

Spiritual Warfare

1 Peter 5:8-9

PART THREE

Introduction

Gullibility leads to Vulnerability in Spiritual Warfare.

How does this happen?

By distracting the soldier through deception leading him further away from the real battle. In some cases, causing him to engage in foolish, even embarrassing practices.

The Danger of Christian Mindlessness

"For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are 'wise'—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not" (Jeremiah 4:22).

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD" (Isaiah 1:18).

From Scripture, and Scripture alone, the soldier receives two critical pieces of strategic information:

- 1) it identifies the Enemy and his methods: he appeals to the eyes, the flesh, and the pride of man.
- 2) it describes our outpost and the location of the battle – *the mind* – and delineates our defenses.

The Crucial Importance of Training the Mind for Battle.

The Bible, which *renews and transforms the mind*, is the effective means of our defense against attack.

Why is this so important?

Because we need to recognize that the Bible is the sole place of communication we receive from our Commander in Chief to us His troops on the ground.

The Importance of Understanding the Divine *Logos* (John 1:1)

The Logos: the universal Mind; the Law of Reason that controls the universe and is imminent in human reason; "an everlasting Word" (Heraclitus; 500 B.C.).

"The eternal Logos is a necessary condition for the communication of revealed truth; indeed, it is a necessary condition for the communication for human knowledge about anything" (Ronald Nash).

The 'Logos' was the perfect communion of the mind of God to man that was cut off because of sin.

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you" (Psalm 32:8-9).

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness” (2 Peter 1:5-7).

Whether by mysticism, emotionalism, sentimentalism, charismaticism, or experientialism, all serve to *bypass the mind* and this is dangerous.

“We’re not here to make you *feel*. We’re here to make you *think*... Christianity is a matter of the mind” (MacArthur).

Why would people neglect or reject the plain teaching of Scripture on the matter of spiritual warfare?

We are to take control by capturing our thoughts and forcing them to *obey Christ* (2 Corinthians 10:5).

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

The primary battle for the human soul then, involves the *Truth* of Jesus Christ (John 14:6) against the *Lie* of the devil (John 8:44).

“And the Word [*Logos*] became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

“For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world— to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice” (John 18:37).

Since the mind is unavoidably exposed to the mental pollution of the Lie, it must regularly be cleansed with truth if the heart is to remain pure and the will steadfast in the faith.

“*for we have the mind of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 2:16).

“Resist him, firm in your faith”

“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

The battle for the heart takes place in the mind. The enemy objective is to *distract*, then *divert* belief and thereby destroy faith.

The problem for humans is our almost infinite appetite for *diversions* (Aldous Huxley).

When the attack comes, it comes in some form of deception.

“But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1; NASU).

1 Timothy 1:18-20

One common way for a shipwreck to occur is for it veer off course into shallow waters.

Remember: *You* are the guardian of your heart, the watchman over your soul.

Proverbs 4:23-27

1. Exercise self-control and careful watch over your *heart* (v23)

Proverbs 28:26; Colossians 3:2; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8; Proverbs 22:5

2. Exercise self-control and keep careful watch over your *mouth* (v24)

James 1:26; Proverbs 8:13; Proverbs 17:20; Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:29

3. Exercise self-control and careful watch over your *sight* (v25)

The eyes of the heart can either be search lights for the truth and what is pure, or they can be stealth radar that looks for things in the dark to indulge in.

Fix your eyes on Jesus and the path He has set before you and has bid you to follow Him on.

2 Samuel 11:2; Job 31:1; Deuteronomy 4:9

4. Exercise self-control and careful watch over your *walk* (vv26-27)

The Adulteress: Proverbs 5:5-6; Ezekiel 18:21; Ezekiel 18:28; Ephesians 4:1-2; Ephesians 5:15, 17; Ephesians 5:1-2

What is the biblical strategy for spiritual warfare? How can we prevent defeat? Ephesians 6:10-18

Ephesians 6:10-12

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm” (v13).

Six Pieces of Vital Spiritual Armor

- “Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth,” (v14a).
- “and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,” (v14b).
- “and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace” (v15).
- “In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one” (v16).
- “and take the helmet of salvation” (v17a).
- “and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (v17b).

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints” (v18).

Remember to acknowledge and believe that the message of the cross is this: *Victory secured for all time!*

“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Colossians 1:13).

“Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:31-32).