

Spiritual Warfare Lesson 1

You may have heard the term spiritual warfare and not known what it means. It does not have anything to do with wars that people fight for land or their country, but it refers to the battle for our Spirit.

“What is a Spirit? To get past the nebulous feeling and defining what and/or who a spirit is helps us to see that they are real entities and it is helpful to understand more about them.

In the Hebrew language there are two words ruah which is wind and/or a natural force, also used for the Holy Spirit. Pneuma means wind, air in motion or breath, and the creative force in someone. The creative force of God. A person or the Holy Spirit and the breath of God.

Easton’s Bible Dictionary pinpoints the way Spirit is used in the Bible. “In [2 Thess. 2:8](#) it means "breath," and in [Ecc 8:8](#) the vital principle in man. It also denotes the rational, immortal soul by which man is distinguished ([Act 7:59](#); [1Cr 5:5](#); [6:20](#); [7:34](#)), and the soul in its [afterlife]. ([Hbr 12:23](#)), and at times is seen as an apparition (ghost) ([Job 4:15](#); [Luk 24:37,39](#)), an angel ([Hbr 1:14](#)), and a demon ([Luk 4:36](#); [10:20](#)). This word is used also metaphorically as denoting a tendency ([Zec 12:10](#); [Luk 13:11](#)). I would add to this definition an attitude or disposition. In [Rom 1:4](#), [1Ti 3:16](#), [2Cr 3:17](#), [1Pe 3:18](#), it designates the divine nature.

So, a spirit is a force that gives us life and breath, creates and makes decisions, influences our thoughts, actions, attitudes and beliefs, and affects us. We all have our own spirit and the Holy Spirit and evil or negative spirits are around us and can influence us from the outside or be taken in to us.

Spiritual warfare is the battle between two forces that affect us. The Good or Godly force which gives us life and the evil, satanic or negative force. John 10:10 says “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly / to the full. This battle takes place in us and outside of us. What we will concern ourselves with in this study is how we can recognize the forces and participate in the battle by learning to understand God’s love for us and for others. This is a life lesson that we can undertake and keep growing in as long as we are alive and maybe longer. We will start with looking at two passages Ephesians 4 and a portion of Eph. 6. We will cover Eph. 4 in this lesson and Eph. 6 in lesson 2

Paul who most likely wrote this letter to the Ephesians from prison where he was just because he was a Christian. They would have taken it to heart and shared it with other new believers in other cities. Chapter four talks about finding unity in relationships and in the Body of Christ.

God tells us that foremost we should love Him with all of our heart, soul and mind and that secondly, we should love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matthew 22, Mark 12, Luke 10, Duet, 6,19 & 13, 1 John 4). The contrast or battle that evil forces would influence us to do or be is to not love. John 4:24 says God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” Satan is a liar/deceiver so he would tell us that God is not there or He not worthy of our love. The deceit is that there are reasons that we should not love others – maybe we have been or will be hurt or that they do not deserve it because (what comes to your mind about the person you are struggling to love?). Relationships are the area we see how this plays out.

Ephesians 4: 1As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge/beg you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

4There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

7But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives – He took captivity captive

and gave gifts to his people.”

9(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

11So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

15Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

17So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

20That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

25Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26“*In your anger do not sin*”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27and do not give the devil a foothold. 28Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

29Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Doing these things (putting off what would be off putting and putting on what is good and loving) are what we need to do in order to be able to have good relationships and to love. Doing a word study of each of these attitudes will surprise you and assist you in this worthwhile and rewarding goal.

Another place in the Bible talks about something else we need to put on. That is the Armor of God. That will be lesson 2

Questions

1. Have you had any experiences that have helped you understand a spirit, - God’s Spirit, Your Spirit, Another person’s spirit or an evil spirit?
2. In John chapter three it says that flesh gives birth to flesh and Spirit gives birth to Spirit. When we believe in God and believe in Christ and the work and relationships He did and gives then something is born – The Holy Spirit births a Spirit in us.
3. What gives you life – What helps you catch your breath? What is creative? Do you need Christ and the His Holy Spirit to come to you and to give you this life? Will you ask Him to do so?
4. What do you battle with in your mind and heart that you would like God to help you to heal from?
5. Can you see any areas where the pain can be reflecting something that is not true? What would the untruth be and what would the truth of God’s love be?
6. How does attitude reflect our Spirit? What attitudes do you find in yourself and what type of Spirit do they reflect?
7. What does “the thief” come to do?
8. What does Christ come to do?
9. When Christ called his followers, He said come follow me. Would you be willing to seek and follow Him in order to have the answer to question eight in your life?
10. Why do you think Paul urges or begs us to live a life worthy of what we are called to?

11. Humbleness, gentleness and patience can be looked down on, but are actually strengths which lead to a good life. Why would someone look down on them and why are they really strengths?
12. Why does recognizing there is one God help us to have unity and get along with each other?
13. How can different giftings (personalities, talents, ways to work or serve, 'jobs', make things more difficult if people do not cooperate and make things better if they do honor and work together?
14. The verse about Christ taking captives refers to either souls that were dead but had not gone to heaven until Christ died and rose or to Him capturing the evil forces – death and anything that harms or brings death to our spirits - that He triumphed over when He was crucified and then rose from the dead.
15. How does unity help us mature?
16. How does speaking the truth in love differ from spewing our frustration out at someone?
17. Ask yourself, "How do I react when someone speaks the truth in love to me?"
18. When our hearts are hardened, we are more ignorant is an interesting thought. When we are in love, we see the positives and not the negatives, when we are hurt, we see and feel the negatives and but cannot see the positives. If someone speaks the truth in love when our hearts (deep seated beliefs and what we look for) and brains (thoughts) are operating on the love side of it, we appreciate it. If they do so when we stuck on the negatives, even though that person is trying to help us, it feels like that person is against us or does not believe us.

Can you think of any situations where someone tried to help and you rejected that and later wished you had softened your heart and benefited from the advice or the blessing that would have come, if you had listened? Are you dealing with something like this now?

19. How does a darkened heart allow indulgence (excess), impurity (dirt, contaminate, adulterate, infect), or greed (glutton, crave, desire, passion, stingy, mean)?
20. The good or Godly things that can replace these are indulgence being allowing or overlooking what is wrong which God now calls for repentance where favor or mercy can be extended so that wrong is not overlooked but gotten rid of and replaced with grace. Impurity is replaced with forgiveness, new start, strength to overcome temptation and evil i.e. God's purity. Greed is replaced with hunger and thirsting for righteousness.
21. How do you put off falsehood?
22. Look at the questions on speaking the truth in love again. After reading 17 – are the answers to questions 16 and 17 the same or do you see different answers there?
23. How does anger give the devil a foothold?
24. How can **not** ignoring it or minimizing it, but resolving it take that foothold away from the devil? 1 John 1:8 says, "If we claim we have no sin, we deceive ourselves – we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth (or the truth is not in us).
25. How does working and earning allow us to not steal? Have you shared what you have with others?
26. How do you differentiate between sharing with those in need and not enabling someone to do negative things?
27. We are instructed to put off deceitful desires – What are deceitful desires?
28. Psalms 37:4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. good/truthful desires?
29. The new self we are supposed to put on is like God in righteousness and holiness. Are you looking to make things, right? Sometimes we perceive holiness as negative or unattainable but God is that and He is love and He gives it to us for good. Do you see holiness as part of God and His love? Do you understand that it is Him that it is unattainable but that provides it for us and it helps us be closer to Him – to be loved and to love others?
30. How does unwholesome talk bring us and others down?
31. How does building people up help individually and how does it help us be together?
32. Do your words benefit others?
33. How can you/we get rid of bitterness?
34. How do we be rid of rage?
35. What are the things that anger masks? How can resolving the underlying emotions benefit?
36. Synonyms for Brawling are fight, tussle, wrestle, scuffle and clash – Do you have a tendency towards these?
37. Slander is taking the truth and using it against someone. How has this harmed you or how have you used it against someone else? Are you willing to confess and get rid of it?

38. Malice is hating, spite, meanness, nasty, bad or against. Recognize any of it? Willing to ask God to take it away
39. Kindness –. Sympathy, gentleness, from the heart. How does God’s kindness lead us to repentance?
40. Compassion – Sympathy, Empathy, Kindness, Concern and Consideration Meeting a need that you are not expected to meet. What else do you love about compassion. Share about a time you received it. How do you need it now? Will you receive and thank God for His?
41. Forgiveness is a whole additional lesson. Sometimes it is overlooking an offense and sometimes it is releasing (grieving and letting go of) a debt. What are some situations where it may be just overlooking an offense?
42. What are some situations that would involve grieving (denial or minimizing, bargening, anger, letting go which may involve some depression, and acceptance)
43. Have you received the forgiveness that Christ bought for you?
44. Are you willing to forgive others?

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