

The Book of Ephesians

Ephesians 6

Session 71: Real Spiritual Warfare, Part 3

In an effort to simplify the principles for evaluating true spiritual warfare, I have boiled things down to two principles with a few sub-parts.

Spiritual warfare is believers in Jesus Christ “wrestling” against Satan’s realm. That is not to say that Satan is not doing things with lost people, but they do not have the capacity to “wrestle against principalities and powers (P&P)” like saved people do. So, keep it your mind that spiritual warfare is between Satan and believers.

If you are reading these notes and you are not sure about your salvation, we care about you and we want you to know how you can have eternal life and go to heaven when you die. At the end of these notes we have included a QR code called, The Most Important Decision. Just scan that code and you will have access to a short video that will explain to you how to trust Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of

Principles for Spiritual Warfare

1. Scripture Alone is Sufficient

This is the foundational principle for every Bible doctrine, no matter what it is. Things outside of scripture may verify or illustrate the truth of scripture, but Scripture alone is how we know any Bible doctrine.

Everything we need to know about who God is; is found in the Scripture. Everything we need to know about who we are is also found in the Scripture. (And by the way, those are two very important questions which, if we do not know the answers to, will greatly affect the way we live our lives.)

Everything we need to know about our justification, our sanctification, our future in the heavenly places (HP), our new identity in Christ, is found in the word of God alone. And this is also true of spiritual warfare.

God means for His written word to be our only source of truth concerning every aspect of spiritual warfare. Everything we need to know about our enemy and his tactics, about the weapons of our warfare and how to fight is found in God's word alone.

So, the first principle for evaluating and engaging in spiritual warfare is that **the word of God alone is sufficient** to inform us of all we need to know about spiritual warfare. Our wisdom and understanding concerning spiritual warfare must come from God's word and only God's word.

The second principle we need to keep in mind is:

2. Spiritual Warfare is Dispensational

What do we mean when we say that spiritual warfare is dispensational? It means that spiritual warfare changes from one dispensation to another. Therefore, for us it means three things:

A. Paul's Epistles. We get our instructions concerning spiritual warfare from Paul's epistles and not from other parts of the Bible. RDW (rightly dividing the word) equips us to properly conduct spiritual warfare:

- As members of the body of Christ (BoC) (who we are)
- Living in the dispensation of grace (DoG) (when we are living)
- Engaged in the mystery of Christ (MoC) (How we are operating)

If we were living back in the days of the Messiah, we would conduct spiritual warfare as members of the believing remnant (BR), living in 5-4 course of punishment (CoP), engaged in God's prophetic program (under the Law).

But that is not who we are in Christ; that is not the time in which we are living, and that is not the program God is presently engaged in.

*If this is new information for you, then I would suggest you take a look at two of our introductory videos, *The Dispensational Change* and *Rightly Dividing the word*. At the end of today's video we will give you all the ways you can contact us to have those videos sent to you, absolutely free.*

To review, the first characteristic of dispensational spiritual warfare is that it comes out of Paul's epistles. This means, if we are being taught from other parts of the Bible, then we are probably learning an improper way to conduct spiritual warfare.

Spiritual Warfare is dispensational also means that spiritual warfare is over:

B. Bible doctrine (truth)

Do you realize what that means? Spiritual warfare is a constant battle over Bible truth. Satan goes about this in four ways: 1) He convinces us to operate back in Israel's program, or 2) He perverts scriptures back in Israel's program to get them to teach something that is not true, or, if we know that our doctrine is found in Paul's epistles, then 3) He will attempt to pervert those scriptures to teach false doctrine, or 4) He will replace scripture with extra biblical revelations.

For us living in the dispensation of grace (DoG), every battle against Satan will be over something in God's word. Doctrines of devils are 1) always over Bible doctrines, and 2) they are always connected to scripture. ***Anything that is not connected to scripture is not part of our spiritual warfare with the Adversary.*** (As you know, we also have two other enemies; the world and the flesh.)

For example, praying a "hedge of thorns" is a misinterpretation of Hosea 2 and Job 1. But, even if it were true for God's program with Israel, we would not utilize it because this kind of tactic is not found in Paul's epistles.

Recap: Spiritual warfare is dispensational. This means that we get our instructions for spiritual warfare from Paul's epistles. Spiritual warfare is always over Bible doctrine. And now we come to the third issue; spiritual warfare takes place:

C. In Our minds (not out in the world)

2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:⁴ (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) ⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Now that we have established these principles to evaluate spiritual warfare, I think we can move through the rest of the spiritual warfare tactics a little more quickly.

Today we want to look at Generational Curses. This is also known as Generational Sins, and it would include the pronouncement of curses or hexes. The idea is that if your great grandfather or someone back in your family committed some great sin, even though you are saved and may even love the Lord, God may be punishing you for that sin because no one ever confessed it to God and asked for forgiveness.

Because God keeps punishing the successive generations, this is called a generational curse or generational sin. The teaching says that only through a prayer of confession and repentance can that generational curse be broken. The scripture that is used to support this teaching is Exodus 20:5.

Knowing where we are finding this reference, what do we know? We know this is back in God's program with Israel, and therefore it is not for us.

In fact, only a part of verse 5 is usually used as a proof-text. Here it is.

Exodus 20:5 ... for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

Is the book of Exodus where we get our instructions today? It is not. Who is this written to?

Exodus 20:1 And God spake all these words, saying, ² I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

If we observe the hermeneutical rule of who is this being written to; who is being spoken to here in Exodus 20? God is speaking to the people of Israel. How do we know? Because it is Israel whom God brought out of the land of Egypt. Since Paul does not repeat this kind of instruction, we know that this is not for us.

Exodus 20 is not talking about Christians suffering in some way because their ancestors sinned against God, it is actually discussing two different groups of

people; Israelites who love and serve the Lord God and Israelites who hate God and serve idols/false gods. This is the context.

Exodus 20:3 Thou shalt have no **other gods** before me.⁴ Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: ⁵ **Thou shalt not bow down** thyself to them, **nor serve** them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children** unto the third and fourth *generation of them that hate me*; ⁶ And shewing mercy unto thousands of **them that love me**, and keep my commandments.

Notice, this is not about Christians who are suffering in some way because some ancestor sinned. This is about Israelites, under the performance contract of the Law, being punished for idolatry.

When God says He will “visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children” He means that He will punish every successive generation of Israelites that continues to practice idolatry. They are repeating “the iniquity (idolatry) of their fathers.” So, this is not about some curse being handed down as though it is “in the bloodline.”

The idea of “generational curses” has been taught that your great grandparents may have committed some sin against God that you do not know about and God is judging you for it because no one ever confessed it to God and asked for forgiveness on the behalf of their ancestor. That is not biblical.

This is Satan attempting to put false doctrine into your mind. As you see that this is not a correct understanding of the verses, a battle is going on in your mind. Let me give you some information from God’s word which will help you win this battle.

In this dispensation of grace, God is not “visiting the iniquity” of anyone.

2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, **not imputing their trespasses unto them**; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

In the time past of Israel's program, God used punishments to bring the Israelites back to Him. But today, in this dispensation of grace, God is not using punishments, but His longsuffering and goodness to bring people to Him.

Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou **the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering**; not knowing that **the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**

Romans 11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but **toward thee, goodness**, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

“Them which fell” is talking about Israel; God dealt with them with severity under the Law. But today, God is dealing with the world under grace which means that instead of God visiting our iniquity upon us, He is dealing with us out of His goodness and mercy and longsuffering. The above verses are teaching us the very opposite of “generational curses.”

Generational curses are not biblical in either program. The Bible does not teach that God is handing down individual punishments for sins that other people committed. And nowhere is this said to be part of spiritual warfare.

This is not to say that, because of the things you were exposed to as a child or young adult, certain “strongholds” (untruths) have not been built in your mind; that is true for all of us. But strongholds are not God's punishment for sin; they are simply the baggage of untruths that have become part of our belief system.

We “pull down” these strongholds with the truth of God's word, replacing the lie with sound doctrine. For as long as we retain these strongholds in our thinking, we will experience the torment they bring, but this is not God judging us for the sins of our ancestors.

We covered this issue of “pulling down strongholds” in the Sonship Transformation series. In that series we talked about making some affirmations of the truth, and some renouncing of some untruths that we believed. I want to add a couple of caveats about these. **These affirmations are not for the purpose of**

breaking any generational curse, or hex. These are simply for the reinforcement of truths (doctrines) that were not previously working in us; in our minds.

The affirmations are a recommended part of the process whereby we “put off the old man and his deeds” and “put on the new man and his deeds.” The way to “put off” and “put on” is by first having a change in our thinking. It is part of the renewing of our mind.

Let me give an example: Suppose a person who has believed in Jesus and has been in church for years has been taught that they can lose their salvation, and they must constantly pray for forgiveness. They think that the only way to stay saved is by not committing sin and making sure they are living for God, and if they do sin, they need to repent and confess it. They have been taught that they are “a sinner saved by grace” as though they will always be a sinner. Therefore, they are then taught to observe 1 John 1:9 to make sure their fellowship with God is not broken and God does not punish them.

Now let’s say they have learned the doctrine of their justification, and they have discovered that when they trusted Christ, they were justified unto eternal life, permanently, no matter what they do, or don’t do. They understand this is not a license to sin, but an opportunity to live out of grace. They no longer think they have to keep the Law to be acceptable to God, but they are acceptable because they are “in Christ” and they are complete in Him.

So, in order to replace that old thinking which has been in them for years, especially in the beginning when they may not have 100% certainty in this new doctrine they are learning, it will be beneficial for them to pray or affirm those things which they now see are true for them. These may look like this:

- I have trusted Jesus Christ as my all-sufficient Savior
- I am justified unto eternal life
- The righteousness of Christ has been imputed to me
- I am the righteousness of God in Christ
- I have a new identity in Christ
- I am forgiven of all my sins

- I am “at-one” with God
- I am no longer under the penalty of sin
- I cannot lose my salvation
- My security is in Christ, not in my works
- My fellowship with God cannot be broken
- When I sin, God wants me to live as the justified, sanctified saint that I am in Christ, (not an apology)

All of these are biblical and true for believers in Jesus Christ. There is nothing wrong with making these kinds of affirmations or putting these into a prayer of thanksgiving to God. But remember the first caveat; these are not for the purpose of breaking a generational curse, or a hex or any such thing.

The second caveat is that we do not address or talk to Satan when we are praying or making these affirmations. I have heard this taught where the prayer was addressed to Satan as though making these things known to him has some kind of power that forces him to leave us alone. This strays back into a superstitious and erroneous understanding of the doctrine.

Closely associated with “generational curses” are “spells and hexes” which “witches” put on people. Here is the bottom line, our apostle Paul never says that these things are real for us as believers, or that they have any power over us. Paul never gives us, as a part of our armor or spiritual warfare, a prayer to break a curse, spell or hex.

The truth is, these things have no real power over us, but if you want to act like they are real, they can become a kind of “self-fulfilling” prophecy. But these are not representative of the real spiritual warfare that is taking place today. This is another distraction and a false kind of spiritual warfare.

Closing Prayer:

Father,

Help us to discern those carnal weapons of warfare and avoid them. May we find our instruction for spiritual warfare from our apostle in his epistles, so we may effectively engage in the battle. This week, may we consciously be aware of how our flesh, the world and the Adversary are working in concert against us. Thank you for your word which equips us. This week as we continue to study this issue, we pray for a greater understanding of the doctrine, in Jesus' name, Amen

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