

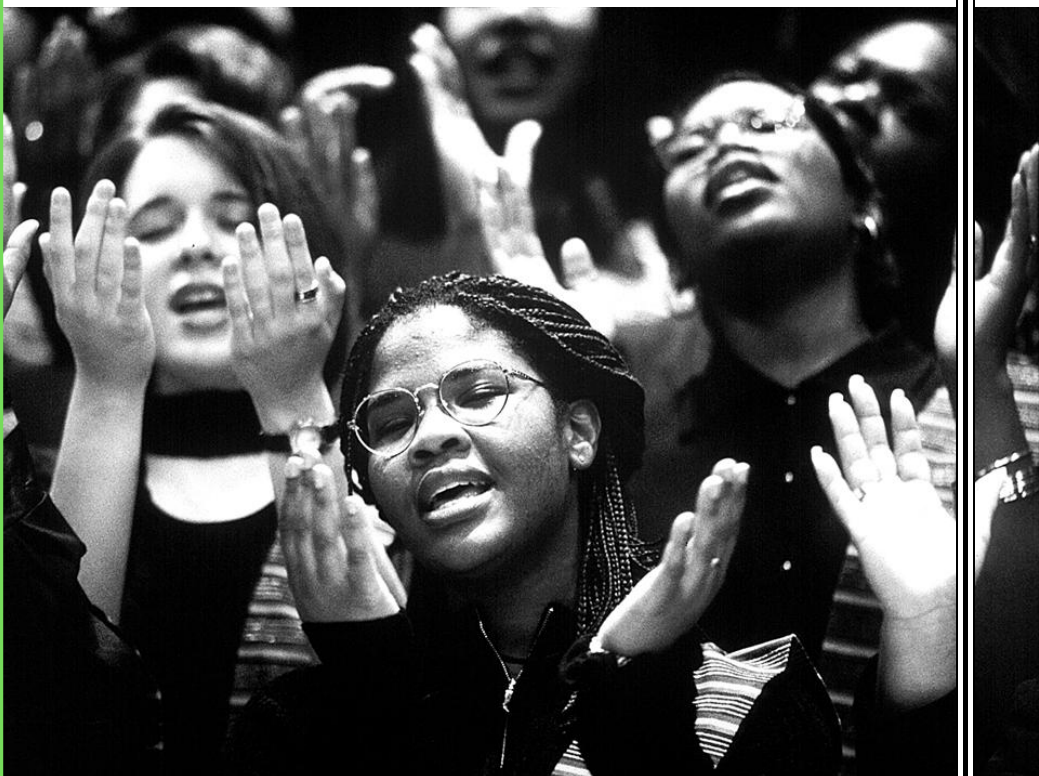


Spiritual warfare

Aware of the Devil, Impressed with God

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Alive Ministries South Africa

www.aliveministries-sa.org

Dear friends,

For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12). Apparently this (seen) world is ruled by evil rulers and authorities. Those evil rulers are coming from the unseen world. They have mighty power and it is a power of darkness. We also have to fight against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Be aware, **its wartime!** This is a message to you, to the whole Church, and not only to some “freaky” and strange so called “warfare minister” from some ministry. You’re in, if you want it or not! This study is meant not to be complete, but to create an awareness within you: We are spiritual, the earth is occupied territory by the enemy, called Satan and his army, and we have to fight to colonize the earth (re-conquer and defend our property), that what belongs to us, thanks to the mighty work of Jesus the Christ! We are not yet on the new heaven and the new earth. *The enemy has been defeated because of the blood of the Lamb and by our testimony (Revelation 12:11).* Fight, and challenge the spiritual forces over South Africa! Our slogans are: **Aware of the Devil, Impressed with God!** and **The task ahead of us is never as great as the power behind us!**

1. You are in de midst of these battle!

*“mighty powers of darkness who rule **this world**” (Ephesians 6:12).* Actually here is written “those who **belong to this world**”. We don’t belong to this world, we are strangers as written: *friends, I urge you, as aliens and **strangers** in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul (1 Peter 2:11).* So, those powers of darkness are not ruling me, for I don’t belong to this world, I am a Christian, a Kingdom citizen. O yes, you are right, but there is one condition while living in this world, you know “occupied territory”: **abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul (1 Peter 2:11).** You still have to fight (its still wartime) and defend your property (the spiritual Kingdom here on earth) by abstaining from sinful desires, for your own sinful desires are making war against your own soul. Your soul is your spiritual part and by following your sinful desires you are putting parts of your own soul (your spiritual part) in captivity, under control of the enemy. And be aware, this enemy is also spiritual, but from de dark side. **Here we are facing the interconnection between the dark spiritual (unseen) world and a part of our own body (our spiritual soul).** And don’t forget that you Christians are living between so many people who still belong to this world, they are no aliens and strangers in this world. So, all of us, Christians and non-Christians are more or less under the destructive dominion of Satan, we are all influencing each other’s situation, while living in the period before Jesus second coming.

Likewise, just as there are heavenly places, there are also places or regions of darkness. Both are continually active upon the land of the living. We don’t have to be dead for heaven to manifest itself in our lives or for our life to become a living hell. The mission of our Lord was to unite heaven and earth again, in bringing the Kingdom of God. The goal was to make everything that belongs to the heavenly kingdom to be established in the natural world (Ephesians 1:9-10). We are never free from this conflict as written: *These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict (Galatians 5:17).*

All of us, Christians and non Christians, are more or less in captivity. Depending on the maturity of Gods (spiritual) Kingdom, the Heavenly places you entered, already here on earth, **parts of your soul (your spiritual part) are hold in captivity** in dark spiritual places (Hades): *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Your name; The righteous shall surround me, for You shall deal bountifully with me.” (Psalm 142:7).* *How long will you torment my **soul**, and break me in pieces with words? (Job 19:2).* *Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; My eye wastes away with grief, Yes, my **soul** and my body! (Psalm 31:9).* *Yes, his **soul** draws near the Pit, and his life to the executioners (Job 33:22).* *To bring back his **soul** from the Pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life (Job 33:30).* Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary

residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls (1 Peter 2: 11).

Do you know the work out (symptoms) of this captivity in your life, the work out of the dark spiritual realm and its power into this physical world, your life? The gifts of Satan: fear, brokenness, loneliness, sadness, restlessness, violence, apathy, uselessness, rejection, depression, war in your mind, doubt, gossip, crime, insecurity, unrest, you don't experience God's presence, hostility, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, ignorance, frustration, division, envy, abuse, drunkenness, etc. **As you see most of these gifts are spiritual (in your mind), but controlling your whole life!**

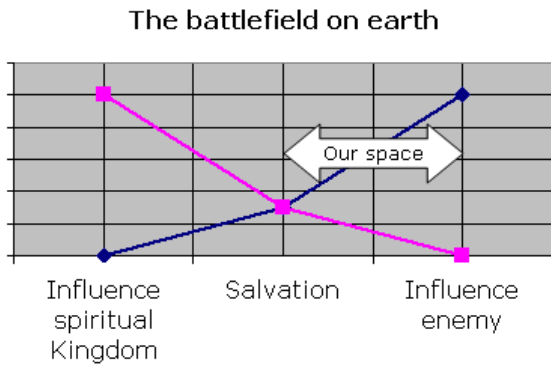
Let your soul be converted and restored: David, a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), was fully aware of the position of his soul and the need for his soul to be nursed: *To You, O LORD, I lift up my **soul** (Psalm 25:1). Our **soul** waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield (Psalm 33:20). The law (the scripture) of the LORD is perfect, **converting** the **soul** (Psalm 19:7). He **restores** my **soul**; He leads me in the paths of righteousness **for His name's sake** (Psalm 23:3). Keep my **soul**, and **deliver me**; Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You (Psalm 25:20). For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:10-11). But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your **souls** (1 Peter 2:25). Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your **souls** (Matthew 11:29). And Mary said: My **soul** magnifies the Lord (Luke 1:46). Apparently we have to work on our souls, not only for our salvation, but to stay free and grow into maturity of the Kingdom.*

Wow! So, I am also really involved in spiritual warfare, also as a Christian. Man, there is work to do to keep and extend my property. That's not easy to stay away from sinful desires. So, by putting my own sinful desires into acts, I am giving legal grounds to the enemy, I am giving parts of my property away (Kingdom territory). Yes, I can't help that, you're not yet in the ideal situation of the new heaven and new earth. My dear friends, be aware of that, don't let the enemy steal your property, but fight, defend and extend your property. It belongs to you, thanks to the mighty cross of Christ. You know the work out of these fight, the gifts of our dear Lord: *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).*

Every person born into this world is immersed in spiritual warfare. Having been plunged into the conflict of the ages, we cannot be exempt or neutral. We will either be trampled by malign forces or we will be victorious, winning souls, changing society, influencing history, and helping establish the Kingdom of God through spiritual warfare. I have noticed that Christians in general tend to allow a defeated enemy to steal the victory that Christ won for them on the Cross. **God wants His people to be an army that influences the world and drives back the powers of darkness.** As the children of God, we need never be victims! The more we shine the Light on Satan's activities, the more his work is hindered.

2. The battlefield on earth, your space in the spiritual Kingdom.

Allow me to explain the battlefield on earth. The (spiritual) Kingdom of God is progressively extended over the whole world until all of the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God. *The enemy has been defeated because of the blood of the Lamb and by our testimony (Revelation 12:11).* Once we bow down for King Jesus and accept His payment for our sins we are entering the spiritual Kingdom here on earth, which is our salvation as written: *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." (John 3:3).* Your salvation is secure as



written: *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9). I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me (John 10:28).* From the moment of your salvation until you die (your earthly body), you are able to freely move (up and down) in the space as shown in the graph. This is your space in the (spiritual) Kingdom here on earth, and at the same time the battlefield. You are able to grow, but also to fall back, but never

beyond your salvation. The enemy has been defeated, so you should be able to enter into the maturity of the (spiritual) Kingdom, already here on earth and taste the benefits already before you leave your earthly body. Be aware: you are never free from this conflict as written: *These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict (Galatians 5:17).*

3. Resist the devil and he'll flee?

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7). A lot of people claim that this is proof that a Christian never needs a deliverance. They claim that all we have to do is draw near to God and resist the devil and he's quickly on his way. What an ear tickling message to say the least. So why isn't it working with so many countless believers who are being tormented and harassed by demonic spirits? They can try to resist the devil and draw near to God with everything they've got, and still the harassment and torment doesn't stop. Many pastors are known for writing the people off and saying that they aren't trying hard enough, but these people can try with everything they've got and still have no progress! What's wrong? Quite frankly, James chapter 4 is not speaking of demonic harassment or torment... no, it's speaking of **how to deal with the temptation that the devil sends our way!**

Furthermore, it's not telling us that the devil will come out of us, it's telling us that the devil will flee, which gives us a good indication that this is speaking of spiritual warfare where we are resisting the temptations of the devil from the outside. Now let's take a look at a story found in the Bible on how to deal with demonic torment or harassment.

An example of how demonic problems were addressed: In Luke 13:11, there stood a woman with a spirit of infirmity: *And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up (Luke 13:11).* How did Jesus handle her? Did He walk up to her and say, "Woman, you aren't resisting the devil and drawing near to God! If you would just do that, your demon would depart from you!" No, that's not what happened. Jesus gave us a clear indication that she was a precious and sincere child of God when He said..., *So ought not this woman, being a **daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?** (Luke 13:16).* Obviously this woman didn't need to draw near to God and resist the devil, she needed to be set free from her demonic bondage! That's exactly how Jesus did for her in verse 12: *But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity (Luke 13:12).* For those who insist that this woman was not a believer, I encourage you to read the following teaching, which will present an irrefutable case that she was indeed a believer, and she indeed had a demon: **a Daughter of Abraham.**

I encourage you to go read James 4, then tell me, is it speaking about dealing with demonic harassment, possession, bondages and being vexed by demons? Is it speaking of getting people set free from demons? No, it is not! It's telling you how to overcome the temptations that the devil throws our way in this world! The Bible is also clear on

how we are to go about handling demons that need to be driven out: *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give (Matthew 10:8). And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils... (Mark 16:17).* Now if all we had to do was draw near to God and resist the devil, there would be no point in casting out demons, would there? **Would not Jesus and His disciples have been wasting their time, along with the early church? Would they have not been giving people 'quick fixes' to problems that they ought to be drawing near to God and resisting the devil to solve?** While it is true that we should always resist the devil and draw near to God, it is not the Biblical solution to solving problems that are demonic in a person's life. Right now I am in contact with someone in South Africa and both we are already for one month busy to get rid of voices (demons) in this person's life. With all the knowledge we have (also equal successful deliverances) and using the mighty name of Jesus, we still didn't succeed. For sure we will continue and trusting our Deliverer, Jesus the Christ. It is sometimes not easy and a real battle.

The victory is yours: *And they have defeated him because of the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony (Revelation 12:11a).* As you see, Jesus took the victory, however there is still work for us to do (our testimony). More information in our study "Know your enemy" and "the Kingdom".

4. Spiritual eyes.

Here we are talking about seeing in the unseen spiritual world, having contact and the gift of discerning of spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10).

On many places in the scripture is written about **visions**: *When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also **seen a vision of angels who said He was alive** (Luke 24:23). So he went out and followed him, and did not know that **what was done by the angel was real**, but thought he was seeing a vision (Acts 12:9). Then **the angel said to her**, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.³⁴ Then **Mary said to the angel**, "How can this be, since I do not know a man? (Luke 1:30, 34). **Visions and angels are real and we are able to see them and talk with them.***

*Then **the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD** (Numbers 22:31). And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, **open his eyes that he may see.**" Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of **horses and chariots of fire** all around Elisha (2 Kings 6:17). The unseen world became as real as the world of flesh and blood he had always known. **Those who are with us are more than those who are with them!** (2 Kings 6:16).*

If it is the Lords will that we will see in the spiritual world, and we stretch out to it by for instance prayer, we will see angels, horses and chariots of fire, the whole book of Revelation (John), etc. The whole scripture is full with stories of real things, seen through for instance a vision by your spirit inside the body or outside. The gift of discerning of spirits, promised in 1 Corinthians 12:10, is God showing us what is going on in the spirit realm at any given time (Hebrews 5:14).

A couple of years ago we adopted a boy for some month in our family who had worshipped Satan directly and asked him directly for help. As a consequence this (Christian) boy was demon possessed and sometimes when we asked him for instance "what would you like to drink" for a minute very strange and dark noises (demons) came out of his mouth, afterwards he said "sorry, a coke please". Many times while looking from my room to the boys room I saw a huge demon glittering in a poster on the wall. I still can describe this demon: 2.5 meter, clothes like an angel, ugly head with one eye and a thick nose. Once I told this to the boy and described the demon he really started to smile and became happy. From that moment he started to trust me to help him in the deliverance process. He told me, yes these demon is standing always the whole night beside my bed and tormenting me, and I am so happy that a "normal" Christian also has

seen this demon. Another boy who told me his story, that he already spoke with ancestor spirits from his fourth age and other scary things was really happy that after 16 years he could speak about his "problem", for most people declared him mad. **Spiritual eyes, prophesying, visions, revelations etc. for one purpose: To serve one another in love.**

5.1 Sitting.

Ephesians 1-3 focuses on our position in Christ and our relationship with God. These chapters are full of declarations of **who we are** and **what God has done**. God has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing". He "predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself". "He made known to us the mystery of His will". "We have obtained an inheritance". Christ is "our peace", and through Him we have "access in one Spirit to the Father". We are "no longer strangers" but "fellow-citizens ... and are of God's household". This is who we are: recipients of all these wonderful benefits from God. And it culminates in God making us "**sit with Him in heavenly places**". Reading the book of Ephesians should establish us in unshakable confidence. We must embrace these truths, believe them, and learn to sit with God.

Being seated speaks of three things:

1. It speaks of **reigning**. "Those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17). We are meant to reign in life. We must ask ourselves: Are we reigning, or are we slaves to our circumstances and the attacks of the enemy?"
2. Being seated also speaks of **a finished work**. We only sit after the work is complete. God is saying through Ephesians that everything has already been done to make us what we need to be. It is a finished work. Having completed the work of atonement, having defeated the devil, having spoiled all principalities and powers, having established Himself as the reigning King of Kings, Jesus took His rightful place and sat down. **We need to take our rightful place, the place won for us by our glorious Lord and Savior, and sit down**. Our salvation is complete; our authority over the enemy has been won (Colossians 2:10).
3. Finally being seated speaks of being in **a relaxed position**. Relaxing is the natural response when a job is completed. When we are convinced that nothing can undo the completed work, we can relax. We need more Christians know they are kept by the power of God, Christians who know they are saved and secure in Christ, being seated with Him in the heavenly places.

There is a chair reserved for you in heavenly places. Run to it and take up your seat in Christ!

5.2 Walking.

Ephesians 4:1-9 is the second major section of this epistle. Here Paul explains the responsibilities of the believer to act according to the will and Word of God. Sitting is but one dimension of the Christian life. Once we have learned to sit in Christ, to know who we are in Him because of the great work that He has done, we must learn to walk. We need to stop arguing and realize that both positions are true; they just reflect two dimensions of the Christian life. There is nothing we can do to gain the gifts of forgiveness and salvation. There is nothing we can add to the works of Christ on the Cross. He has done what He has done, and we can only accept or reject it. We cannot gain admission or acceptance on the basis of our efforts. We cannot make God's work more complete. We can only sit with Him.

But once we have accepted our position in Christ, we must walk a manner worthy of the foundation which has laid by Christ. It is our responsibility to do everything in our power to serve Him; to walk in obedience, to walk in the light, to walk in the Spirit. Though we sit in the heavenly places because of what God has done, we must act and behave in a responsible manner worthy of our position in Christ. We must walk!

5.3 Standing.

This brings us to Ephesians 6:10-20, the “stand” section. It is at this point that we are instructed “finally” to **take our stand against the enemy**. We will never be able to stand confidently and resolutely against the powers of darkness if we are not first secure in our salvation. Unless we are *seated* and relaxed before the Lord, knowing who we are in Christ and trusting in the wonderful grace of God which is able to keep us from falling; and unless we are *walking* with a clean conscience; we will not be able to *stand* against evil powers. God calls us to “lay aside the old self” and to “put on the new self”. This is easy to understand as putting on and taking off our clothes. It is a responsible action. Putting on the new self is a daily responsibility, a right choice. It is not works; it is simply our proper response to God and all that He has done for us. Until you are absolutely relaxed and confident of your salvation; until you “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called” (taking care of business on a daily basis); you will never be able to consistently stand before the enemy. But when you are, you are in a position to stand. It sounds like an acrobatic wonder, but we must stand, sit, and walk at the same time. Only then are we prepared to move and defeat the powers of darkness. We can “finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might”.

And never forget: *This precious treasure – this light and power that now shine within us – is held in perishable containers, that is, in our weak bodies. **So everyone can see that our glorious power is from God and is not our own** (2 Corinthians 4:7).*

6. Know your enemy.

Satan is real. His evil nature, his intentions, and his participation in our affairs are real. When we enter his territory, we are making friends with a remorseless thief, a diabolic destroyer, and a monstrous murderer. His full intention is to destroy our minds, our reputations, and our relationships. More information in our study “Know your enemy”.

7. Three battlegrounds.

Bridges, roads, airfields, television and radio stations. In any war, strategic areas are heavily fortified in order to keep them from the enemy. Whoever holds the key places will probably win the battle. In our lives, there are three strategic areas which we must fortify against attack: **the mind, the heart, and the mouth**.

The mind: The first strategic area. Every thought that enters our minds has three possible sources. Thoughts can originate within ourselves. Thoughts can come from God, whether we call it revelation, guidance, the Holy Spirit within us, a word of knowledge, He does speak directly into our minds. The third source is the enemy, the forces of darkness also speak to us. Paul is warning us for these demon spirits: *Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons (1 Timothy 4:1)*. While the forces of darkness cannot read our minds (only God can do that, Psalm 7:9), they can put suggestions there. Most spiritual warfare takes place in the human mind. It involves recognizing when a thought is not righteous, or when it does not agree with God’s truth. Not all evil thoughts are from Satan, but he will exploit them and add to them. The Bible says: *As he thinks within himself, so he is (Proverbs 23:7)*. **One of the devil’s greatest schemes is to nullify the effectiveness of Christians who are genuinely saved. Even if they go to the new heaven and earth when they die, Satan will be happy to blunt their lives while on earth. He disables them, stealing their days, months, and years by influencing them think wrongly. Unfortunately, Satan has successfully neutralized thousands of potential victors this way.**

The Heart: The second strategic battleground. To keep the enemy from our hearts, we must immediately deal with wrong attitudes that surface: “Do not let the sun go down on your anger” doesn’t tell us we won’t be angry; it says to deal with anger. We can’t think that all our bad attitudes disappeared when we were saved. The Bible is clear about our daily responsibility to manage life, to make choices, and to correct wrong attitudes.

Living responsibly and consistently is very important because the powers of darkness can ride on our attitudes. If we remain in pride and rebellion, there is no guarantee, even from God, that we are protected from the powers of darkness. If we tolerate bitterness over months or years, we are providing a place for the enemy (Matthew 18:34-35). We are not talking here about that we have been justified by faith and stand in God's grace, but about shutting any doors to the enemy.

Our new spiritual **heart** has been transformed as written: *And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart.*²⁷ *And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will obey my laws and do whatever I command (Ezekiel 36:26-27).* The transformation starts with the heart and results in *new and right desires, a new spirit and a new, **obedient heart**.* Our heart is now ready to manifest our ultimate weapon to conquer our enemy: **Love!** *The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with **love that comes from a pure heart**, a clear conscience, and sincere faith (1 Timothy 1:5).* Our spiritual heart is the entrance for our believing, our thoughts and impulses. **So be careful to guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life (Proverbs 4:23).** And finally my dear brothers and sisters *anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart (John 7:38).* Your new spiritual heart of love becomes the key of making impact in serving South Africa for **rivers of living water will flow from your heart!** You became a water transfer station of the water *flowing from the throne (Temple or Tabernacle) of God and of the Lamb and the leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations (Revelation 22:1-2).* Your leaves are used for medicine to heal the nations, the Republic of South Africa.

The Mouth: The third crucial area. Many people are carrying wounds as real as physical ones, caused by spoken words. Words are amazing tools that can bring life and death. Words of the mouth combined with heart attitudes bring "spirit power". A sermon or message that is anointed brings revelation and has spirit power. Those words and the righteous heart of the speaker give the Holy Spirit opportunity to open minds and hearts to His truth. Through Spirit-anointed words come the power to change lives. Our words can be vehicles of the Holy Spirit for truth, righteousness, and life, or vehicles of Satan for deception, accusation, and death. Words, like music, are a medium. A medium is amoral: neither good nor evil. The fact that words have power is not new to many Christians. We believe that if someone on the other side of the country is sick, a group of people thousands of miles away can agree together in prayer and affect the physical body of the sick person. We believe in the power of prayer. **Words do have power with God, if we pray according to His will, agreeing with what He has promised.** *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit (Proverbs 18:21). Take control of what I say, O LORD, and guard my lips (Psalm 141:3).*⁷ *People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish,⁸ but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison.⁹ Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God.¹⁰ And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!¹¹ Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water?¹² Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring (James 3:7-12).* There is power in our mouths. What we speak out has spirit power: negative or positive. The words which spring from our hearts can defile others. We must watch over our mouths. It takes discipline, the discipline to simply keep our lips tightly pressed together when our hearts are burning to say what shouldn't be said: *But the words you speak come from the heart—that's what defiles you (Matthew 15:18).* **If we can consistently watch our minds, hearts, and mouths, we will deny the devil access to our lives and truly experience victory.** We will be ready to go on the offensive. *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer (Psalm 19:14).*

8. The whole armour of God.

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, **be strong in the Lord** and in **the power of His might**. ¹¹ Put on the **whole armor** of God, **that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil**. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your **waist with truth**, having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the **shield of faith** with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— ¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak (Ephesians 6:10-20). I don't need to explain these verses. **We are strong in the Lord and in the power of His might**. Almost all our weapons are defensive, except for the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And above all with **FAITH** in **His power we will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one**. And please do me a favor: Don't show false humility! Yes we are weak in ourselves, but we are strong in His power! This implicates that it is not allowed to say that you are weak, if He lives in you, for in that case you are making Him a liar. **In Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body** (Colossians 2:9-10). Ok, ok, I will come your way: *This precious treasure – this light and power that now shine within us – is held in perishable containers, that is, in our weak bodies. So everyone can see that our glorious power is from God and is not our own* (2 Corinthians 4:7). But still: **this light and power that now shine within us!** Don't deny it! **Stand in your victory, thanks to what He has done!** *And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:6). *For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ* (Romans 5:17).

Some more words about warfare and weapons. How do we wage spiritual warfare? The primary method is through **intercession**. *I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them* (1 Timothy 2:1). Another important one is **petitioning**. One type of prayer Paul mentions in 1 Timothy 2 is "petitioning". Petitions are simply requests made to God. Supplications are continuous petitions. Some might say: God gets sick of our asking. But there is no place in the Bible where God frowns on our asking. In fact, it is a command of God. He encourages it. He is a giving God who wants the best for us. We need to learn to ask with the right motives, but we should always feel free to ask. Paul also includes prayers of **thanksgiving**. These are prayers that acknowledge with faith that God is God and that He is working in us through us, and for us. We should confidently declare that He will do what we have asked Him to do. Every request we have of God is to be made with continual thanksgiving. Every prayer of thanksgiving launches another arrow into Satan's camp, much like every complaint and confession of unbelief an arrow into ours. When Paul speaks of **entreaties**, or intercession, as a type of prayer, it means two things. It is firstly, ministry and prayer "on behalf of". Secondly, entreaties or intercession mean to "come between". There is always an outside object for intercession. We can intercede for ourselves. We can intercede for other individuals, as well as for cities, countries, businesses, groups and situations. They become the object of prayers and intercession. Intercession is coming between two things. We stand between the object of our intercession and God; or between the object and the devil. When we intercede between the object and God, we make specific requests for provision, protection, direction, or blessings from God for the person, place, or thing for which we are praying.

We are a thread to the devil. As intercessors, we are to stand between the devil and the people for whom we are interceding. This hinders what Satan would otherwise be able to do on earth. We turn away his attacks, foil his schemes, and diminish his effectiveness. This is why the devil expends so much energy in trying to keep us preoccupied with ourselves. The powers of darkness would have us so focused on our own problems that we don't intercede for others. Satan would have us bound by fear, depression, lust and materialism. He probably doesn't even mind us praying, as long as it is only self-centered. But at all costs, he wants to prevent us from interceding and obstructing his work in the world. **We must see the threat we are to Satan as intercessors and recognize our significance in the earth as agents of god.**

God has chosen us as warriors in the name of Jesus Christ. If we ever feel insignificant on this planet, we need only look at Isaiah 59. The first portion of Isaiah 59 describes society as we know it today. It describes unrighteousness, injustice, and evil in great proportions. Having described the evil in the world, Isaiah records God's reaction: *Now the Lord saw, and it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice. And He saw that there was no man, and was astonished that there was no one to intercede (Isaiah 59: 15-16).* Why is God looking for a man? Why is He amazed when there are no intercessors? Because He knows the significance of intercession and the role of man on earth. God has established certain irrevocable principles in the universe. He will move in the affairs of mankind according to the degree and how specially we pray. This is why God is looking for a man to intercede. This is why He is amazed when none can be found. God has all power. He has the love, and is fully willing to bring change in the world. But He stands astonished, even shocked, when we don't pray. **God is crying out to His people: "I want to move, I want to bless. I want to save. I want to protect, provide, and stop injustice. Why won't you intercede?"** When we pray, God moves. God even tells us what to pray. We wait on God; He speaks to us; we pray according to His will; and He moves into action. **It seems that God has chosen to include man in the responsibility and authority of this planet.** We need to pray with firm conviction that our prayers will make a difference.

O Jerusalem, I have posted watchmen on your walls; they will pray day and night, continually. Take no rest, all you who pray to the LORD. ⁷ Give the LORD no rest until He completes his work, until He makes Jerusalem the pride of the earth (Isaiah 62:6-7). God established here "watchmen" or intercessors to pray all day and all night, petitioning God over and over again. We are "to remind the Lord", to pray, giving Him "no rest until" our prayers are answered. God asks us to be unrelenting, not let up until our prayers have brought results. Praying boldly and specifically is not a sign of disrespect. It comes from understanding the character of God, and what it is to be His child. **God urges us, "Come on give Me no rest!". I want to save and bless and heal and move. Come, and pray without ceasing.** *So don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?⁸ I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?" (Luke 18:7-8).* Do you have the faith to pray without ceasing?

Our diligence in prayer is not to wake God up, nor to beg Him, negotiate with Him, nor convince Him. He is already convinced and willing to help, to bless and save us. This is His character. He is trying to wake us up, and convince us!

Every Christian should pray with boldness, expecting God's response to every prayer. We need to give God no rest until our prayers have been answered. As we abandon our religious traditions and restraints, we can pursue God through prayer with unrelenting determination. If we become totally convinced that God moves in the affairs of men, then we will pray like this. And when we pray, we will see the hand of God move. We will see transformations all around us. Prayer will become one of the most exciting parts of our life!

9. Praise God pre-emptively.

His companion answered, "Your dream can mean only one thing—God has given Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite, victory over Midian and all its allies!" ¹⁵ *When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship before the LORD. Then he returned to the Israelite camp and shouted, "Get up! For the LORD has given you victory over the Midianite hordes!" (Judges 7:14-15).* **As you walk into the battlefield of your circumstances ... what's the true level of your faith?** It's amazing how easy it is to praise and worship our heavenly Father when everything in our lives seems to be going according to plan ... or when He has blessed us and we have personally experienced the manifestation of His power and glory in our lives. But what happens when we find ourselves into the face of a huge battle ... Do we still praise and worship God with faith, trust and real passion ... believing with our whole being that God will bless us with His victory? If we read the above Scriptures from Judges, Gideon shows us such a beautiful example of having a deep rooted, uncompromising in God is, a faith that asks no questions, a faith that has no ifs and buts, a faith that does not for a moment doubt, a faith that simply says "**God You have said it and so it is**". The Scripture tells us that the moment Gideon received a personal word from God, he immediately began to talk about the battle he was facing as though it had already been won. Gideon did not panic, he did not doubt, he did not wait to see the results of the battle before he declared the triumph of the Lord, instead what he did was, he boldly started to praise God as though the victory was already his. All he needed was to hear from God, that he would be delivered victorious, and he immediately started to praise God, because his faith in God was the absolute, solid foundation of his life. If we can learn to praise God before our battles, we will get His attention, because it is a very clear expression and demonstration of our faith and trust in Him, it will also inspire and enable us to boldly and bravely walk into any challenge and circumstance that we face. **The task ahead of us is never as great as the power behind us!** *Mandy Greyling, Angel Mission SA.*

10. The angels, at your service!

Yet you do not have because you do not ask (James 4:2). I think too often we leave God's angels unemployed because of our lack of faith. Too often we believers are content to live good lives with occasional blessings. The army of Satan and his dark servants exist of fallen angels. God's army exist of angles (of the Light) too. Angels are playing the major role in the spiritual warfare. There are angels all around us! The reality of angels needs to be commonly accepted, even taken for granted!

The unseen world is just as substantial as the world we see. In fact, it is even more permanent and less fragile. More time and energy need to be invested in the unseen world. I believe it would be right and mature for all of us to ask ourselves two important questions every day: How are my attitudes, activities, and words affecting the unseen world today? and, How is the unseen world affecting me at this moment? If we would just ask these two questions, we would greatly increase our effectiveness as spiritual warriors. They are not easy to ask because we tend to ignore what we cannot see. But we as Christians have an absolute reference point and guide to the realm of the spirit – the Bible. It is a record of events in the unseen world. You cannot read it without being introduced to the heavenly places!

In the Kingdom of God citizens are not fighting but the angels are fighting on our behalf. In a Kingdom the government is sending His army to protect your property. *Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? (Matthew 26:53).* Not believers, but angels. I don't need believers to defend me, I got an army in my Kingdom! Do you know that a legion is 6000 soldiers (72.000 angels!), and only one angel destroyed pharaohs army! You are safe! The only problem for angels is, they work for you, you have to give them instructions. *Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14).* Regarding the angels, he says, *"He sends his angels like the winds, his servants like flames of fire."* (Hebrews 1:7).

While reading this "angels story" something arises within me. Did you know following verse out of the scripture : *At that time Michael, the archangel who stands guard over your nation, will arise (Daniel 12:1)*. The angel Michael is guarding over regions, over your nation, over the beautiful Rainbow Nation.

Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14). Angels are working for us, but we have to give them instructions. So if we call upon our God for His angels to help us "*He sends His angels like the winds, His servants like flames of fire (Hebrews 1:7)*". Consider next verse with me: "*If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home. For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go (Psalm 91:9-11)*". Consider the last phrase regarding angels: *Then he said, Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come (Daniel 10:12-14)*". Are you still with me? From the first day Daniel started to pray, this angel went immediately on his way to Daniel, however he had severe resistance in the (dark) spiritual realm and the archangel Michael came to help him. Our humble prayer causes actions by angels in the spiritual realm for our sake here on earth! *The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him (Psalm 34:7)*. **Angels are a fact of life, sent by God, surrounding us and active on our behalf.** When we experienced salvation, we entered into the realm of angels: *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels (Hebrews 12:22)*. I imagine we would see ourselves in a video walking through life with angels on all sides, protecting us from harm, shielding us from attack, and aiding us in our efforts to serve God. Beside this, the Holy Spirit would also be there helping and influencing us.

If you are dealing for instance with a cruel dictator in your country Ephesians 6:12 is teaching us "**never attack people**" as written: *For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood. Instead these verse is teaching us: you are fighting against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. So, you have to fight against the dark unseen power behind this dictator.* Our role is indirect by prayer, praise etc. The angels role is direct. So, I don't have to teach you how to humble yourself in your indirect role by prayer, praise, fasting, mobilizing other Christians etc. to get those angels at work for your sake. They know how to handle the dark power behind this dictator and this will cause an effect in the physical world. One example regarding this: Consider the death of Herod as recorded ²³ *Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died (Acts 12:23)*. In the spiritual realm an angel struck Herod. In the natural realm he died and was eaten by worms. And all of this in the New Testament period. The reason for this is also written: *because he did not give glory to God.* The whole scripture is full of examples were our dear Lord took actions for the sake of His own name. Always remind Him, in a humble way, the sake of His own name in your particular case you are dealing with! A dictator who want to be honoured like "a God" and behaves like being "a God" himself has a big problem with our Lord. Remind our Lord!!

11. Don't point your guns the wrong way.

Again, our battle is not against flesh and blood, never battle against flesh and blood. People may be reluctant to fight Satan, but we are all experts when it comes to battling people. **The reason a defeated devil has consistently beaten a so-called victorious Church is because we are always fighting one another.** We have wasted multiplied hours criticizing other denominations, and preaching sermons and writing books against each other, and have lost the real battle. What's worse, we are not battling

the one who is really the cause of the problems. While we are fighting our leaders because they aren't doing what we want, while we are fighting our brothers because they believe differently, and while we are fighting our co-workers, Satan is running rampant on the earth. It's okay to fight issues, but not the people behind issues. We can never win if we battle other human beings. All our struggles with one another, our fleshly battles throughout history until today, have only strengthened Satan's grip on the earth, on the lost, and on the people of God. **We can be so earthly minded, fighting our fight in the earthly realm, that we are of no value in the heavenly battle. We fire our canons in the wrong realm. If we are not fighting in heavenly places, we will fight in earthly ones.** Fighting people never advances the Kingdom of God, no matter how right the issues. **God's Kingdom is advanced through God and His response to our prayers, and through Spirit-led actions!**

12. Yes He can!!

The words of a popular hymn say it better than I: *Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.* If we truly believe that the Holy Spirit is able to speak into the hearts of people and has a far greater level of influence than we do, shouldn't we first take everything, every concern, every observation to Him? Unfortunately, we often come to God after we have failed in our attempts and have left a trail of bruised and wounded hearts. And all the time, we were convinced we were right. **Is our first impulse to pray, or do we believe that we are more capable, more persuasive than the Holy Spirit?** Can we deal with people better than God can? Can we straighten out our kids, correct our husbands and wives, discipline our followers, rebuke our leaders, and remedy every conflict more easily than the Spirit of God can? Are we certain that God is as interested and capable as we are? Any action on our part to deal with people prior to immediate, heartfelt prayer and intercession stems from immense pride. We believe we can handle things better than He can. **God loves people far more than we do, and He is far more capable than we are, exerting incomparable influence on people's hearts.** If we truly believe these things, wouldn't we be constantly in prayer for one another?

13. Five things to remember.

1. ***We should pray before we act.*** Even in situations where we have responsibility as pastors, leaders, or parents, we should always first pray. We must give God the first opportunity through prayer. It's not that we do nothing and God does everything. We pray first, giving God a chance to minister into the situation and maintain the relationships. God will either act directly into that situation, or give us wisdom how to respond.
2. ***We should resist the enemy and take authority over him.*** The problem is not the person, but the powers of darkness who take advantage of every situation, multiply conflict, hinder reconciliation, and destroy relationships. We should face every situation with a wilful verbal stand against the devil. We should say, "Satan, I rebuke you. You will not have my marriage, my kids, my friend, my leader. I stand against you and bind you in the name of Jesus". We can stop the enemy from hindering God's work in our lives and of those around us. ***The enemy has been defeated because of the blood of the Lamb and by our testimony (Revelation 12:11).***
3. ***Rather than fighting flesh and blood when we are rebuked, we should assess honestly whether there is any truth to it.*** Every rebuke, every criticism, and every accusation should be humbly considered. They may be wholly or partly true. When we consider the possibility that we might be wrong, we are open to the ministry of others in our lives. This is humility. This is spiritual warfare. If there is truth in what others say, it becomes an opportunity for us to repent, make restitutions, grow, and become more like Jesus.
4. ***We must never lose faith or fall under condemnation.*** Peoples words, whether right or wrong, situations coming our way, should not cause us to waver in our faith in God's Word, our confidence in our salvation, or in our strength and maturity. Simply take the word they say from God to Him in prayer. If in humility

and openness we do all that we should before God, and the He does not confirm to us that their word is from Him, at that point we can reject their words with confidence. We can leave them with God. We never need to lose confidence, but can remain strong in our faith.

5. ***We should maintain relationships at all costs.*** Proverbs 18:19 says: *A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and contentions are like bars of a castle.* If we fight people, we are not serious about the spiritual warfare. If we allow relationships to falter, doctrines to divide us, and people problems to flourish in our lives, we are not building up the Kingdom of God, nor tearing down the powers of darkness. We are actually hindering the Kingdom of God and aiding the kingdom of darkness.

14. There is simply no comparison.

This is a heathen view of the world that places God and Satan as opposites like some Oriental *yin* and *yang*. They are not equal counterparts. Only God is God. He is the great uncreated Creator. He is eternal and infinite. He is omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (all-powerful), omnipresent (everywhere at all times), and sovereign (having supreme authority). Lucifer is only a fallen archangel, created, finite, and extremely limited in knowledge, ability, and space. He doesn't know everything. He can't do everything. And he can only be in one place at one time. The Christian view of the universe describes one, incomparable Supreme Being. The concept of two beings ruling over two equal and opposing kingdoms with the victory shifting from side to side is taught in Hinduism, as well as other Eastern religions. But the forces of good and evil do not counter or balance one another. Although the Bible calls Satan "the god of this world", this only denotes a position of authority over his own deceptive system. The angels threw Lucifer out of heaven, and he became Satan, establishing his kingdom of darkness. And now, we battle him in the name and authority of Jesus.

God has never fought the devil and never will. It would be like the tiniest ant crawling up to my shoulder and shouting, "Hey buddy, want to wrestle?". How could I wrestle an insect that I can barely see? Apart from just squashing him or blowing him away with a small puff of air, how could I actually wrestle with this tiny ant? This ant, although bold and proud, would never be a threat to me or to anything I possess. The idea of God fighting Satan is even more absurd than me wrestling an ant. God is infinitely greater in every respect. God can never fight Satan, which is precisely why the angels and we are supposed to carry out the battle in the power of God. Equally absurd was Lucifer's attempt to be like God. It is not possible for the created to become the uncreated. The finite can never become the infinite. God is God, and there is nothing in the universe that is remotely like Him.

15. We need to strengthen the walls of leadership.

If "gates" refer to the choice of authority, then "walls" are a Bible symbol for the protection of authority in society. Satan sees the rightful structures in our society. He knows that if they are functioning properly, he cannot rule. The walls of authority shuts him out. If the walls are broken down, he can and will rule. Where there is no authority or submission to authority, where there is chaos and rebellion, Satan rules. The degree to which these institutions break down is the degree to which Satan governs. It is easy to understand why marriages, families, churches, and schools are under such vicious attack today. The ancient cities are a historical picture of what we now face in the unseen realm. **Like the cities of the Old Testament, the governmental structures of society have walls. Though unseen, they are real walls of authority and protection. When these walls are torn down, the results are disastrous. In the unseen world, the devil is actively and effectively destroying the walls.**

The first destroyer of these walls is **godless leadership**. When leaders do not live and lead according to biblical principles, and in agreement with the will of God, the walls of their authority crumble. Satan is allowed to rule through them. Godless leadership breaks down the walls and allows rulers of the unseen world to rule. And they never miss an

opportunity. This is why 1 Timothy 2:1-2 directs us to **pray for all who are in authority**. Every authority is under attack because the enemy wants to rule. We have a leadership crisis in much of society. **We need to strengthen the walls of leadership. We need to intercede for our leaders!** And as leaders ourselves, we need to be strong and lead with integrity.

Another destroyer of society's protective walls is neglect, leaders who don't lead. Unfortunately, there are husbands who don't husband, parents who don't parent, teachers who don't teach. To the extent that we neglect our responsibilities as leaders, we leave a vacuum for the rulers of darkness to rule our place. For example many fathers and mothers are too busy to spend time with their children, too busy to pass on moral values, or discipline and affirm them. This leaves their children vulnerable to the evil influences.

The third and most common destroyer of the walls of protection is rebellion. From little children to mature adults, we have all rebelled. Unfortunately, even in Christian circles rebellion is often excused: "Well, I am just like that", "I like to have my own space", "It's just my personality". We may defend our rebellious hearts with quaint little phrases, but we are wreaking tremendous damage to the walls of authority. The lines between compliance and resistance, support and opposition, and submission and defiance are too easily crossed when we give ourselves permission to be just "a little bit rebellious". **We must realize that rebellion destroys the (our own) walls of protection!** Rebellion is a heart attitude that says, "I don't need rules. I don't need leaders or anyone telling me what to do". **Pure and simple, the spirit of rebellion is the rejection of authority.** It is the desire for freedom from anything imposed upon us. The reason it is like witchcraft is because **rebellion allows Satan to enter in.** **Rebellion and witchcraft accomplish the same thing in governmental structures and in individual lives: They both do business directly with the powers of darkness.**

A country that has a strong authority structure will limit evil, even though it is not Christian. A family that holds to family principles will slow down and hinder evil. The devil is held back by the walls of authority that surround these institutions. This is a universal principle of God. It affects everyone!

It is one thing to recognize Satan's attempts to break down walls. Ezekiel 22:30 says: *I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall* God is looking for people who will rebuild the walls through intercessory prayer. Now we know where the walls and the gaps are. They are all around us ... the structures of society are crumbling. We are to fill these gaps as we intercede before God, and shut out the enemy on behalf of cities, families, schools and individuals. Ezekiel 13:4-5 is even more exacting in its challenge to take up our prophetic and intercessory responsibilities in society. *"Your prophets have been like foxes among ruins. You have not gone up into the breaches, nor did you build the wall around the house of Israel to stand in the battle".* A fox makes himself a comfortable den in the ruins of a wall. This is often what Christians do while society disintegrates around them. **We are called to rise up and repair the damage in the walls of society through warfare, prayer, and involvement!**

Spiritual warfare is not a football game, but we can still block the powers of darkness. We can engage the enemy and hinder his strategies for specific matters, or people by being specific in our prayers. If we are in a dark room, **we do not simply rebuke the darkness. We turn on the light!** If we want to rid the world of darkness, we must do everything in our power to turn on the light of Jesus Christ.

16. Attack on the individual.

Another prong of the assault by the kingdom of darkness is that of wicked spirits, who are interested in the individual. Wicked spirits influence individual behaviour. We are

being tempted to do evil constantly by the enemy's pressure on our thoughts, attitudes, appetites, and wills. But notice, it is an influence, not a cause. We can never say "The devil made me do it" . We are responsible ourselves for our actions.

Descent into bondage: There is progression, however. Everything wrong starts with an *influence*. We're tempted, we feel like doing it. We can ask for God's grace and refuse it, or we can acquiesce. If we give in to the influence, we get a "weight on our will". It will be easier to do that particular sin a second time. If we continue in evil, we develop "habits of sin", which can be very strong. It's just a habit, deeply ingrained, like many things we do without thinking. Habit patterns can be deep, but they can be broken with God's grace and with our commitment. However, if we continue in a habit of sin, we can develop an bondage. **A bondage means that there is a supernatural element to our problem.** The enemy now has a grip on a function of our personality. It is possible to have a bondage that does not consume your entire personality and function, you are merely bound in a certain part of your personality. Do you know the work out (symptoms) of this captivity / bondage in your life, the work out of the dark spiritual realm and its power into this physical world, your life? The gifts of Satan: fear, brokenness, loneliness, sadness, restlessness, violence, apathy, uselessness, rejection, depression, war in your mind, doubt, gossip, crime, insecurity, unrest, you don't experience God's presence, hostility, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, ignorance, frustration, division, envy, abuse, drunkenness, etc. Whatever the bondage, and whatever the degree, if you are bound, you need to be set free in Jesus name.

Spiritual warfare deals with two levels: the big, or cosmic level, and the individual, personal level. In dealing with the kingdom of darkness, we stand against the rulers, principalities, and powers in nations, in people groups, and in authority structures. And we must bring freedom from bondage to individuals through prayer, intercession, and personal ministry. We stand against evil influences in their lives, and in ours as well. We must be resolute in our efforts to share the Gospel and bring light wherever there is darkness. It is not too great a task, if we go on to learn how strong we can be in the Lord. We can become men and women with God-given authority, winning victories on every level.

17. Using your God-given authority.

It is possible to become discouraged by the size and sophistication of Satan's forces. However, God has established an even stronger army. It is us ... every Christian. ***The Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world (1 John 4:4)***. God delegated some of His authority to man and He has never taken it back. This is why people are now doing all kinds of evil and God is not stopping them. Yet Satan does not have complete authority. He cannot simply rule the world. He operates the same way today as he did in Eden, usurping what God has given to man. Man gave his authority to Satan, but Satan can only use it through man. **Satan can only influence the world to the degree that man chooses to sin and live in disobedience to God.** This is what we might call the balance of power.

God promised to bruise Satan's head through the seed of the woman. The seed of Satan would in turn bruise mankind's heel. This established the grounds for spiritual warfare. Satan is working through mankind to do his business on the planet. And God is working through mankind to defeat the enemy. This is what has been happening throughout the history. *The enemy has been defeated because of the blood of the Lamb and by our testimony (Revelation 12:11).*

Jesus also gives us authority to exercise: *Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you (Luke 10:19)*. As individuals we have authority over all the combined powers of the enemy. This is an incredible, wondrous truth. **Everything at Satan's disposal, every demon, every coven, every cult and religion, every work,**

and every influence, is subject to the authority given to us by Jesus! (See also Ephesians 1:18-23).

Now it is up to us! Man again has authority, based on what Christ did on the cross and through His resurrection. Man can still employ Satan through selfishness and sin, but the balance of power on the earth rests with man in the name of Jesus Christ. The authority is complete in man as long as man is in relationship with God through Jesus Christ. With our authority comes the responsibility to use it for God's purposes. If we don't rebuke the devil, he will not be rebuked. If we don't drive him back, he will not leave. It is up to us. Satan knows of our authority, but hopes we will stay ignorant. **We must be as convinced of our authority as the devil is.** We need to go ahead and exercise our authority in Jesus name. Five important methods for exercising our authority are: 1. The name of Jesus as weapon. 2. The Word of God in warfare. 3. The power of the Holy Spirit. 4. The blood of Jesus. 5. Telling the truth.

We must deal with the enemy. He is a defeated foe, but will successfully hold his ground, until we exercise our God-given authority against him! Victory is ours, but the price is faith and persistence.

18. Spiritual places.

Spiritual places are as real as for instance physical cities as Johannesburg or Cape Town. The scripture is teaching us that just a maximum of hundred years (nowadays) our spirit and soul is enclosed in a mortal body. God is spiritual, dwelling in spiritual places, and most of us do believe in that reality.

- Where is heaven (the lower heavens)? Since Jesus took the victory at Calvary, two thousand years ago *heaven and earth became one again (Ephesians 1:9-10). The Kingdom of God is spiritual and not of this world (John 18:36). The kingdom of God has come upon us with Jesus first coming (Matthew 12:28).* So, it is actually **heaven on earth!**
- Where are the dark spiritual places? This is perfectly described in the book "Regions of captivity" of Ana Méndez Ferrell. **The second heaven:** We see Satan and his demons operating in the air as "prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). **Region of darkness:** He who has the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13, Ephesians 6:12). **Empire of death (Sheol or Hades), lesser places:** Emperor of death (Hebrews 2:15) and the angel of the Abyss (Revelation 9:11). **These are the regions of captivity, the lower places under the earth.**



*We are fellow citizens with the saints and members (angels) of the household of God in the spiritual Kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:18-22). We are the People of God, already seated "with Him in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 2:6). Are you still with me? Your spirit and soul is in the same place as all the Saints, together with Christ and the angels. This place, is the spiritual Kingdom on earth, it is Heaven on earth. Billions of human souls and spirits are in the Hades, under the earth, and parts of your soul (of those who are in Christ) are probably in captivity in those regions of captivity under the earth. To make it even more complicated: you are surrounded by millions or billions demon spirits in the dark spiritual realm here on earth. Well, knowing this I am really happy that the enemy has been defeated and that, **thanks to Jesus, we have authority over all powers of darkness** as written: ¹⁸ "Yes," he told them, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! ¹⁹ Look, I have given you authority over **all the power of the enemy**, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. ²⁰ But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven." (Luke 10:18-20). "Snakes and scorpions" must be seen as demon spirits in the dark spiritual world. Last but not least: don't forget the angels! We are surrounded by billions of angels who are eager to support us: *Therefore, angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14).**

"You will open the eyes of the blind. You will free the **captives from prison**, releasing those who sit in **dark dungeons** (Isaiah 42:7)". "Through you I am saying to the **prisoners of darkness**, 'Come out, into the light!' I am giving you your freedom! (Isaiah 49:9)". Here we are facing the battle between the Light and the dark spiritual world to release prisoners (souls). My dear friends, those who are familiar (or have spiritual eyes) with the dark spiritual places (dungeons and prisons) do know that there are millions of these places around this world and they are close to where you are living. Some of these places are common known as cemeteries, or places from which everyone knows "it is spooky there". Among the Satanist and modern paganism people, the so called "strongholds" of Satan are well known and very often these places are higher places as mountains (God is for instance on the mount Zion, and Satan is the big imitator). These places are still frequently used by humans for ritual ceremonies to worship Satan and to please the "spirits". In Europe they have the "Mont Ventoux", on the Fiji islands they have such a mountain, we all know the Bermuda triangle, and the "Drakensbergen" in South Africa and Lesotho do have the same occult history and is still such a place. Recently I saw a report on television about a place in Soweto (a kind of height or plateau) where people are coming to please and consult the spirits.

Spiritual places are real and in our study "Curses on the beautiful Rainbow Nation" we have seen that by approaching Satan directly (direct or by witchcraft), you are placing yourself (partly) under his dark and destructive dominion. We are not yet in the ideal situation, the new heaven and new earth, the earth is still occupied territory by Satan and we still have to defend and extend our territory, the spiritual Kingdom of God. Fight! **The enemy has been defeated, already 2000 years ago!**

19. The battle is not ours, but God's.

¹ After this, the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the Meunites **declared war** on Jehoshaphat. ² Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army from Edom is marching against you from beyond the Dead Sea. They are already at Hazazon-tamar." (This was another name for En-gedi.) ³ Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and **begged the LORD for guidance**. He also ordered **everyone** in Judah to begin **fasting**. ⁴ So people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to **seek the LORD's help**. ⁵ Jehoshaphat stood before the community of Judah and Jerusalem in front of the new courtyard at the Temple of the LORD. ⁶ He prayed, "O LORD, God of our ancestors, **you alone are the God** who is in heaven. You are ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. **You are powerful and mighty; no one can stand against you!**" ⁷ O our God, **did you not** drive out those who lived in this land when your people Israel arrived? And **did you not** give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? ⁸ Your people settled here and built this Temple **to honor your name**. ⁹ They said, '**Whenever we are faced with any calamity** such as war, plague, or famine, **we can come to stand in your presence** before this Temple where your name is honored. **We can cry out to you** to save us, and **you will hear us and rescue us.**' ¹⁰ "And now see what the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir are doing. You would not let our ancestors invade those nations when Israel left Egypt, so they went around them and did not destroy them. ¹¹ Now see how they reward us! For they have come to throw us out of your land, which you gave us as an inheritance. ¹² O our God, won't you stop them? **We are powerless** against this mighty army that is about to attack us. **We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help.**" ¹³ As **all the men** of Judah **stood before the LORD** with their little ones, wives, and children, ¹⁴ the Spirit of the LORD came upon one of the men standing there. His name was Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite who was a descendant of Asaph. ¹⁵ He said, "Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says: **Do not be afraid!** Don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for **the battle is not yours, but God's.** ¹⁶ Tomorrow, **march out** against them. You will find them coming up through the ascent of Ziz at the end of the valley that opens into the wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷ But **you will not even need to fight. Take your positions; then stand still and watch the LORD's victory. He is with you,** O people of Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Go out against them tomorrow, for the

LORD is with you!" ¹⁸ Then King Jehoshaphat **bowed low** with his face to the ground. And all the people of Judah and Jerusalem did the same, **worshipping the LORD**. ¹⁹ Then the Levites from the clans of Kohath and Korah stood to **praise the LORD**, the God of Israel, with a very loud shout. ²⁰ Early the next morning the army of Judah went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. On the way Jehoshaphat stopped and said, "Listen to me, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! **Believe in the LORD** your God, and you will be able to stand firm. Believe in his prophets, and you will succeed." ²¹ After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the LORD and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang: "**Give thanks to the LORD; his faithful love endures forever!**" ²² **At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the LORD caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves.** ²³ The armies of Moab and Ammon turned against their allies from Mount Seir and killed every one of them. After they had destroyed the army of Seir, they began attacking each other. ²⁴ So when the army of Judah arrived at the lookout point in the wilderness, all they saw were dead bodies lying on the ground as far as they could see. Not a single one of the enemy had escaped. ²⁵ King Jehoshaphat and his men went out to gather the plunder. They found vast amounts of equipment, clothing, and other valuables—more than they could carry. There was so much plunder that it took them three days just to collect it all! ²⁶ On the fourth day they gathered in the Valley of Blessing, which got its name that day because the people praised and thanked the LORD there. It is still called the Valley of Blessing today. ²⁷ Then all the men returned to Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat leading them, overjoyed that the LORD had given them victory over their enemies. ²⁸ They marched into Jerusalem to the music of harps, lyres, and trumpets, and they proceeded to the Temple of the LORD. ²⁹ When all the **surrounding kingdoms heard** that the LORD himself had fought against the enemies of Israel, **the fear of God came over them.** ³⁰ So Jehoshaphat's kingdom was at peace, for **his God had given him rest on every side** (2 Chronicles 20). I have no words. Amazing he, this spiritual warfare with the work out in the physical realm. Amazing, the different casting. Stick to your own role and give the Lord space for His part!

20. How to wage warfare.

Spiritual warfare is not just a prayer prayed or a demon rebuked, it is a life lived. We've seen how important prayer is. However the Bible says in James 5:16: *The effective prayer of a **righteous** man can accomplish much.* God linked praying with holy living, the way we walk. Everything we do either aids the forces of darkness or repels them! A defeated devil is effective only to the degree that people are sinning and living selfishly. It is exactly to that degree, no more and no less! Sin is what gives an opening to the devil. Ephesians 4:27 says: *Do not give the devil an opportunity.* There is power in holy living.

Repentance is a major weapon against Satan. It's simple: If I repent, I break the powers of darkness. But if I am disobedient, **I allow** the enemy to work. If I obey God, I hold the devil off. If I am moving in unbelief, I make room for Satan. But if I exercise faith, I cut him off.

Physically claiming territory. Something happens when we go geographically and take an area for God. There is nothing particular spiritual about travelling, being on a plane, or going on vacation. But when we go in obedience, filled with the Holy Spirit and walking in righteousness, we have an effect. Walking through an unrighteous part of a town or stepping off a plane in a spiritually darkened nation can be an act of war. In Joshua 6:1-20, Joshua and the children of Israel walked around Jericho for seven days, once every day for six days and seven times on the seventh day. Knowing human nature, by midweek a number were probably grumbling and wondering why God didn't just knock the walls down by Himself. Surely He didn't need them walking around in the hot sun to do the job. But they obeyed, day after day, putting one foot down and then the other. After seven days of physical obedience, the walls came down. Did the walls indeed fall because the children of Israel walked around them? God could have knocked down those

walls at any time, but He had greater things in mind. Israel was going to win more than one battle that seventh day. **Through obedience and the very presence of the people of God, Israel drove back the powers of darkness in the unseen realm.** God showed them the importance of going exactly where He wanted them to go, and doing exactly what He wanted them to do. **Before the walls of Jericho fell, there was victory in the spiritual realm.**

Praying on location. God is leading His Church to more and more praying on location as warfare. Many do prayer walks, going up and down the street of their city, pausing as led by God at significant locations where major decisions are being made. Others have received understanding regarding spiritual “high places”. Sometimes, as in Old Testament times, these are literally the highest places in a city; other times, they are not “high”, but are places where there seems to be concentrations of evil. **We must be careful to get our strategy from God in each situation and place, rather than fall into tradition.** Sometimes it is right to hit strongholds first; at other times, smaller steps of obedience are needed first. In the Old Testament, God led His people to open confrontation with evil, like on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18. But in other instances, He said He would drive out their enemies a little at a time (Exodus 23:29-30). In many parts of the world, the land itself has been worshiped, has had curses put on it, and spirits invoked to it in the past. This has produced strongholds of evil. Also, many strongholds are due to a present day concentration of sin in a geographical area. God has led some Christians to redeem particular areas in prayer. We must remember the importance of seeking God and being led by Him in such activities. Not every piece of real estate needs to be cleansed. We shouldn't form a whole theology around rocks and trees and forget the people whom Jesus wants to save. We break bondages over territory only as these bondages relate to people, preventing negative influence over individuals in that area. As we become watchmen for our cities, nations, or institutions, we can daily cut off evil influence in society: *Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land, so as to cut off from the city of the Lord all those who do iniquity (Psalm 101:8).*

Preaching is warfare. Preaching cannot be separated from spiritual warfare. **One sure way of getting rid of darkness is to turn on the light!** Preaching the Gospel places light in the midst of darkness. If the Church has been called to anything, it is to preach the gospel. We need to embrace every style and every method. If any presentation of the Gospel, no matter how innovative or old-fashioned, can be done in truth and in the love of Jesus, we need to do it. The devil will do all he can to talk us out of sharing the Gospel because he knows that preaching the gospel drives back the powers of darkness.

Reacting the right way is warfare. Another way we wage spiritual warfare is through right reactions. Terrible things happen to good Christian people, as the Bible says: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all (Psalm 34:19).* Adversity is part of life in a fallen world and no one is exempt. The book of Job is a picture of calamities in the life of a faithful man. But Job's story shows us that we can have victory over the devil if we have the right reactions. Job lost everything and suffered every possible attack, both spiritually and physically. Yet Job defeated the devil. The attacks of the enemy didn't work. In the midst of all his suffering and confusion, although he didn't understand, Job was able to say with confidence “I know that my redeemer lives”. In any calamity, no matter how big or small, we have to acknowledge that we do not know everything. But regardless what happens, we should be able to say, “God is okay” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, Proverbs 3:5-6). Satan tries to prove to us that God fails us when circumstances are less than ideal and even painful. We can react in hurt and bitterness toward God, or we can react with absolute trust in His character. Our circumstances do not change the wonderful character of God. We should never charge God foolishly or sin with our lips. We should never accuse God, criticise Him, blame Him, insult His character, nor complain about Him. If we charge God, we hand Satan a tremendous victory. Every adversity is a prime opportunity for Christians to have a right reaction, to give glory to God, to uphold His character, and to defeat the devil. We are called to spiritual warfare, not a sheltered life of comfort without pain. Our comfort

comes from knowing who God is. **We are called to be overcomers, not avoiders. We are called to establish the Kingdom of God on planet earth and resist the powers of darkness.** God could remove us from the planet as soon as we're saved, but He chooses to leave us here to become spiritual warriors. We must live through suffering with right reactions. We must grit our teeth and endure adversity righteously to defeat the enemy attacks.

Setting captives free. Spiritual warfare certainly includes direct confrontation with demonized individuals at times. When Jesus said to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, He also told us to cast out demons in His name. People develop bondage in their lives and need to be set free. We have the authority to do this and should do so wherever necessary. Deliverance should always be linked to repentance and healing. **Demons are like flies, they swarm to wounds and corruption. We can either keep swatting the flies away, or repent of the corruption and heal the wounds.** On order to remain free afterward the newly delivered person needs to be built up through the word of God. This will give him or her strength to resist further advances and walk in victory. Our Lord Jesus is more than a Savior, He is also our Deliverer. Many of God's people (the Church) are living in captivity, because a lack of knowledge of their true identity in Christ. Alive Ministries South Africa provides practical, free out of print biblically teachings & studies by which church and ministry leaders discover their true identity in Christ and are able to lead their people out of captivity into freedom, so that those ministries become healthy healing places making a powerful impact for Christ on their communities. *"You will open the eyes of the blind. You will free the captives from prison, releasing those who sit in dark dungeons (Isaiah 42:7)". "Through you I am saying to the prisoners of darkness, 'Come out, into the light!' I am giving you your freedom! (Isaiah 49:9)". Say to those who are afraid, "Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you." (Isaiah 35:4).*

Warfare through fasting. Fasting is a tremendous weapon against the enemy. *Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? (Isaiah 58:6).*

Giving as spiritual warfare. You may wonder what giving has to do with spiritual warfare. *Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. ¹¹ " And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts; ¹² And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:10-12).* When people give, it totally frustrates Satan's attempts to influence people towards selfishness. **Giving is contagious, undoing the work of the devil far beyond the act of a single giver.** It ripples outward: With every gift comes a grateful heart, and with a more grateful heart comes a greater willingness to give. Giving initiates a cycle which can influence many.

Unity as warfare. Unity is a powerful means of warfare and is one of the biggest factors in the unseen realm. Jesus said: *"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven (Matthew 18:19).* However, He was not referring to something that affects God's willingness to answer; He was showing us something that drives back the powers of darkness. The devil hates unity. This should be obvious by the amount of division, betrayal, undercutting, and factionalism he constantly sows among God's people. When we fight and have any part in breaking up relationships, whether in a marriage, a church, or between different parts of the body of Christ, we give the devil great advantage. The wolf will always separate the sheep to devour them. We must refuse to be any part of division. We must humble ourselves, put things right, forgive people, go the extra mile, and be tolerant. If we work for unity, it will keep the door shut to the enemy. *Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you*

have been called by God. ²Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. ³Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. ⁵There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all. (Ephesians 4:1-6).

The weapon of signs and wonders. When we deal with demonic forces, we are dealing with the supernatural realm. Therefore we should seek, the supernatural manifestations of God's Holy Spirit through our lives, particularly the gifts of the Spirit revealed in 1 Corinthians 12. In John 7, Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as a force flowing like rivers from our innermost being. Jesus didn't give any indication that this kind of power should be rare, only given to a few scattered spiritual heroes here and there. It was part of equipping of every Christian for warfare. John 15 is explaining that **to get our job done, we can ask anything what we desire, and it will be granted!** This brings great glory to the Father. *These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages. ¹⁸ They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won't hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed.* (Mark 16:17-18). We should not hesitate to seek the Holy Spirit's wonderful and powerful manifestations. They can aid us in our warfare and drive back the powers of darkness. *Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church (1 Corinthians 14:12).*

Serving is warfare. A surprising means of waging spiritual warfare is through loving service. The devil's nature is to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). If we come in and meet the needs of those who have lost possessions, health, or home through war, disasters, or other tragedy, we are undoing the works of the enemy. Serving people in physical ways is not just a social gospel. It is a command from God and it is direct spiritual warfare. Loving services drives out the destroyers that attempt to bring despair and ultimately, death. The enemy has strategies for destruction and he succeeds with thousands every day. **The Church as God's representatives on earth can dramatically reduce the works of the enemy by meeting the basic needs of humanity.** We must feed the hungry, house the homeless, visit the refugees, and assist disaster victims. This is effective warfare against the enemy, who always tries to take advantage of adversity.

Acts of faith on the Rhema. Yet another method of waging spiritual warfare is through steps of faith. Faith is not an emotional pressure that we muster in hopes that God will grant our wishes. Faith is believing in who God is and in what He has said. Faith is based on the *rhema*, or specific, quickened Word of God to us at a particular time; and on the character of God as revealed in the *logos*, or written Word of God. Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus is the author and the finisher of our faith. Whatever God begins, He will finish. When God says something will happen, it will happen. However, we still need to do steps of faith, acts of obedience to what He tells us, to drive back the powers of darkness. **We need to hear God and step out in faith. As we do, we will defeat the powers of darkness who thrive on ignorance and unbelief.** Everything we do should be based in the word (*rhema*) of God to us, because *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17)*. If we do this, the rope of faith will be kept tight. If we pull hard in expectations, the enemy will be held at bay. Once we have received a word from the Lord, we must continue to thank God for the answer, keeping active in our confession of faith. As it says in Colossians 4:2: *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same thanksgiving.* Some verses regarding God's promises I personally received: *He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection (Psalm 91:4). My eyes strain to see your rescue, to see the truth of your promise fulfilled (Psalm 119:123). I stay awake through the night, thinking about your promise (Psalm 119:148). May the evil plans of my enemies be turned against them. Do as you promised and put an end to them (Psalm 54:5). For I, the LORD, have*

spoken, and I will do what I say (Ezekiel 36:36). God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through? (Numbers 23:19).

Warfare through praise. The Bible has much to say about praise defeating and driving back the powers of darkness. Second Chronicles 20 tells the story of Jehoshaphat, who was facing the enemy. Instead of sending out soldiers with swords and spears against them, he sent out : those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said "give thanks to the Lord, for His loving kindness is everlasting. And when they began singing and praising, the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed". As Jehoshaphat's praise warriors raised their voices to God, angels were sent to defeat the physical foe. The physical enemy was defeated because unseen enemies were scattered by the power of praise. Praise isn't merely a nice way to begin a meeting. It's not a warm-up or filler, nor Christian tradition. Praise is not just an activity, like singing or raising our hands. Praise is from the heart and should never be done lackadaisically. If praise is just something we do mechanically, it truly is meaningless. But **Biblical praise drives back the powers of darkness, releases the angels of God to do battle on our behalf, and brings God's awesome presence into each situation.** The reason we are committed to worship and teaching is not get blessed and filled up, but *to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples,*⁸ *to bind their kings with shackles and their leaders with iron chains,*⁹ *to execute the judgment written against them. This is the glorious privilege of his faithful ones. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 149:7-9).*

Verbally opposing the devil. Another way to wage spiritual warfare is by directly rebuking the enemy. *Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).* We should aggressively deal with the enemy, as Jesus did in the wilderness, verbally opposing the devil and using the Word of God to counter his attacks. Jesus told us to bind the strong man, and then we could spoil his goods (Matthew 12:29). The "strong man" is simply the predomination demonic influence in any situation; and we're to eliminate that influence. It can mean the difference between life and death.

One of the last weapons. We are a generation of quitters. We quit our places of leadership. We quit our marriages. We drop out of church. We get hurt and discouraged and quit. Don't we realize that this is part of the warfare? *For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised (Hebrews 10:36).* Satan is in constant hope that God's people will give up, that their circumstances, the tasks set before them, and the daily adversities of life will be too much for them to endure. The winner will always be the one who doesn't give up. If we stick it out, the devil won't. If he knows that we will endure, he will give up all the sooner. Sometimes the only effective weapon, and often the last to be employed, is just saying, "I'll die before I let this thing go!", or, to use the words of Scripture, "They overcame him ... they did not love their life even to death" (Revelation 12:11). It is this weapon of endurance that finally convinces the devil that he has to give up. **Too many Christians quit minutes before the victory!**

The last weapon, waiting.

Desperately, helplessly, longingly, I cried,
Quietly, patiently, lovingly God replied.
I pled and I wept for a clue to my fate,
And the Master so gently said, "Child, you must wait."

"Wait? You say, wait! " my indignant reply.
"Father, I need answers, I need to know why!
Is your hand shortened? Or have you not heard?
By Faith, I have asked, and I am claiming your Word.

My future and all to which I can relate
Hangs in the balance, and YOU tell me to "WAIT"?
I'm needing a 'yes', a go-ahead sign,
Or even a 'no' to which I can resign.

And Father, You promised that if we believe
We need but to ask, and we shall receive.
And Father, I've been asking, and this is my cry:
I'm weary of asking! I need a reply!

Then quietly, softly, I learned of my fate
As my Master said once again, "Child, you must wait."
So, I slumped in my chair, defeated and taut
And grumbled to God, "So, I'm waiting... for what?"

He seemed, then, to kneel, and His eyes wept with mine,
And he tenderly said, "I could give you a sign.
I could shake the heavens, and darken the sun.
I could raise the dead, and cause mountains to run.

All you seek, I could give, and pleased you would be.
You would have what you want - But, you wouldn't know Me.
You'd not know the depth of My love for each saint;
You'd not know the power that I give to the faint.

You'd not learn to see through the clouds of despair;
You'd not learn to trust just by knowing I'm there;
You'd not know the joy of resting in Me
When darkness and silence were all you could see.

You'd never experience that fullness of love
As the peace of My Spirit descends like a dove;
You'd know that I give and I save... (for a start),
But you'd not know the depth of the beat of My heart.

The glow of My comfort late into the night,
The faith that I give when you walk without sight,
The depth that's beyond getting just what you asked
Of an infinite God, who makes what you have LAST.

You'd never know, should your pain quickly flee,
What it means that "My grace is sufficient for Thee."
Yes, your dreams for your loved one overnight would come true,
But, Oh, the Loss! If I lost what I'm doing in you!

So, be silent, My Child, and in time you will see
That the greatest of gifts is to get to know Me.
And though oft may My answers seem terribly late,
My most precious answer of all is still, "WAIT."
(Received from my dear sister in Christ, Ronelle Venter from Cape Town).

21. Wisdom, seasons of life.

There was a man who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly. So, he sent them each on a quest, in turn, to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away. The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third in summer, and the youngest son in the fall. When they had all gone and returned, he called them together to describe what they had seen. The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent, and twisted. The second son said it was covered with green buds and full

of promise. The third son disagreed; He said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen. The last son disagreed with all of them; He said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfillment. The man then explained to his sons that they were all right, because they had each seen only one season in the tree's life. He told them that you cannot judge a tree, or a person, by only one season. That the essence of who they are, and the pleasure, joy, and love that come from that life, can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are up. If you give up when its winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, and the fulfillment of your fall. Don't let the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest. Don't judge life by one difficult season. Persevere through the difficult patches, and better times are sure to come in time.

Aspire to inspire ... before you expire! Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and leave the rest to God. Happiness keeps you sweet, trials keep you strong, sorrows keep you human, failures keep you humble, success keeps you growing, but only God keeps you going.

Take care and be safe for me. Thank you for being a very important part of the seasons of my life. God bless you and keep you in His care through all the seasons of your life!

22. A holy spiritual dwelling.

*No, **you have come to Mount Zion**, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering.²³ You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.²⁴ You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24). I have no words. What a spiritual explosion! We, right now, on the Mount Zion where God lives! We, right now, in the heavenly Jerusalem, together with the angels and the saints and Jesus in a joyful gathering! **Who may climb the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?**⁴ Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.⁵ They will receive the LORD's blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior.⁶ Such people may seek you and worship in your presence, O God of Jacob.⁷ Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter (Psalm 24:3-7).*

23. Final word.

He has chosen us as co-workers in the establishment of His Kingdom and the destruction of the kingdom of darkness. God is waiting for His people to rise up and take hold of the victory He purchased on the Cross. He desires that we reach back to the Cross by praying in Jesus name and bringing that total victory into every space and time situation. Spiritual warfare is a life lived. It is embracing the truth and living daily, aware of the enemy and committed to God. It is knowing that God has left it up to us. If we do not drive back the powers of darkness, they will not be driven back. If we do not rebuke the enemy, he will not be rebuked. If we do not reduce the evil in the world, it will continue to grow. Spiritual warfare is not a fragment of Christianity. It encompasses everything we do. To be a Christian is to be a spiritual warrior. To be as spiritual warrior is to walk consistently and victoriously through life, with Christ at our side. *The enemy has been defeated because of the blood of the Lamb and by our testimony (Revelation 12:11).*

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. (Romans 16:20). The Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world (1 John 4:4).

Aware of the Devil, Impressed with God!

Yours in His service,
Kees
www.aliveministries-sa.org