

WEAPONS TO USE FOR VICTORY IN REAL SPIRITUAL WARFARE

by **Abu Ahad**

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Introduction:

Thinking about the two words ‘spiritual’ and ‘warfare’, what comes to mind is ‘spirit’ and ‘war’. We can simply define spiritual warfare as “warring or fighting in the spirit realm”. It is a battle fought not in the physical, but in the spirit realm.

Our world today is at war with itself. Nations are at war with other nations. Tribes are against tribes. Of deep concern is the threat of impending nuclear war as nations secretly develop weapons of mass destruction. All these wars are in the physical realm and involve physical weapons. However, we must not be oblivious to the fact that there is a continuous war going on in the spirit realm twenty-four hours a day. The spirit realm we do not see is far larger than the physical realm we can see. What we see in the physical realm is a manifestation of what has been settled in the spirit realm. War is occurring in the spiritual realm and is affecting our physical world. There is no demilitarized zone.

1. The Reality of Spiritual Warfare

‘Know your enemy.’ There is a saying in Africa, ‘When God has revealed your enemy to you, he can no longer harm you.’ In order to be victorious in the spiritual realm, we must recognize and know how to battle our enemy. The Apostle Paul, a foremost missionary, admonished us not to fall prey to the enemy or be ignorant of his devices.

Not only do we face an enemy, but the reality is that there will be evil days. In encouraging us to put on the whole armour, the Apostle Paul alerted us to the fact that evil days will surely come. It is not a matter of ‘if’, but ‘when’. For a missionary or any believer at all, warfare does not end, so it is imperative that we learn how to fight.

Furthermore, we need to recognize that the satanic realm is well organized and ready for battle. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians highlighted the ranks of demonic forces. He said that ‘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’ (Eph. 6:12 NIV). The Apostle Peter also warned that we have an arch-enemy who, like a roaring lion, is looking for people to devour (1 Pet. 5:8).

2. The Certainty of Spiritual Warfare

‘You will be opposed.’ ‘The devil is out to get you.’ ‘You are on the hit list.’ Do such statements scare you? They are the reports and cries from where we serve. We are on a rescue mission. *‘We are commissioned to plunder hell to populate heaven.’* We are anointed to co-labour with our Lord as He transfers men from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light.

This is not a picnic. Our Commanding Officer said no one can enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man; then he robs his house (Matt. 12:29). What are the possessions? Are they wealth or influence or power? No, they are the precious souls of men. There is a saying in Africa: ‘The one who owns the slave owns the slave’s property.’ This means you don’t need to struggle to rob a man of what he owns, just enslave him and then you can help yourself to whatever he has. That explains the reason why Satan goes for souls. If he can enslave the youth of any nation, he can take charge of the nation’s future. The souls of men are precious to both God and Satan.

Satan will not fold his arms and passively allow anyone to break into his ancient prison and plunder it. He will attempt to fight back on all fronts – personal, marital, business or ministry. He does not open doors to let his prisoners go free and there is great danger involved in rescuing souls from the hold of the enemy. He will attempt to prey on us and will not let go easily. Therefore, we must be ready to fight back so that we don’t become a casualty as we try to rescue others.

Stories of unsuccessful rescue attempts:

In 1999 I was a pastor at a church in South West Nigeria. We employed a girl to help with house chores since my wife was then nursing our second child. Things were upside down from the moment she came into our home, and as we kept praying God revealed to us that she was demon possessed. We resolved to help her by sharing the gospel with her and ministering deliverance. My wife on several occasions took her to deliverance services, all with the aim of helping her to receive Christ. We had an option of letting her go, but we held on to God for her deliverance from the powers of darkness. The warfare was complicated by the fact that the rented house we were living in had a demonic foundation (as we later discovered). Our investigation revealed that all who ever lived there before us came in wealthy and healthy and left poor and in poor health.

Our little daughter then (our eldest) became sick; my wife also was rushed to the hospital one day. It was a difficult time. Why? We were determined to rescue this soul from the power of darkness. We kept fighting the battle. One night a man appeared to me in a dream with two sharp knives. He threatened

to kill me if I did not let her go. This revealed to me the reason for my family's affliction. The enemy 'rose against me.' Having fought the battle a long time, coupled with the fact that she was not willing to be delivered, we let her go. Deliverance from the powers of darkness never occurs against the will of the person in bondage. The point I'm making here is that the enemy may turn to attack us as we try to rescue someone. We must be on guard and protect our family.

Another example is from a co-worker serving in another part of the Middle East who wrote me recently asking us to join in prayer as they engaged in spiritual warfare to free a local family they have been witnessing to for a long time. They prayed and fasted and visited this family twice. The last mail I received was that recently there was a tense situation within my friend's family which he discerned as a backlash of their incursion into Satan's territory.

We must put on the whole armour at all times. The certainty of spiritual warfare cannot be over-emphasized. Even when the enemy knows that he has lost a territory, he will not give up easily. The story of Jericho illustrates this. The people of Jericho knew they had lost the battle, but they still closed Jericho tightly. No one went out and no one came in (Josh. 6:1).

If anyone is involved in kingdom business, be sure that there will be opposition from the enemy. He opposes everything that is of God. I believe that one of the ways to know if you are moving in the direction of God's will for your life is the opposition you face from the pit of hell. There will not be any opposition if you and Satan are moving in the same direction. Even Paul was hindered by Satan (1Thess. 2:18).

Our Story of God opening a door to minister

As we pray for workers to join the harvest force in the Arab world, we must engage the enemy in battle and break through his opposition. This may include the immigration policies of many countries, which are influenced by spiritual wickedness resisting the coming of light. There may even be things in the worker's home country that may be tying him or her down. The donkey Jesus rode to Jerusalem was initially tied down. It was not useful to the Master until it was loosened from the stake. We need to declare 'the Lord has need of it...' (Matt. 21:2, 3). Men must be released for Christ to ride them triumphantly into many nations in the Arab world.

A story from our lives illustrates this reality. We were to start language study in one Arab country but all effort was resisted and opposed by the enemy. We attempted another country. We were assured by our contact person that all was in place for us to move. We packed and moved to a transit place. At the last moment we were refused a visa. We became confused about where to go next. The weapons we used at that time were prayer and worship with

thanksgiving. God rose up to fight for us. He moved in our favour and miraculously when we thought it was impossible, the gate of another Arab country was opened to us to begin language study. The embassy which refused to give visas to a couple, gave visas to our family of four. Also, I was the only one that appeared at the embassy with a simple unsigned email letter of invitation. It took time for me to believe what had happened. Our Lord of Hosts fought for us.

3. The Weapons of our Warfare

In our experience among Muslims for the past eighteen years, both in my home country and our present location, the following weapons of spiritual warfare have proven vital.

3.1 The name of Jesus

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The name of Jesus is a name above all names and all powers. We have been given the Power of Attorney by our Lord to use His exalted and victorious name to cast out demons and perform miraculous signs that will accompany us if we believe. We are protected and covered by the power in His name as we serve wherever he sends us (Mk. 16:17). No power of darkness can resist His name. This is because God elevated him to the place of highest honour and gave him the name above all other names (Phil. 2:9-11). As we labour against our enemy, Satan, we can take courage remembering that David brought down Goliath in the name of the Lord (1 Sam. 17:45). In ministering deliverance to those under demonic oppression, I have cast out demons using the name of Jesus. It is very efficacious.

3.2 The blood of Jesus.

The blood that redeemed our soul is precious and powerful. Demons cannot withstand the power in the blood that redeemed us. In Africa, when we plead the blood during deliverance or when we plead for God's mercies by the blood of the Lamb, we see tremendous results. I have read a book that argues against this understanding, but I cannot deny the efficacy of the blood of the Lamb when engaged in spiritual warfare. You can cover yourself by the blood of Jesus when in the enemy's territory. Revelation 12:10-11 says that we overcome the enemy by the blood of the lamb and by our testimony.

Our second daughter's experience when we first came to this region is a good example. She would wake up in the middle of the night crying and when offered a drink, she would simply say, 'Pray daddy. I don't want water.' This happened several times, so we pled the blood of Jesus, prayed and sang.

In a few minutes she would be fast asleep. We knew we were in the enemy's territory, but His blood protected our daughter.

The blood of the Passover Lamb is a shadow of the blood of Jesus that was shed for us. If the blood of a physical lamb is efficacious, how much more the blood of Jesus, that speaks better thing than the blood of Abel (Heb. 12:24)! During deliverance or when engaged in spiritual warfare, the enemy may remind us of our sins, or accuse us. In turn, we can remind him of the blood that was shed for the remission of our sin (Acts 2:38).

3.3 The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit

The word of God is living and active. It cannot be compared with simply a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12). His word is like fire, and indeed like a mighty hammer that is able to crush to pieces a rock (Jer. 23:29).

Our prayer must be fuelled by the word of God. God will always fulfil His promises.

When the early disciples were faced with great opposition from the rulers of the Jews, they resorted to prayer. They prayed using scriptures (Acts 4:23-31) and they prayed asking for great boldness in preaching God's word. 'Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus' (Acts 4:30). God responded and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness. In fact, this has happened here in this very city! There is power in the word of God as we use it to confront the enemy in spiritual battle.

3.4 Praise and worship

All spiritual warfare should begin with praises and worship. By so doing, we are inviting God into our situation. He is the one that is mighty in battle. When we lift him up, he will draw all men to himself.

This was the cry of King David in Psalm 149. 'Let the praises of God be in their mouths, and a sharp sword in their hands.' I would consider the sword here as the word, to be used to execute vengeance on the nations. The combination of these two weapons – praise and the word of God – is effective and powerful. A well known incident in the Bible where praise and worship was used was the battle of Judah against three nations during the reign of King Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:21-22). They sought the Lord through prayer and fasting about what to do. They resorted to singing praises to God. At the very moment that they began to sing and give praise to God, the LORD caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to fight each other.

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3.5 Prayer

Paul exhorts us to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit (Eph. 6:18). We are limited in our knowledge, but the Spirit is not and he wants to help us. Pray always, sometimes in an unknown tongue, if you are gifted by the Holy Spirit to do so (Rom. 8:26-27). I will never forget one dark night in 1990 when I was serving my nation for one year in the Muslim populated area of northern Nigeria. I was alone at home as my roommate was away. I felt a strong presence of demonic forces in my room that I could not explain. I prayed, but it was like a heavy darkness enveloped me. Then I began to pray in an unknown tongue as the Holy Spirit gave me utterance and a release. The darkness just lifted up and a great peace and relief flooded my heart and the room.

3.6. Submission and Obedience.

The walls of Jericho came down because the Israelites followed God's strategy. Every step of obedience is a step of victory. God's heart cry is for His people to follow His path and obey Him. Then their victory will be guaranteed (Ps. 81:13-14). 'Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you' (James 4:7). Humility will neutralize pride – the spirit of Lucifer. We must be submissive to God to exercise authority. Only a man under authority can exercise authority. Likewise, we must be submissive to our leaders.

4. Victory in Spiritual Warfare

What has been highlighted above is not meant to frighten, but to alert us, as

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Paul did, to the reality of the battle we are engaged in. It is always best to avoid two extremes: the first extreme is to think that there is a demon behind every issue, and the second extreme is to believe that there is no such thing as Satanic or demonic influence. Both extremes are dangerous and we must strive to strike a good balance.

One very important truth we must know is that *Satan is a defeated foe*. His fate was sealed on the cross at Calvary where Jesus shamed principalities and powers (Col. 2:15). Before Jesus' ascension to heaven, He made a declaration: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me' and we were commissioned to go with full knowledge of this (Matt. 28:18-19).

If it is true that all (not some) power belongs to Jesus, where does the enemy derive his power? What the devil has is 'wiles', 'devices' and 'cunning craftiness.' He is *like* a roaring lion, but he is not a real lion. There is only one

real Lion – The Lion of the Tribe of Judah – Jesus Christ Our Lord. We belong to Him and He commissioned us (Jn. 15:16). What should our attitude be to spiritual warfare? It should be like the lion mentioned in Proverbs 30:30, the lion which is the strongest among beasts that does not retreat before anyone.

We must know our authority in Christ and use it. Satan is aware that he is a defeated foe, but he has not given up. We have battles to fight, but we must know that we are fighting in victory. The land has been given, but we need to conquer and occupy it. We must engage the enemy in battle to enforce the Lordship of Our Lord. With the help of Our Lord we are more than conquerors.

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5. Conclusion

When we look at the familiar Pauline passage in Ephesians on spiritual warfare we notice that every part of the body is protected apart from the back. Could this mean that there is no protection for the back because we are not expected to turn our back to the enemy? We are encouraged to put on every piece of God's armour so we will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil.

As we engage in spiritual battle, our eyes must be fixed on Jesus, our Commander-in-chief. Victory is sure in Christ. It is my prayer that as we engage the enemy in battle, we will eventually echo the words of Paul the apostle in the following verses:

But thanks be to God, who always lead us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him (2 Cor. 2:14, NIV).

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body (2 Cor. 8-10, NIV).
