



ANGELS & DEMONS MINI SERIES PART 3: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

ICEBREAKER |

What was your favorite book or movie when you were a kid?

INTRODUCTION |

It's fun to play make believe when you're a kid. But as you grow up, it's time to learn the truth about life. We know that angels and demons are real. But unfortunately, our understanding of the spiritual realm often comes more from movies and books than the Bible. What if you knew that you were involved in a very real battle every day of your life? How might that change the way you see yourself, your neighbors, and your prayer life? In this lesson, we will dig deeper into the realities of spiritual warfare from a biblical perspective and get a handle on how we are to fight our battles.

READ I

In the first week of this series, we talked about the reality of the evil, demonic world all around us. We are in a fight, whether we chose it or not. Read this passage about that battle:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor 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.
Ephesians 6:10-12 (NIV)

This battle is not against your neighbor or any other person. It's a struggle against the devil and his demons. But we don't have to rely on our own power, we have God's might to be strong in. Once you understand those two things, it puts the entire idea of spiritual warfare into perspective.

How often do you think about the unseen spiritual battle that is going on around you? What are some of the unseen realities of which we need to be more aware?

READ I

Let's cover a couple of key ideas from this week's message. First of all, **you are not alone in your battles.** Read the next passage of scripture together:

When the servant of the man of God got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. "Oh, sir, what will we do now?" the young man cried to Elisha. "Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more on our side than on theirs!" Then Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes and let him see!" The LORD opened the young man's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire. 2 Kings 6:15-17 (NLT)

In this story, the prophet of God, Elisha, is being chased by an army. But there is a greater army protecting him. He was able to see it, even if his servant wasn't.

In our lives, there are many things that will come up against us. We can get worried or worn down. Or we can turn to God and ask for help. The truth is, we are never alone in our battles.

Describe a time when you realized God was doing something, spiritually, that you couldn't see with your natural eyes. (Maybe God was warning you, or speaking to you, or prompting you to do something.)

READ I

Next, it's important to know that **your prayers are more powerful than you know**. Take a look at how Daniel used prayer as a spiritual weapon:

Then he said, "Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come."
Daniel 10:12-14 (NLT)

Daniel had prayed for understanding and insight. He waited for 21 days and prayed each day. When the answer finally came, he found out what was going on behind the scenes.

At the moment he prayed, his prayers were heard and answered. An angel was sent right then to bring Daniel the answer, but then a war broke out. A "spirit prince" tried to keep him from reaching Daniel, but Michael the archangel showed up to help out.

Just imagine that happening over and over again in your lifetime! You say a prayer and immediately angels are dispatched to deliver the answer. It may take a while, but they aren't just sitting there. They are actively engaged in combat! And it's all for you and the answer to your prayers! What power our prayers hold!

What role does prayer play in spiritual warfare? How important is it to be in a state of prayer consistently?

READ I

Sometimes it's important to know your enemy. In a war, there are entire divisions dedicated to learning how the enemy attacks. In spiritual warfare, it's the same. Take a look at how the enemy intends to do you harm.

1. He Blinds the Minds of Unbelievers.

2 Corinthians 4:4 says that the "god of this age" has blinded the minds of unbelievers. He will do whatever he needs to keep you from knowing God's truth.

2. He Steals God's Word from You.

In Matthew 13:19, Jesus tells a parable about seed that is sown. He explains that the seed is the word of God, but many times the enemy will snatch it away from us before it is sown in our heart.

3. He Sets Traps to Ensnare You.

Paul warns Timothy about the "trap of the devil" (2 Timothy 2:26). He will tempt you to do wrong.

4. He Fights to Stop You.

The devil doesn't want you to win, and he'll try to stop you (1 Thessalonians 2:18)!

5. He Plans to Destroy You.

First Peter 5:8 says that "your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

Why is it important to know our enemy? Do you tend to err in overemphasizing or underemphasizing the devil's existence? What are some reasons we may underemphasize the devil's existence? What are the dangers inherent in overemphasizing spiritual warfare?

READ I

Finally, no matter what battles we face, we can rest assured that we will win.

We do not fight for victory...we fight from victory. That means the outcome is not up to us, how hard we pray or how much faith we can muster up. It's all up to God.

Take a look:

Children, you belong to God, and you have defeated these enemies. God's Spirit is in you and is more powerful than the one who is in the world.

1 John 4:4 (CEV)

Your enemy is powerful, it's true. But he is not more powerful than God. You have everything you need from the Lord to win any and every battle you face. All you need to do is rely on Him for your strength.

How has Christ already won the victory over the devil? Describe what it means to fight from victory?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This very week, you may face a battle you weren't prepared to face. But the truth is, there is a spiritual battle all around us all the time. When we are aware of it, we don't need to fear. Instead:

- ***Believe you are not alone in your battles,***
- ***Lean on the power of your prayers,***
- ***Fight from victory, not for victory.***

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Do at least one (1) SOAP Devotions this week
- Share with your group one of your SOAP Devotions from this past week
- Invite a friend to your small group

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Thank You, Lord, for giving us strength in every battle. Help us be aware of the enemy's strategies to take us out. Give us courage to face any stronghold head on. And prepare us for battle with Your spiritual armor. In Your mighty name, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you.

Luke 10:19 (NLT)

Day 2:

The LORD will defeat your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction but run away from you in seven directions.

Deuteronomy 28:7 (GW)

Day 3:

For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

1 John 5:4-5 (NLT)

Day 4:

“No weapon formed against you will succeed, and you will refute any accusation raised against you... This is the heritage of the LORD’s servants, and their vindication is from Me.” This is the LORD’s declaration.

Isaiah 54:17 (CSB)

Day 5:

For the LORD God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The LORD will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.

Psalms 84:11 (NLT)

DURING THE WEEK

Find Time To Read God's Word



The Power of Feeding on God's Word Daily

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

As we read God's word, we begin to see how God responds to things. Doing daily devotions re-patterns the way we think and transforms the spirit of the mind. Then, when we face similar situations as Jesus did, we begin to respond in the same way.

Doing devotions is an excellent way to record, process, and share what God is speaking to you. It's also a useful tool to use at a later time to reflect on and review some of the "gems" that you have received. Without writing these down, you may forget God's promises and some very important life lessons! While doing devotions is a very personal time with the Lord, you may want to share some of your daily devotions with your family, friends, co-workers, or small group. Through discussion, you may be able to look deeper into what God is speaking to you, gain new insights, and even encourage others.

Sample Devotion

SCRIPTURE

"If you do not carry your own cross and follow Me, you cannot be My disciple."
(Luke 14:27)

OBSERVATION

Self-sacrifice is a prerequisite for discipleship. Self-centeredness has no place in the life of a Jesus follower.

APPLICATION

It can be hard to focus less on self and more on Jesus, but when we do we are living out the very commands of Jesus.

PRAYER

God, help me to live a selfless life by always focusing on what You want instead of what makes me happy, comfortable, and content. In Jesus' name, Amen.



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