

Warfare in Relationships (Part1)

Family is God's Primary Shield. Man was created in God's image and the enemy's strategy is to distort that identity. Jesus is the identity activator. My job is to see my wife how God sees her and reinforce that. Healing takes place in community. Some men are called to restore and some women are called to restore. Families are that primary community God has given us to produce whole people. We are called to reinforce all the good things God wants to say to our loved ones.

THE CASE FOR WARFARE

You have to take an active stand

Ephesians 6:10-13 (NIV)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Sometimes what warfare looks like is continuing to walk in righteousness even when people around you are not. It can be believing in truth from the Word when others are entertaining lies. It can be taking the higher ground of faith instead of the spirit of unbelief. This is the belt of truth, shield of faith and breastplate of righteousness. **The spirit of rejection often causes you to believe lies about people and about yourself. The result is often isolation, which is the enemy's strategy against you. The isolated self is a dangerous self.**

Galatians 5:19-23 *The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

This passage on the fruit of the spirit is actually about spiritual warfare. Many people mistakenly think that spiritual warfare is just about having a secret formula and saying the right thing to the enemy, phrased properly and that will get the result. Warfare is more about coming in the opposite spirit. The Bible says a curse without a cause cannot alight. The enemy thrives on getting a foothold. Warfare is about legalities. Don't give the enemy the legal right to mess with you. How do you do

that? Stay in the Kingdom. The Bible says Love never fails. **The emphasis of warfare is standing, it is holding your ground.** The ground is already yours, so all you have to do is stand. What I find interesting about this, is that you should always stand and not wait for the devil to mess you around before you make a decision to stand. You have to consistently wear the whole armour of God so that you do not fall into the traps of the devil.

Warfare is more about obedience than pseudo spiritual formulae.

Matthew 7:21-23

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

There is no neutral ground. There is no demilitarized zone.

Matthew 12:30 *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*

Jesus taught and modelled warfare

1 John 3:8 *The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

You cannot separate deliverance from discipleship

A large portion of the warfare you will experience will be in the context of family. We need to figure out what the devil's work in our family is and declare that to be the enemy, not your family members.

COMMON STRATEGIES OF THE DEVIL

1. He tries to intimidate you

Say "I am powerful". You have the power to shape your future. You have the power to aspire. By making himself BIG in your eyes, he makes you overestimate his power over you. Often he uses people to do this so that you do not walk in fullness. **This is why you can be a naturally confident person but still have a couple of people in your family or at work that intimidate you through control and domination.**

Colossians 2:9-13

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in circumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ, He forgave us all our sins.

We were with Christ in death and resurrection. He died for us, and He rose for us.

Colossians 2:15

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

The devil was stripped of his arms. Remember James 4:7, he flees when you resist.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant. Your adversary, the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

The term “be vigilant” is the word Gregoreo in Greek which means, to watch or to stay awake. Often the enemy waits for when we are in slumber. He is like a roaring lion trying to scare people with his roar. It is important to note that Peter was speaking to believers. **At what time of the day, week or month are you most vulnerable? Is it when your husband travels? Is it just before Ignite prayer meeting that you get sick?**

2. He takes advantage of your ignorance

Hosea 4:6 (NIV)

My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

Hosea 4:6 (NLT)

My people are being destroyed because they don't know me. Since you priests refuse to know me, I refuse to recognize you as my priests. Since you have forgotten the laws of your God, I will forget to bless your children.

My knowledge or lack thereof can affect the blessing on my children. Intimacy precedes warfare. It's in the place of intimacy with Christ that we see ourselves. You are as spiritual as your

thoughts. Years ago the Lord taught me to be careful of who I agree with. I would have critical or negative thoughts about my wife and experience His presence lift.

Ignorance is not bliss in spiritual warfare.

Your personal development is the best gift you can give the people around you.

3. He influences you to violate universal laws

They are certain laws that God has put in place and the enemy's strategy is to influence us to violate those laws. **When the devil influences you to violate universal laws, then the law works against you without the need for demonic assistance. This means that his demons can be deployed elsewhere.**

We can examine one example below:

The Law of Sowing and Reaping:

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction, the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

When you sow seed it multiplies. Many Christians want breakthrough but they are busy breaking God's universal laws. The deception of the enemy is to convince you that you do not reap what you sow. This law also works in the negative. If you sow bad thoughts, you will reap bad behaviour. Often I find that when I think good thoughts about someone, the good thoughts bless me. What harvest are you going to reap as a result of what you have been thinking or speaking? Many Christians cancel their prayers because they pray one way and think another way. **Heaven responds to the declaration of your words. Heaven responds to the conversations you make especially when we are in agreement.**

Matthew 7:2 (NIV)

For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

What are you sowing? In the same way you judge you too will be judged. So when you measure out stinginess, that is the same measure that comes out to you. Sometimes as Christians we tie God's hands by putting a small measure out.

Matthew 7:2 (NLT)

For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.

2 Corinthians 9:6

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

If you are reaping sparingly in your life, maybe the issue is not necessarily about rebuking the devil, maybe it is about a universal principle that God has put in place that you are violating. Some Christians do not give and are not generous and yet they keep praying expecting God to answer their prayers and make them prosper. There is a law, the law of sowing and reaping. These universal principles, also work for unsaved people.

4. He uses the element of surprise

1 Corinthians 10:12 NIV

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

1 Corinthians 10:12 ESV

Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

Many of you are familiar with the concept of guerrilla warfare. The enemy uses the tactic of ambush. Do you know the ticking time bombs in your life? Look what happened to Oscar Pistorius. Many of you never plan to fall but the enemy ambushes you and so you end up falling into sin. We must watch, be alert and proactive. A study was done on a group of pastors who fell into adultery and a large number of them confirmed that they never thought that it could happen to them. **A lot of Christians fall into sin because they do not have a script for when they are tempted.** What will you say when someone comes to bribe you? You must have a script beforehand on how you are going to respond to temptation, you must be watchful and sober. One man of God tells a story of when he was once on a plane and a certain woman came along to his seat to seduce him, so he got up and shouted, "get away from me you whore of Babylon". He went on to say that you have to embarrass sin before sin embarrasses you. Sometimes you have to be bold enough to address the spirits that are attacking you. Jesus was able to say to Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan."