

The Battlefield Of The Mind

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.
2nd Corinthians 10:3-6

v.3a For though we walk in the flesh; It's obvious that we live amongst saints and heathens alike. Although our exterior is indistinguishable from the world, we have the exact same physical and biological components that make up the human body, however, we are distinctly different on the interior. Our ways are not the same as theirs, our methods are not the same as theirs, our thoughts are not the same as theirs. We are uniquely different from the non-believer, governed by different statutes and decrees and have been given a new nature, a divine nature to be exact (2nd Peter 1:3-4) For though we walk in the world our citizenship is not of this world, we are literally aliens and sojourners of this world. Jesus said,

John 17:14,16 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because ***they are not of the world***, just as I am not of the world. 16 ***They are not of the world***, just as I am not of the world.

Philippians 3:20 For ***our citizenship is in heaven***, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ

Ephesians 2:9 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but ***fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God***,

2nd Corinthians 5:20 Now then, ***we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us***: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Ezekiel 36:24-27 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a ***new heart and put a new spirit within you***; ... 27 ***I will put My Spirit within you*** and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.

As a result, although we walk the face of this earth just like the others, and just like we did before we were enlightened by the Holy Spirit and united together with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus things have changed. We are new creations in Christ Jesus, the old things have passed away, all things have become new to us. We are no longer "of this world", but belong to another, "THE KINGDOM OF GOD".

Some would say that we won't actually become citizens of Heaven and God's children until we die and actually go to Heaven, but it states in *1st John 3:1* Beloved, ***now we are children of God***; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Romans 8:19 (NIV) The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

It's important for us to understand our true identity and position in Christ because if we don't realize who we truly are, we'll most likely believe that there is little or no distinction between the believer and the non-believer, between us and them.

However, after establishing the fact that we are not of this world and that our citizenship is in Heaven, and we are God's children now, and part of His household now, we have a dilemma. And that is the fact that although we still currently walk in the flesh with non-believers (parable of the wheat & tares parable Matthew 13:24-30). We do not engage in our spiritual warfare as if we were non-believers, "***though we walk in the flesh***".

v.3b We do not war according to the flesh; It's important to understand first of all that we are actually engaged in warfare, spiritual warfare to be exact. Our enemy has tactics, strategies, targets, objectives, and our enemydoes not come ***except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy***....(*John 10:10*). Our enemy is active and is constantly on the prowl. As a result, we have toBe of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, ***seeking someone to devour***. (*1st Peter 5:8* NASB)

We also have a mission as it relates to the warfare we have been commissioned to fight. Our mission and objective is the same as our Commander's was. We have been sent to do the same thing that Jesus did when he was physically on earth as declared by the following scriptures:

John 17:18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

John 20:21 As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.

In order for us to understand what exactly we are chosen to do (You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you*John 15:16*), we have to search the pages of scriptures to see what Jesus was sent to do because He sends us to do the same as He came to do.

Luke 19:10the Son of Man has come to ***seek*** and to save that which was ***lost***.

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and *make disciples* of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20 teaching them** to observe all things that I have commanded you.....

Hebrews 2:14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might **destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,**

1st John 3:8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. **For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil**

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, **To proclaim liberty to the captives (ref Gal 5:1), And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;**

One might argue that these works were for Jesus Himself while He walked this earth, but the Scriptures gives us a different opinion.

John 14:12 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, **he will do also; and greater works than these he will do;...**

The point I'm trying to make is the fact that we have our responsibilities and work that is assigned to us as participants in the spiritual war. As the Body of Christ, we are His physical representation on earth assigned to continue His work here.

There is one thing however, that we need to understand. The weapons that we are to use are not worldly weapons, they are spiritual weapons.

Ray Steadman said it best in his series on Spiritual Warfare "though we live in the world ..., still we do not use human plans and methods to win our battles." It is important that we understand that, because here is where all the problems has come. Many have recognized that Christians are to live in the world, but they go on to assume that a Christian living in the world must be like the world, that he must think like the world, that he must depend upon the thoughts, philosophies, ideas, and writers of the world, and draw all his arguments and his solutions to problems from these sources."

Though we walk in the flesh, we are a new creation, acting differently, thinking differently, talking differently. We are literally not the same as the non-believer who has no other choice but to use worldly methods to battle all his problems.

2nd Corinthians 5:16-17 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him thus* no

longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, ***he is a new creation***; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

(NLT) So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though he were merely a human being. How differently I think about him now! 17 What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! ***For though we walk in the flesh***

Let me say again, it's important to note that the declared battle of spiritual warfare illustrated above is not to be fought with the familiar weapons that we have used in the past with ineffective and fruitless results. We have very different weapons that we are to employ to fight our battles. We fight the spiritual battle using spiritual weapons. Using worldly weapons in a spiritual battle guarantees defeat simply because worldly weapons will not defeat, harm, deter, hinder, or discourage our enemy in any way shape form or fashion because worldly weapons are impotent in spiritual warfare. Often times the right enemy is opposed but with using the wrong weapons. Employing the weapons of the world will not win our battles, we are not engaged in a worldly war but a spiritual war. As a result, we do not use human plans and methods to win spiritual battles. Unfortunately, we have far too many Christians waging war but are ill equipped for victory. They don't understand the enemy and don't understand the enemy is a formidable foe, they don't even understand who the enemy is or what the enemy is. "***We do not war according to the flesh***".

v.4a The weapons of our warfare are not carnal; It's also important for us to understand exactly what are the carnal weapons of warfare and what are the spiritual weapons of warfare. John MacArthur in his exposition of the text writes;

"Human weapons have no effect. Human weapons cannot fight the kingdom of darkness. Human weapons cannot deal with principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. Human weapons can't fight on that level. ***Human weapons cannot liberate souls from the kingdom of darkness. Human weapons cannot transform sinners. Human weapons cannot sanctify saints. They have no effect in the spiritual realm, no affect on the kingdom of darkness, no affect on Satan, no affect on his supernatural systems. No affect on the eternal souls of men.***

John MacArthur also goes on to say "What are we talking about here? What are the weapons of the world? What are the weapons of the flesh? Human reason, human wisdom, arguments of rationalism, human plans, strategies, ingenuity, organization, skill, eloquence, personality, cleverness, entertainment, religious showmanship, philosophical, psychological speculations, the mystique of the mystics, artificial atmospheres creating artificial environments, all the human approaches are **impotent** weapons, they are simply weapons of the flesh.

You use those things to fight battles on the human level. You use those things to sell soup and Chevrolets and suits and garbage disposals and houses. You use those things to convince people they ought to go to college or that they ought to go to a different career or a job different job.

You use those things to get people to give their money to charity or to invest in something that you want them to invest with the prospect of making money. You use those things to motivate people to work at a faster level so they can climb the ladder in their job. You use those kinds of methodologies to get people to produce a better product on the assembly line. You use those kinds of things to make people happier with their environment and make them get along better with their friends and family. Those are human things. You use those things to make people feel more emotionally stable or better about their life situation.

They're pea shooters, pop guns with ping-pong balls. They're plastic weapons with little soft rubber darts. Such weapons only appear to be effective. They appear to be effective to people who have never seen and understood real fire power. Such weapons gain superficial temporary victories and it soon becomes clear evil is still entrenched. They are very, very ineffective and yet you have so many people today who are attempting to fight the great spiritual war with fleshly weapons and gaining what is only a superficial appearance of a victory. In essence these weapons represents human sufficiency without God".

I must state however, that every human attribute and weapon that's available to us should be developed and used to its fullest extend for our benefit when we deal with the affairs of this world. They just will not serve us well when we are dealing with matters of spiritual warfare. That is why the following Scriptures are so important to understand;

1st Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, **not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.**

1st Corinthians 2:1-5 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come **with excellence of speech or of wisdom** declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were **not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**

1st Corinthians 2:12-13(NIV) We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words **taught by the Spirit**, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

2nd Peter 1:16 (NIV) We did not follow **cleverly invented stories** when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Ray Steadman also said in his spiritual warfare series titled Methods of Madness " One of the chief rules of warfare is, know your enemy. You can never be successful as a soldier if you do not know something of the tactics of the enemy. This is true in military conflict and it is true in spiritual warfare as well. The second rule of warfare is, know your weapons. Know what you have to meet the enemy with, and know how to use them. Right here, of course, is why the church has been so weak. It is because it has neglected both of these areas. It has not understood

its enemy, and it has not understood its own weapons. ***"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal"***.

v.4b But mighty in God; To this point, I have only talked about the inappropriate use of worldly weapons that have no effect in spiritual battle. Now however, I would like to state that our spiritual weapons have power and are effective in conquering our enemy. The spiritual weapons that are for our use are ***"mighty in God"***. In other words, they are able because of the divine power of God that's attached to them. They are made mighty and powerful by God Himself, and specifically designed for spiritual warfare.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, ***be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.***

There is nothing within ourselves that can conquer the enemy. We possess no power, or ability, or strength, other than what God has provided for us.

Zechariah 4:6 'Not by might nor by power, ***but by My Spirit,***' Says the LORD of hosts

Not only are our spiritual weapons mighty in God, we have been given the authority to use them. What good would the weapons be if we didn't have the authority put them to good use when we needed them?

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ***All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.***

Luke 10:19 ***...I give you the authority*** to trample on serpents and scorpions, ***and over all the power of the enemy,*** and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

As a result, we have to use the weapons at our disposal and not deviate from the weapons that are ***"mighty in God"***.

By now we should have a good understanding of what human weapons are and their ineffectiveness. Now we have to identify what are the spiritual weapons we are to use and our objective. In other words, we shouldn't take our weapons and go "Rambo" on our communities. We have to have clear objectives and purpose.

And we will discuss the objectives and purpose in next week's study.