

FIGHT LIKE A LOVER

(Ephesians 6:10-18)

WHY DO WE NEED TO FIGHT?

Becoming a Christian does not mean that everything will be rosy. This world has fallen from its original perfect state, and sin is entrenched in the world and its systems. The world's sin affects us, even if we don't participate in that sin. God's will in sending His Son is to restore the world back to Himself through our participation. "God so LOVED the world that He gave His only begotten son; that whosoever believes on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16 emphasis mine). The Lord Jesus fought a victorious spiritual battle for us - He defeated satan totally. GOD IS LOVE, and we are to be lovers of God and love others the way God loves us, with that perfect love. We are agents of God's love. It is not sweet, syrupy love, but tough and persistent, as well as compassionate and tender. Lovers of God do not give up on themselves or other people. Lovers of God rescue victims from the kingdom of darkness.

When we give our lives to the Lord Jesus, we are completely forgiven of all sin up to that point. But the consequences of our past sin may not have been erased. For example, if a person commits murder, Jesus forgives that sin - wipes it away just as if there was no sin - when it is confessed and repented of. But the guilty person still owes an obligation to society to pay for that crime. The same thing applies to so-called "smaller" sins. Actually, there is no difference in the size of sin in God's eyes. Sin is sin. But in the eyes of society, murder is considered greater than theft. The Law of God is a unit, made up of ten principles. Therefore, if one principle is violated, the entire law is broken. It is not called the LawS of God, but the Law of God. To illustrate the consequences of sin, imagine your life is like a beautiful garden. You know you are to plant the good seed of God's Word in your garden. But you are also to guard against weeds (the enemy's words). If you allow poison ivy or other fast-growing weeds to flourish in your garden, by accident or through ignorance, you will experience the Word of God being choked from your thinking and from your heart. You can ask for forgiveness and will be forgiven for not taking care of the garden. But you will have to dig up and destroy everything that is contrary to the seed of God's Word, and ask the Lord to heal you. It takes work to correct things in our lives. Some things are our responsibility to correct.

WHO DOES THE FIGHTING?

All of us! We all have to **fight** to stay out of sin even after our sins have been crucified with Christ. Correction in our lives is necessary. We must be on guard against old habits of behavior and thinking which try to rise up bringing sin. Having our sins forgiven when we come to the Cross brings responsibility to stay clean. How do we do that? By fighting the good fight of faith with God's Word! The good news is that we can be victorious no matter what we are facing.

None of us are exempt from the fight. We are all part of the Army of the Lord. He is the Lord of Hosts, our General. We either take orders, or we go AWOL. It is up to us (1 Corinthians 3:8-16). God does not force us to follow orders. He has given us free will. He has also given us the GRACE we need to walk in the good works He has prepared for us to walk in (Ephesians 2:8-10). Those good works include destroying the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). But we must receive that grace by faith - it is not automatic.

WHAT DO WE FIGHT AGAINST?

We fight evil with all its principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness in this world. We are not supposed to fight against other people (flesh and blood). Our fight is with the devil and his kingdom. The devil uses flesh and blood, doesn't he? Even a believer in the Lord who is ignorant of the devil's schemes can be deceived into cooperating with the devil. The Lord went to the Cross so that we could have authority in His Name, not against people, but against all evil. Let's not be deceived. Let's ask the Lord for discernment so that we can use that authority properly.

HOW DO WE FIGHT?

There are several spiritual weapons and defenses for Christians:

THANKSGIVING FOR WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE.

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). We enter his gates with thanksgiving (Psalm 100:1). We are to be thankful IN every circumstance, not necessarily FOR every circumstance. Many circumstances are not from God, but are the creation of evil, or simply the result of living in this world of tribulation. Remember, this is a fallen world. But be thankful IN everything, and believe the Lord to turn everything around for your good (Romans 8:28). There is a path of righteousness through every trial (Psalm 23:3). After you have come through it with Him, you can praise Him FOR it, because through the experience you were strengthened and matured .

PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS, MERCY, AND LOVINGKINDNESS.

The Lord inhabits (lives in) our praises (Psalm 22:3). Praise invites His presence as our Warrior, giving us HIS strength. Rejoicing in Him is part of praising Him.

WORSHIP THE LORD FOR WHO HE IS.

Worship brings us into the presence of the Lord. We worship Him for Who He Is. This is where we fellowship and commune with Him. All of our success depends on our relationship with the Lord. It is a heart condition. Do we have a distant relationship, or do we take time to come into His Presence daily? The Lord desires fellowship with us! He wants us to bring everything to Him. He will be our Best Friend if we will let Him.

THE BLOOD OF JESUS

The Blood covers our sin. We must remember to repent of any thing that is not pleasing

to the Lord. The Blood of Jesus is not a good luck charm. Remember His sacrifice with reverence, thanksgiving and praise. Present yourself as a living sacrifice, wholly and acceptable to Him, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1)

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

The Lord Himself is our armor of light and righteousness. There are specific pieces of armor that we must consciously be aware of daily (Eph. 6:10-18).

The belt of truth - commit yourself to truth; ask for a love for truth so you will not believe lies

The breastplate of righteousness - ask for a love of righteousness so you will hate iniquity

The gospel of peace on your feet - walk in peace; ask the Good Shepherd to guide your steps in paths of righteousness and peace, and prepare you to share the gospel

The shield of faith - ask for faith to please the Lord

The helmet of salvation (full coverage helmet); thank Him for the mind of Christ; ask for wisdom that the eyes of your understanding will be enlightened; ask that your ears be opened to the voice of the Holy Spirit; ask the Lord to put a guard on your mouth).

The sword of the Spirit (the Word of God) - ask for understanding and revelation; confess specific Scriptures over specific situations and specific people.

THE WORD OF GOD

Angels listen for the Word of God to be spoken from our mouths (Psalm 103:20). Speaking the Word of God sends the angels on assignment to act on our behalf. We do not boss angels around. They respond only to the Word of God being spoken in faith. The Word brings instruction about God's expectations for us - both correction and blessing. Learning God's Word protects us from deception. For example, if I am ignorant of (or don't believe) the FACT that with the stripes of Jesus I am healed (Isaiah 53:4-5), then I won't know or believe that I should resist sickness and fight against it using our weapons and defense systems in the Word.

Satan's only weapon against us is deception. He doesn't have any authority over a believer in Christ unless that believer gives it to him. Satan has convinced many that he doesn't even exist. He is a real enemy, however. He hates God and God's people. He will try to convince us to do and say things that are not in agreement with God's Word. If we yield to deception, we sin and open the door for Satan to do his dirty work in us. We will gain in discernment when we learn more of God's Word and will be able to resist anything that is not of God (James. 4:7).

FASTING

Fasting is not popular, but is extremely important. We do not twist God's arm into action with our fasting. Fasting tunes our ears and our hearts to the Holy Spirit, so that we will be led by the Spirit in perfect cooperation with His plans. Many people believe that

fasting is simply denying yourself of anything you like, such as TV, video games, sports, etc. Scriptural fasting is actually going without food, or limiting food to “no pleasant bread” as in Daniel’s case (Daniel 10:3).

PRAYER

Prayer is the all-encompassing activity. We use all the weapons in prayer: thanksgiving, praise, worship, pleading the Blood of Jesus, speaking the Word over people and situations. We pray for ourselves and many others. We lift up our needs, our desires, and ask for direction. We conduct warfare!

WHERE AND WHEN DO WE FIGHT?

We need to be ready anywhere and anytime to be led by the Holy Spirit! We are to be lights in this world of darkness. If we have not spent time with the Lord to get His battle plan, His daily instructions, reading His Word, putting on the armor, we will not be ready if the Lord needs to call on us, or if we have an emergency. But our fight is not just for ourselves. We are responsible to pray and do warfare for our families, our friends, our church, our neighborhoods, our nation, and..... We fight like lovers - lovers of God, doing battle, following orders from the Lord of Hosts - tearing down strongholds of darkness and becoming partners in the establishment of the Kingdom of God in hearts.

Diane Shields Spears (a warrior’s name!)
Doctor of Christian Education/Art
author of Christian art curriculum
artist
www.spearsartstudio@earthlink.net