

Spiritual Warfare and Victory in Christ

(by Bob Hoekstra, IPM Director)

All around the world a battle is raging, a **spiritual warfare for the souls of men and women**. It takes place from prison cells to offices to family dens. In this most serious of all battles, **victory is fully available in Christ**, for the inmate, for the worker, for the family member - - for whoever will seek the Lord.

Our Enemy

Our enemy is the devil and his army of demonic forces. *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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”* (Ephesians 6:11-12). If we had to face our spiritual foe alone, by our own meager resources, we would certainly fail.

The Devils’s Goals, Tactics, and Scope

The goal of the devil is our spiritual destruction. *“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy”* (John 10:10a). He wants to devastate our lives. *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Peter 5:8).

The tactics of our enemy are three-fold. As the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), he wants to use the values of this world to ensnare us. *“For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - - is not of the Father but is of the world”* (1 John 2:16). All around us, many are urging us: **“If it feels good, do it”** (“**the lust of the flesh**”). Others are inviting us; **“If it looks good, go after it”** (“**the lust of the eyes**”). Still others are counseling us: **“If it will make you feel better about yourself, embrace it”** (“**the pride of life**”). The result is that prisons are filling up, businesses are compromising, and homes are falling apart.

The scope of our enemy’s work is astoundingly extensive. *“. . . the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one”* (1 John 5:19). The lives of every unbeliever, as well as all of their systems and programs, are under the deceiving influence of the enemy of men’s souls. Every place that we turn in this fallen world (television, newspapers, public education, false religions, governmental bureaucracies, etc., etc.), the devil is attempting to exert his influence into our lives. Yes, amazing though it seems, *“. . . the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”*

The Power and Armor of the Lord

In spite of the threatening and impressive goals, tactics, and scope of our enemy, **victory is available**. We do not need to rely upon our own feeble energies. **We can trust in the power of the Lord.** *“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might”* (Ephesians 6:10). We do not have to be our own protectors. **We can be protected by the armor of God.** *“Put on the whole armor of God”* (verse 11). This armor is made up of the resources of God that are available to all who believe in Christ - - His truth, His righteousness, His gospel, His Spirit, His word, His salvation. These spiritual realities are experienced through **prayerful dependence upon the Lord.** *“Having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able*

to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:14-17).

Standing in Victory in Christ

Whenever we are trusting in the Lord to work these blessings in our lives, we are actually **standing in the victory that is ours in Christ**. *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand against** the wiles of the devil . . . 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. Stand** therefore . . .”* (Ephesians 6:11, 13-14a). This will bring victory into our daily lives - - whether in prison, at work, or in our homes.