



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

PREPARATION FOR WARFARE

KEY PASSAGE: Ephesians 6:10-14 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:** Exodus 14:13 | Matthew 28:19-20 | John 4:24
Acts 1:8 | 2 Corinthians 4:4 | Ephesians 1:18-20 | 2 Timothy 2:3 | James 1:2-4 | 1 John 4:4

► SUMMARY

Believers are in a spiritual battle between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

By every way possible, Satan seeks to hinder the work of God in our lives. Of course, if we are in Christ, our names are written in the Lamb's book of life and we are heaven-bound. Nothing can change that truth. But the devil would love to make us miserable and ineffective Christians here on earth, and thus cheat us out of our heavenly rewards. How can we avoid falling prey to Satan's destructive plans for us? According to Ephesians 6, we aren't called to fight the devil; instead, we resist him by standing firm in the power of the Lord. Through His ability, believers can overcome temptation, even when facing difficult circumstances.

► SERMON POINTS

In Ephesians 6, Paul encourages Christians to "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm" (vv. 10-13).

What is the nature of our battle against Satan?

- **Spiritual.** Paul isn't talking about physical armor (v. 11). He speaks of "forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (v. 12). Our current bodies are temporary but our

spirits will last forever; it's through them that we relate to God (John 4:24). Though Satan can't change our eternal destiny, he'll do all he can to interrupt our relationship with God while we're on earth, drawing us away and making us unhappy and spiritually unproductive.

- **Personal.** Paul says, "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood" (Eph. 6:12). Struggle here can also mean wrestle, indicating one-on-one combat. Christians experience similar types of temptations, but the devil attacks and tempts each of us individually.
- **Real.** One of Satan's tactics is to convince people that he doesn't exist. Second Corinthians 4:4 says, "The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they will not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." With such deception, the devil can easily execute his strategies of destruction. Although the Lord allows Satan to bring adversity, the Holy Spirit can enable us to walk through it victoriously, and even joyfully, as we trust in Him (James 1:2-4).

Why do God's people give in to temptation?

As children of God, we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. Why are believers still sometimes defeated in spiritual warfare?

- **Ignorance of the battle.** Many Christians aren't even aware there is a war going on. They attribute the good or bad in their lives to luck.
- **Denial of Satan's existence.** The devil is real: Jesus talked to him in the wilderness, cast out demons, and taught about the devil's schemes. Christ would not have spoken of the adversary if he didn't exist.
- **Lack of training.** It's not enough to be saved. Scripture calls us to "suffer hardship ... as a good

soldier” (2 Tim. 2:3). Soldiers in faith need to learn how to use the weapons of spiritual warfare: the Word of God and prayer.

- **The devil’s propaganda.** Satan seeks to steal God’s glory and disrupt His kingdom. The evil one is always lying to us about what will satisfy. One of the ways he works is to make earthly goals, pleasures, and possessions so attractive that we are lured away from devotion to God.
- **Spiritual landmines.** God’s people sometimes fail to anticipate the danger zones they will face. But certain sins are like landmines; they take us by surprise and cause great damage. The devil says, “Just a little won’t hurt you,” but soon, we develop a dangerous habit or make a life-destroying decision.
- **Inadequate biblical instruction.** We call the Sunday morning service “worship,” but it’s also a time of learning. Sermons teach us principles to face the battle victoriously. Not attending church won’t cause us to lose our salvation, but spiritual knowledge and gathering with other Christians is an important part of preparing for spiritual warfare.

We must assume responsibility for our sin.

Sometimes people joke, “The devil made me do it.” In reality, he can’t make a believer do anything. What gives us the power to resist sin?

- **Believers have the strength of God.** None of us can match Satan on our own; he’s too strong. He has been deceiving humans a long time, and he knows what tools and tricks to use. Our responsibility is to “be strong [continually empowered] in the Lord” (Eph. 6:10). We overcome in God’s strength, not ours.

Earlier in Ephesians, Paul wrote, “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know ... the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe. [This is] in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead” (1:18-20). In other

words, God’s mighty power, which was strong enough to bring Jesus from death back to life, enables us to overcome sin. He also equips us through the Holy Spirit to share the gospel (Acts 1:8; see Matthew 28:18-20). Truly, “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

- **We have the authority of God.** A police officer directs traffic using the government’s authority, not his or her own physical power. Similarly, you aren’t facing Satan alone; you can resist him in the power of Jesus’ authority. When we are walking according to the Spirit, we can command Satan to leave us in the power of Jesus’ name.
- **As believers, we can be strong and watch God fight our battles.** We are called to put on our spiritual armor and then “stand firm” (Eph. 6:11). This is similar to what the Lord told Moses (Ex. 14:13), and centuries later, King Jehoshaphat: “You need not fight in this battle; take your position, stand and watch the salvation of the LORD” (2 Chron. 20:17). Although we are in a spiritual war, God doesn’t call us to fight with the devil. We are simply to be strong in the Lord and watch the miracles unfold.

► RESPONSE

- Look through the reasons why believers fail when faced with spiritual warfare. Which one or two most often describe your tendencies? What changes can you make to experience more victory?
- Many people deny the existence of Satan and spiritual warfare. What do you think is the best evidence that spiritual battles are a reality?
- Meditate on the truth that God doesn’t expect you to fight your own spiritual battles. Describe how standing firm in the power of the Lord differs from attempting to fight the devil yourself.

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