

Introduction: Four facts you need to know

- FACT #1** God has objectively defeated Satan and his agenda. He has delivered us from sin's penalty and power and ultimately will deliver us from sin's very presence. In the interim, we are involved in guerilla warfare with demonic forces.
- FACT #2** As believers, we have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light with all the rights, privileges, and position that being a child of God entails.
- FACT #3** The spiritual battle we fight involves a responsibility on our part to "put on" the spiritual protection that God has provided for us. We can and will resist the enemy's attempts to "deceive," "accuse," and "cast doubt" when we stand firm against him by:
1. Being honest with God, ourselves and others as a prerequisite to all spiritual battle.
 2. Responding to the truth that God shows us about His will for our lives – righteous living.
 3. A clear understanding of and readily sharing the "Gospel message" of grace.
- FACT #4** The great majority of spiritual warfare need never go beyond the regular practice of living out our position in Christ by faith. Our practice of Paul's metaphor of the spiritual armor protects us from Satan's ongoing attempts to break our fellowship with Jesus and, as a result, greatly minimizes any impact by the enemy.

There are times however, when we must move beyond “standing firm” and ENGAGE the enemy in actual combat:

- When we’re taking significant steps of faith for spiritual growth.
- When we’re invading enemy territory (i.e. evangelism).
- When we’re exposing him for who he really is.
- When we repent and make a “clean break” with the world, a long-held sin pattern, or an unholy relationship.
- When God is preparing us (individually and/or corporately) for a “great work” for His glory.

The Question – Once you’re wearing your spiritual armor and yet you feel yourself bombarded by spiritual opposition, *How Do You Engage and Win Battles?*

The Answer:

¹⁶ . . . in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming [missiles] of the evil one.

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Ephesians 6:16-17

How to engage the enemy and win:

1. “Taking up the shield of **FAITH**”

Ephesians 6:16

- Metaphor Explained
- **Definition = Faith** in this context is our “absolute confidence” in God, His promises, His power, and His program for our lives. Although rooted in the objective reality of the Gospel and our new standing with God (justification) through Christ (saving faith), this **faith** refers to our “*present faith in the Lord Jesus for victory over sin and the host of demonic forces.*” Weust
- Its purpose – to quench all the fiery missiles of the evil one.
- “**Fiery darts/missiles**” = The schemes, temptations, lies, deceptions, and attacks aimed at (us) God’s people to get us to “shift our trust” to something or someone other than God. (i.e. blasphemous thoughts, hateful thoughts, doubts, burning desire to sin, questioning other’s motives, waves of discouragement or depression) – often rooted in lies about God’s identity or our new identity in Christ.

- Classic Examples

Genesis 3, Matthew 4

- Classic Methodology – Disguise, doubt cast on God and His Word or on you and your worthiness. Then provides appealing, immediate alternatives rooted in the pride of life, lust of the eyes or lust of the flesh. 1 John 2:15-16

➤ **Application:** Darts of doubt and deception must be immediately met by the shield of faith. (i.e. your active, present, application of truth to your personal situation as soon as you recognize a dart has been received). How?

1. Trusting in God’s **CHARACTER** – God has my best in mind.

Psalm 84:11, Romans 8:32

2. Trusting in God’s **PROMISES** and Word – He will accomplish what concerns me.

Numbers 23:19, 2 Peter 1:2-4

3. Trusting in God’s **PROGRAM** and Timing – His ways are not always easiest, but are always best.

Jeremiah 29:11, Isaiah 55:8-13

2. “And take the helmet of **SALVATION**”

Ephesians 6:17

- Metaphor Explained
 - Definition = 1) Obvious allusion to the security we have as saved, justified believers, safe from Satan’s attacks. But, focus in on **present deliverance from sin!** 2) The helmet of salvation is the certainty of deliverance from sin and the protection of our minds in the battle.
 - It’s not something you can do – “receive,” but something you must allow God to do in your mind.
 - How? Focus is God’s renewing of the believers mind. **2 Corinthians 10:5 = The battle is for the mind!!**
Romans 12:2
Romans 8:5-8
 - Practically – Prayer, worship, music, Scripture, teaching, “Scripture Memory,” fellowship.
 - Paul calls the helmet our hope (certainty) of God’s deliverance.
1 Thessalonians 5:8
- **Application:** Christians who are not filling their minds with Scripture are like warriors going out to battle without a helmet.

3. “And take . . . the sword of the **SPIRIT**”

Ephesians 6:17

- Metaphor Explained
 - **Definition** = The sword of the Spirit is the Word (rhema – spoken word, or words given to us by the Spirit of God) to do close, hand-to-hand combat with the lies and deceptions of the enemy. The truth of God’s Word quoted and applied to the specific lie or deception of the enemy will allow you to take “every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”
- **Application:** Jesus models for us the use of the sword of the Spirit.
Matthew 4:1-11
- Implications for us
Psalm 119:105, Psalm 19:9, 11
 - Practical considerations – Note that the sword is both a **defensive** and an **offensive** weapon.
Hebrews 4:12

Summary: How to engage the enemy in spiritual warfare

1. Prerequisite is a **HEALTHY** spiritual life.
2. Understand your **POSITION** in Christ.
3. **DISCERN** when demonic influence may be the cause.
4. Claim God's promises **OUT LOUD**. 1 John 4:4, 1 John 5:4-5
5. Take our authority and position in Christ to **COMMAND** demonic forces to cease their activity and depart.

Key Resources:

Biblical Text

James 4:1-8
Ephesians 6:11-18
1 John 4:4, 5:4-5
Revelation 12:10-12

Books for Balanced Reading

The Invisible War – Donald Grey Barnhouse
Spiritual Warfare – Ray C. Stedman
The Adversary – Mark Bubeck
Overcoming the Adversary – Mark Bubeck
Handbook of Prayer – Ken Boa