

Spiritual Warfare Stand Firm

Ephesians 6:13

July 13, 2025

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Jesus was in a spiritual battle throughout His ministry. The devil attacked Him frequently with being the great miracle worker. I can't say that's one of my spiritual battles. But this includes being popular, giving people what they want.

Jesus had the spiritual battle of misusing His power. He was tempted to have the angels protect Him if He jumped from the highest place from the temple. Now, abusing power is a spiritual temptation for many people. You don't have to be at the highest levels of power to abuse the power you have.

Jesus was tempted to take all authority for Himself for His personal gain. I've defined sin as being selfish. Every person fights against our desire to look out for number one, to be selfish.

In my own life I've struggled with these spiritual battles also. But, there are three other battles that come back to me over and over and over. I fight the spiritual battle of trying to be perfect. I'm not a perfectionist, but I get upset when I make mistakes, stupid mistakes. I fight the spiritual battle of letting my fears direct me spiritually. God gave us fear to know that He is God. But a fear of cats, rats, and bats controlling me spiritually is simply foolish. I fight the spiritual battle of complacency. I like things the way they are when they are good. I wouldn't mind freezing a good moment in time and just staying in that one place. The only way that we are successful in fighting the devils attacks is God's armor.

Ephesians 6:13 (NLT) Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

There is already a spiritual war taking place over the health of your soul. All of us experience it, but not everyone acknowledges it. I try to be as transparent about my faith and my sins. I might as well be honest about my life, God already knows my sins. I've discovered that lying to myself about myself is not only foolish, but it's unhealthy. Specifically, it's unhealthy for my soul.

What I'm talking about is the spiritual war that takes place in my life over the little things. The devil would just love if a person known as a pastor was making mistakes. Every time a Christian sins the devil starts to have a party. But, it ends quickly when the Christian confesses to Jesus and experiences God's grace. The party ends in hell but then continues in heaven. A soul has been made health again.

I don't want to abuse God's grace by giving into sin so I can be forgiven. That's spiritually unhealthy. What is spiritually healthy, soul cleansing, is confessing my sins. What's even healthier is wearing spiritual armor. It protects my soul during the ongoing battles the devil wages against me. This armor of God protects me because it is made from God's promises. The devil is pushed away, slapped around, and knocked down by God's promises. When a Christian proclaims God's promises the devil is forced to take a defensive position instead of attacking.

What's in our souls is revealed in daily life. We see this quite often when we say someone's true

character is revealed. Over the years by God's grace, the blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit I've been changed. When I look back to certain moments in my life I'm embarrassed by what came out of my soul. My anger was explosive, destructive, uncontrollable, and repulsive.

I called myself a Christian. I had given my life to Jesus. I had been washed by His blood. In His eyes I was made clean. But, I wasn't letting Him take control of my anger. The devil knew this so he kept pushing my anger button. Jesus knew what the devil was doing. Jesus let it happen, because I believe Jesus wanted me to see my anger and give it to Him. What was in my soul was being revealed. What I needed to do was give my anger to Jesus, give Him control when the devil attacked by wearing the armor of God.

Please don't think I'm being simplistic or childish. Spiritual warfare isn't complicated. It is dangerous. I could never control my anger on my own. I had to fight the battle knowing God was on my side, the grace of Jesus was upon me, the Holy Spirit was empowering me. I needed to wear all of God's spiritual armor.

Ephesians 6:13 (NLT) Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor.

We may make a mistake when we don't wear every piece of God's armor. My brother didn't think anyone had the right to make him wear a helmet when riding his motorcycle. Therefore, in every state that included Ohio, he would ride without a helmet. In the trunk of his Harley he kept a helmet. He would stop at the state line and put on the helmet or take it off depending on the state.

One day in October he and a friend got on their Harley's heading out for a ride in the country. My brother being the alpha male took the lead. They were flying down the road when out of nowhere there appeared a deer. Deer often if not always appear out of nowhere.

Now going at his current rate of speed he barely had time to react. The front wheel of the 1996 Harley Davidson Ultra Glide hit the center of the deer. The deer was chopped in half, with pieces going in multiple directions. The front end of the motorcycle went in one direction down the road. The other portion of the motorcycle continued moving forward.

My brother was thrown forward from the motorcycle. He land and rolled, then slid on his back for a long distance. His friend riding behind my brother was able to react, slow down and avoid the debris. He thought for sure my brother was dead. My brother was wearing motorcycle boots that come part way up his calf. He was also wearing full leather pants with built-in protection. He had on his leather gloves. His helmet was intact, with deep scratches, rocks, and dirt imbedded.

When his friend arrived, calling my brother's name, he opened his eyes. His response was, "How's my bike? Don't tell me. Let me lay here for a minute."

My brother was wearing all the physical motorcycle armor a rider can wear. He walked away from the crash bruised, sore, and alive. You know where I'm heading now.

The full armor of God must be worn at all times. My brother was saved by the grace of God. I don't doubt that for one second. There is no other explanation. If not for the grace of God he would have died on that country road that day. Had he not been wearing the jacket or the pants, which were shredded, he skin would have been ripped from his body. Had he not been wearing his helmet his skull would have been crushed.

Spiritual warfare is not always catastrophic battles of life and death. But we never know when those battles will happen. We need to be wearing all of God's armor, all the time. We need the armor when we wake up and lie down. We need the armor when we are at work or when we are having fun. We need the armor when we are with family and when we face our enemies. There is not a moment, even a second in life, when we don't need the armor.

God's armor will protect you even when the rains come down, the flood waters rise, the boss is angry, or the deer runs out in the road. Name a situation in life and you need God's armor to fight against the devil in your spiritual battles. We are faced with moments of temptation and evil when we least expect it. The devil is looking for those moments when we don't put on the full armor of God. He would love nothing better than to shred you to pieces or smack you in the head.

Ephesians 6:13 (NLT) You will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil.

When we are wearing the full armor of God we're protecting the health of our soul. We need every piece of God's armor. Paul speaks of a belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, and sword. If one piece is missing then we are vulnerable. We will be attacked. We will be attacked in various different ways.

Anytime the devil attacks it is a time of evil. We live in evil times. Satan and all his demons are at work all the time. They are constantly seeking a way to make any attack. The attacks will be small and subtle. The attacks will be huge and hard hitting. They will come without notice. They will be against our bodies and minds, but ultimately against our spirit. The attacks are always meant to drive a wedge between us and Jesus. Anything and everything is used against us. Things that may look good, seem good, and feel good will be used. They will be repeated more than once. Like a hammer driving a nail into wood, the devil keeps attacking.

My soul and your soul need to be protected. Jesus gave His life to save our souls. He paid the penalty for our sins by dying on the cross. He rose from the dead providing us with new life. Our souls have been saved. Now, we need to protect what Jesus saved.

This is a daily decision to protect your soul from the attacks of the devil. Our soul is vulnerable. When left unprotected it can be damaged. When protected our soul can be encouraged, inspired, and energized.

I know that talking about spiritual warfare and the attacks of the devil can feel dark and uncomfortable. But in the midst of the darkness is the light of Jesus Christ. During the discomfort there is the power of the Holy Spirit. God is always present and His glory is greater than all the things in this world.

When you are wearing every piece of God's armor your soul is not only protected but you are growing. Your faith is expanding. Your willing spirit is being developed. You are finding a new motivation to glorify God.

It's the feeling of being invincible. Do you have memories from your childhood when you felt powerful? You may have only been imagining your invincibility. But there was an intense emotion of being able to overcome anything.

Wearing the full armor of God is not a feeling. It's not an emotion. But you are invincible. You are able to overcome the temptations. You are able to win the battles with the devil. The full armor of God is the power and the promises of God protecting your mind, your spirit, and your soul. The enemies' attacks may come, but God's armor is greater.

Ephesians 6:13 (NLT) Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

Create the habit and routine of wearing a belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, and sword. I don't know your morning routine. But at some point you get dressed. With every item of clothing you put on, add to it the armor of God. Make this silly suggestion into a reality in your routine. You've done crazier things in your life. Now, do something out of this world to not only protect your life but to empower your life.

My responsibility is to give you the gospel. It is also to train in how to live your life according to the Good News of Jesus Christ. You can forget this strategy or you can start to apply it to your life. One choice won't lead to destruction, but the other choice will lead to hope and to power. There are a hundred habits and routines you follow every day. I'm just suggesting a new one.

When you take up this new habit of putting on God's armor every morning you might discover some old habits and routines fading away. Maybe your habit of being fearful will fade away. Possibly your desire to be anxious will become less popular. Potentially your willingness to be passive will become less appealing. Perhaps the complacency that slides into everyone's life will be stopped.

When we gave our lives to Jesus as our Savior and Lord we made an eternal decision. That choice impacts every second of our lives. When we are working or playing, eating or laughing, relaxing or stressing Jesus is still your Savior and Lord. Whether you are in this building or in your car, praying or talking to a crazy person Jesus is still your Savior and Lord. You need to be fully dressed, fully protected, fully empowered.

You don't put your hand in the lions cage. Don't go throughout your day without the full armor of God. Make it your habit, your routine to be armored all the time. You don't put your hand in the fire or pick up a burning log. Put on the full armor of God. Don't miss one piece of armor. You don't stand outside in the thunder and lightening with a golf club in your hand. You'd be struck by lightening, fired to a crisp, shocked right out of this world. So, put on every piece of God's armor. You don't stand a chance of a twig in a hurricane against the spiritual attacks of the devil. Wear the armor of God.

Know that your body, mind, spirit and soul are protected. Know that your life is empowered.

In the name and authority of Jesus through His blood you have been saved. Live your life wearing the protection He has given to you. Stand firm in His power and grace.