Spiritual Warfare

Chapter 6 – Warfare Strategies Part 2



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SETTING UP GARRISONS AT PLACES OF VICTORY

Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, and brought tribute. So the LORD preserved David wherever he went. 2 Samuel 8:6

A garrison is a fortified military outpost established in conquered territory and occupied by a group of soldiers whose responsibility is to defend that area from enemy attempts to regain control. It is a defensive position, but it also serves an offensive purpose because it creates a base from which further advances can be made. A garrison represents a place where victory has already been won, but where vigilance must continue.

This is an important principle in spiritual warfare: a defeated enemy does not always immediately surrender his desire to reclaim lost territory. Whenever an enemy loses ground, he will look for opportunities to regain it.

Throughout history, nations have fought repeatedly over the same pieces of land because whoever lost territory rarely abandoned the desire to take it back. If they believed they had the strength, resources, and opportunity to advance again, they would make another attempt. The spiritual realm operates in much the same way.

We see this pattern throughout Scripture. The Philistines gained influence and territory over Israel during certain seasons, only to lose it when God raised up leaders who walked in His authority. Battles were won, but continued vigilance was required to maintain those victories. Spiritual victories are no different.

When God delivers us, restores us, or gives us victory over an area of bondage, that does not mean we can ignore that area forever. We do not live in fear, constantly wondering when the enemy will attack, but neither do we live unaware. Victory requires stewardship. A conquered territory must be occupied and defended.

Let me give you a personal example.

In 2005, while walking through some extremely difficult personal circumstances, I experienced one of the most severe attacks of the enemy I have ever faced — adult-onset anorexia. Within six months, my weight dropped to 78 pounds. Every area of my life was affected. My family was terrified that I might die.

Those who have never experienced an eating disorder may not understand the powerful hold it can gain over a person's thoughts, emotions, desires, and will. Having experienced addiction before coming to Christ, I can honestly say that I had never encountered a bondage quite like this one.

But God, in His mercy, brought complete freedom. In what felt like a moment, He broke the power of that bondage, and I returned to a healthy weight and healthy eating patterns. It was a powerful victory, and I was grateful beyond words.

However, about a year later, during a season when I was pursuing deeper intimacy with the Lord, something unexpected happened. My appetite suddenly disappeared, and for five days I struggled to eat. Fear began to rise as I recognized familiar thought patterns attempting to return. I knew the enemy was trying to revisit an old battlefield. I cried out to the Lord, and He met me there. He strengthened me, helped me, and the attack went no further. But I learned an important lesson.

When the enemy discovers a strategy that has been effective against your life, he may attempt to use that same strategy again in the future. A previous defeat does not mean he will never try that weapon again. He may wait for a vulnerable moment, a season of exhaustion, distraction, or discouragement, and attempt to advance where he once gained ground.

This is why Scripture tells us:

"For we are not ignorant of his devices." 2 Corinthians 2:11

Notice what Paul does not say. He does not tell us to become obsessed with the enemy's activity. He does not tell us to live suspicious, fearful lives, constantly searching for demons behind every difficulty. He tells us not to be ignorant. There is a difference. Fear causes us to retreat. Wisdom causes us to prepare.

When David conquered territory, he established garrisons. He did not simply celebrate the victory and walk away. He placed something there that would protect what had been gained. We must do the same thing spiritually.

When God gives you victory over an area of your life, establish a garrison there. If God delivers you from bitterness, guard your heart. If God frees you from addiction, establish boundaries that protect your freedom. If God restores your joy, refuse to allow discouragement to reclaim that territory. If God strengthens your prayer life, continue building upon that foundation.

Victory is not maintained by passivity. It is maintained through continued dependence on God, continued obedience, and continued resistance against the enemy .Be vigilant. Be watchful. Guard the places where God has given you victory. Keep your life garrisoned — standing watch over what God has entrusted to you while remaining ready to advance against the kingdom of darkness. The enemy may attempt to return, but he does not have the authority to reclaim what God has delivered.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7

CONTINUE WITH MOMENTUM

Joshua 10:28-43 records an incredible season of victory for Israel after they entered the Promised Land. In this passage, we see Joshua leading the people through a series of battles against the nations that occupied the land God had promised to give them. The passage names six different nations that Joshua conquered, and what stands out is the pace of his advance. One victory did not become the end of the journey; it became the foundation for the next battle.

Joshua understood that a partial victory was not the same thing as complete victory. He did not settle for gaining some ground while leaving the rest of the enemy's territory untouched. He continued moving forward until the assignment God had given him was accomplished. The momentum created by one victory carried him into the next opportunity for advancement.

This is an important principle in spiritual warfare. When God gives us victory in an area of our lives, that victory should strengthen our faith and create momentum for further growth. We should celebrate what God has done, but we should also recognize that breakthrough is often an invitation to keep moving forward.

Part of Newton's First Law of Motion states that an object in motion tends to stay in motion, while an object at rest tends to remain at rest. We experience the truth of this principle all the time.

Think about a time when you were deeply engaged in a project or task. You were focused, productive, and making progress. The work was flowing, and you felt encouraged because you could see things being accomplished. Then you decided to take a short break. Maybe you sat down for a few minutes, checked your phone, or simply rested. Before long, the momentum was gone.

The same task that had felt manageable before the break now seemed much more difficult to restart. The challenge was not necessarily the work itself; the challenge was getting back into motion after entering a state of rest.

I have experienced this personally in the area of physical fitness. I once read a study published by ScienceDirect showing that only 22% of health club members were still attending after a year of membership. Unfortunately, I can relate to that statistic. I have a gym membership that I faithfully pay for each month, even though I am not currently using it the way I intended. But there was a time when I was going several times each week. Then life became busy. A few weeks passed where I did not make it to the gym. The routine was interrupted, the momentum disappeared, and eventually getting started again felt much harder than it should have.

Many of us have experienced the same thing with New Year's resolutions. We begin with enthusiasm because we have a clear picture of what we want to accomplish. We

are motivated, disciplined, and committed. But as time passes, the original excitement fades. Other responsibilities demand our attention, and eventually the goal that once seemed so important becomes something we barely think about. Why does this happen?

I believe one reason is that we lose sight of the purpose behind the goal. The reason we started becomes less important in our minds than the immediate demands around us. Our focus shifts, our desire weakens, and something that once had great significance slowly becomes neglected. Joshua avoided this because he never lost sight of the purpose God had given him.

His assignment was clear: he was to lead Israel into possession of the Promised Land. That calling remained before him even when the battles were difficult and the journey became exhausting. I am sure Joshua experienced moments of weariness. He was leading an entire nation, facing powerful enemies, and carrying a tremendous responsibility.

But he understood that the work of God could not be abandoned simply because it was difficult. There was a purpose greater than his temporary discomfort. Eventually, Joshua did experience rest — but it came after the mission had been accomplished:

"So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war." Joshua 11:23

There is a principle here that is easy to overlook: rest followed obedience and completion. Joshua did not stop in the middle of the assignment because he was tired. He did not decide that partial possession was good enough. He continued until Israel had received what God had promised. This same principle applies to our spiritual lives.

There are seasons when God calls us to contend and to keep pressing forward. We cannot allow temporary difficulty to cause us to abandon something God has placed before us. The enemy would love nothing more than to use discouragement, distraction, or exhaustion to interrupt our progress.

When God gives you victory, do not abandon the territory He has helped you gain. Continue growing. Continue pursuing Him. Continue advancing His kingdom.

The victories God gives us are not merely moments to celebrate; they become reminders that He is faithful and encouragement that He can be trusted in the battles ahead. Do not forget why you started. Keep your focus on the purpose God has placed before you, and allow every victory to strengthen you for the next step.

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." Hebrews 12:1

Keep your eyes on the prize. Keep moving forward. Let the momentum of what God has already done carry you into what He has planned next.

SOMETIMES IT'S JUST YOU

Ever since I first discovered the story of Jonathan and his armor bearer in 1 Samuel 14:1-23, I have loved it. There is something about Jonathan's passion for the battles of the Lord that inspires me. He was not driven by pride, recklessness, or a desire to prove himself. He was motivated by a confidence that God was able to accomplish His purposes, even through a small number of people who were willing to step out in faith. His fearlessness and willingness to move toward an impossible situation because he believed the Lord would help him, stirs something in my heart.

Jonathan saw a Philistine garrison positioned against Israel, and while the rest of the army remained fearful, he recognized an opportunity for God to move. He didn't wait until every circumstance was favorable. He didn't wait until he had overwhelming support. He simply trusted that God was bigger than the opposition standing before him.

Many years ago, the Lord did a beautiful work in my heart that awakened me to the urgency of evangelism. Before that time, evangelism was not a normal part of my life. I had always been quiet and introverted, and the thought of approaching strangers to talk about Jesus was intimidating. It was outside of my comfort zone in every possible way.

But when God began stirring my heart, He placed such a burden within me that I could no longer ignore it. That burden compelled me to step into situations that I would have naturally avoided. I began trying to organize evangelistic outreaches at my church, but those efforts were unsuccessful. I remember feeling frustrated because I believed God was leading me, yet I couldn't seem to get others to share the same passion.

I thank God for a pastor who was able to recognize what God was doing in my life. Rather than dismissing my frustration, he helped connect me with a group of people who were already involved in evangelism and street ministry in a town about an hour away.

The only problem was that participating required sacrifice. I had to drive there alone at night and often would not return home until three or four in the morning. I tried to find people who would go with me because, honestly, I did not want to make those drives alone. I reached out to others and hoped someone else would feel the same urgency that I felt. But nobody's heart was being moved in the same way at that time.

After several weeks of this, I attended a meeting with other missions-minded believers. During that gathering, my pastor shared something that completely changed my perspective: "When God puts something in your heart, you can't wait for other people to get on board. You need to follow God even if it means you do it alone."

Those words gave me freedom. They helped me understand that while there is great strength in partnership and we often see God sending people out two by two, obedience cannot be dependent upon whether others are willing to go with us.

There will be moments when God places something in your heart that others do not understand. They may not see what you see. They may not feel the urgency that you feel. They may not be ready to move when God is telling you to move. That does not mean you are wrong. It means you must determine whether you are more committed to the approval and participation of people or to obedience to God.

Jonathan did not wait for the entire army of Israel to become courageous before he acted. He trusted that God could bring victory through those who were willing to step forward. His armor bearer joined him, but Jonathan's obedience began before anyone else committed to the battle.

When God stirs your heart, do not ignore it because others are hesitant. Do not allow the absence of support to become an excuse for disobedience. Pick up your sword, trust the Lord, and follow Him—even when the path requires you to go alone.

THE ENEMY YOU COMPROMISE WITH IS THE ONE THAT MAY END UP KILLING YOU

Let's begin with the biblical foundation for this principle. Our passage comes from the life of King Ahab, who had just experienced a significant victory over Ben-Hadad, king of Syria. Syria had been an enemy of Israel, and the Lord had delivered them into Ahab's hands. Ben-Hadad was captured and was now completely vulnerable. The battle had been won, and Ahab had the opportunity to remove a threat that had endangered God's people. Instead, he made a decision that would have devastating consequences.

Then his servants said to him, "Look now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings. Please, let us put sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and go out to the king of Israel; perhaps he will spare your life." So they wore sackcloth around their waists and put ropes around their heads, and came to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-Hadad says, 'Please let me live.' " And he said, "Is he still alive? He is my brother." Now the men were watching closely to see whether any sign of mercy would come from him; and they quickly grasped at this word and said, "Your brother Ben-Hadad." So he said, "Go, bring him." Then Ben-Hadad came out to him; and he had him come up into the chariot. So Ben-Hadad said to him, "The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may set up

marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." Then Ahab said, "I will send you away with this treaty." So he made a treaty with him and sent him away. 1 Kings 20:31-34

Ahab had been given victory, but he failed to understand the importance of finishing what God had started. Rather than completely defeating his enemy, he entered into an agreement with him. What appeared to be an act of mercy was actually an act of compromise. Ahab allowed someone who had opposed God's purposes to remain in a position where he could eventually become a threat again. And that is exactly what happened.

Only a few chapters later, in 1 Kings 22, Israel was once again fighting against Syria. During that battle, Ahab was struck by an arrow and died. The enemy that he had spared returned to fight another day, and this time the consequences were fatal. Ahab won the battle but failed to remove the danger. His compromise gave the enemy an opportunity to regain strength.

This principle is not limited to an Old Testament king and an ancient battlefield. It is a pattern we see repeated in the lives of believers today. When we tolerate things that God has warned us against, we create opportunities for those things to gain influence over us. What begins as a small compromise can eventually become a powerful source of bondage.

Many people do not wake up one day and suddenly find themselves trapped in sin. The process is usually much slower. A person becomes comfortable with something they once recognized as harmful. They begin making excuses for what God has called them to surrender. Over time, the thing they thought they could control begins controlling them. This is why Jesus spoke so strongly about dealing with sin:

"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."
Matthew 5:29-30

Jesus was not commanding physical mutilation. He was revealing the seriousness with which we must approach anything that threatens our relationship with God. Anything that repeatedly draws us into sin must be confronted with courage and decisiveness. Peter gives us insight into why this battle matters:

"Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."1 Peter 2:11

Peter describes sinful desires as something that actively fights against us. Sin is not neutral. It is not simply a harmless weakness or an area where we need more

discipline. It is an enemy that seeks to influence our thoughts, shape our desires, and pull us away from the life God has designed for us.

This reminds us that spiritual warfare is not always about confronting demonic activity. There are times when the battle is against our own flesh—the desires, attitudes, and habits that resist the work of the Holy Spirit within us. The enemy often gains access through areas where we refuse to surrender.

The seventeenth-century Puritan theologian John Owen captured this truth in his book *The Mortification of Sin*: "Be killing sin or it will be killing you."

That statement is powerful because it exposes the danger of treating sin casually. Sin is never content to remain contained. It seeks opportunity. It looks for agreement. It desires to establish a foothold and expand its influence.

A person who has become comfortable with sin has misunderstood its nature. Sin is not merely a violation of a rule; it is an attack on the purposes of God in our lives. It damages our relationship with Him, weakens our spiritual sensitivity, and often brings pain to those around us.

It is like a poisonous snake hiding nearby. The danger is not only the initial bite but the venom that spreads afterward. A wise person does not attempt to coexist with something that carries the ability to destroy. The threat must be removed.

There are things in our lives that God is calling us to confront, not because He wants to deprive us, but because He wants to protect us. His commands are not restrictions designed to make life smaller; they are boundaries that preserve the freedom Christ purchased for us.

The enemy you compromise with is the enemy that may eventually destroy you. Deal with sin while it is still small. Remove the foothold before it becomes a stronghold. Cut the head off the snake.

HOLINESS WARFARE REVISITED

Even valiant warriors can be defeated because of sin This is a most effective strategy of the enemy and we have seen the results of it in our day as spiritual leaders who have done great things for the kingdom have been publicly shamed and have lost their ministry and reputation because of sin.

"For Pekah the son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers."
2 Chronicles 28:6

This verse brings us back to the concept we introduced earlier—what I have called holiness warfare. It demonstrates a sobering truth: when we step away from God's

ways, we weaken ourselves spiritually and become more vulnerable to defeat. The consequences of disobedience are not merely personal. They affect our ability to stand, fight, and fulfill the purposes God has given us.

The men described in this passage were not inexperienced soldiers. They were called valiant men. They were warriors who had been trained, prepared, and proven in battle. They knew how to fight. They had stood together against enemies before, and they had experienced victory. Yet on this day, their strength and skill were not enough.

One hundred and twenty thousand warriors were killed in a single battle. This was not a minor military setback that could be easily overlooked. It was a devastating loss that left the nation exposed and vulnerable. In addition to those who died, two hundred thousand people were taken captive. Families were torn apart. A nation was weakened. The protection that these warriors were supposed to provide was suddenly gone. And Scripture tells us why this happened:

"Because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers."

Their defeat did not begin on the battlefield. It began in their hearts.

They had allowed their relationship with God to deteriorate, and eventually that spiritual decline affected their ability to stand against their enemies. They were still warriors, but they were warriors who had lost connection with the One who gave them victory.

This is an important lesson for us because spiritual warfare is not only about learning how to fight. It is also about maintaining the spiritual condition necessary to remain effective in the battle. A person can know Scripture, understand spiritual principles, and even have a history of victory, but if they begin allowing sin and compromise to take root, their ability to resist the enemy will be affected. The enemy understands this strategy well.

He knows that if he can weaken our devotion to God, he can weaken our effectiveness for God. He does not always need to defeat us through a direct attack. Sometimes he simply waits while we gradually surrender the very things that make us strong. This passage also reminds us that we do not live isolated lives. Our choices impact more than just ourselves. These warriors' decisions affected an entire nation. Their spiritual condition had consequences for their families, their communities, and future generations. The same is true for believers today.

Our obedience matters. Our faithfulness matters. Our willingness to remain close to God matters. We have been entrusted with something far greater than our own personal spiritual growth. Through the New Covenant, we have been made representatives of Jesus Christ and entrusted with the message of reconciliation.

"*Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us…"*
2 Corinthians 5:20

If we allow our hearts to grow cold, if we become distracted by the things of this world, or if we tolerate sin that weakens our spiritual authority, the impact reaches beyond our own lives. The mission of God is affected. The advancement of His kingdom is hindered. People who desperately need the hope of the gospel may never encounter it through us.

This is why holiness is not merely about personal morality. It is part of our warfare. A life surrendered to God becomes a weapon in His hands. A life compromised by sin becomes vulnerable to the enemy's strategies. The battle for holiness is worth fighting—not only because of what God desires to do in us, but because of what He desires to do through us.

Our victory matters. The people around us need us standing strong. The kingdom of God advances when His people remain faithful.