

Standing Firm: Finding Victory in the Spiritual Battle

Those who serve Jesus must face many challenges - the burden of care for hurting people, the challenge of reaching the lost, and the constant pressure of planning and preparation. In the midst of these visible challenges, it is easy to forget the most important battle of all – your unseen conflict with your adversary the Devil. Along with his servants, he is constantly on the attack, seeking to hamper your efforts and destroy you and your ministry. What does the Bible teach us about his tactics? How can you learn to fight with the weapons that God provides, so that you experience the victory Jesus promised you?

Dave Patty has been involved in training youth leaders and leading national and international youth movements in Europe for over 30 years. He serves as the president of Josiah Venture. He is also a founding member of Global Youth Initiative, which mobilizes and equips youth ministry trainers in over 60 countries of the world. Dave is an ordained pastor with a BA in theology and a MA in education. He has also done graduate work in leadership development at Harvard University. For the past 27 years he has lived in the Czech Republic, and he spent the 10 years before that in Germany. Dave is married to Connie and has three grown children, Tyler, Caleb, and Claire.

"Warfare is the greatest affair of state, the basis of life and death, the Way to survival or extinction. It must be thoroughly pondered and analyzed."

Sun- tzu, "The Art of War"
China, 500 B.C.

"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."

The Apostle Paul, "The Epistle to the Ephesians"
Rome, A.D. 62

Have you ever...

- Been overcome with irrational fear?
- Woken up in the middle of the night with a sense of some evil presence?
- Experienced sudden temptations or urges that seems beyond your ability to resist?
- Felt accused and guilty even though you have confessed all known sin and asked for God's forgiveness?
- Felt deeply discouraged right after a significant spiritual breakthrough or time of powerful ministry?
- Wrestled with an area of sin that you cannot seem to get control of?
- Been filled with sudden doubt about the truth of the Bible?
- Experienced a sense of impending failure right before you teach the Bible or talk with someone about spiritual things?
- Been overcome with sleepiness or interrupting thoughts when you start to pray?
- Had an unusually difficult time finding an opportunity to read and study the Word?

- Been unable to concentrate on a speaker, even though his message is one you need to hear?
- Felt the effects of an intense spiritual battle either in you or around you?

Why? You are in a WAR!

1. You live in enemy territory
2. Satan is plotting your downfall, and he doesn't fight fair
3. If you try to do anything for the Lord, you will be the target of special attack

But.....

4. In Christ, you have the power to resist him and his purposes EVERY SINGLE TIME

..... in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Rom 8:37

*But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. 1 Cor 15:57-58
"But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. 2 Th 3:3*

Unfortunately this victory, though available, is often not our experience. Many believers give in when the enemy attacks, or live in consistent bondage to sin, fear, or discouragement. If the promises we read here are true, there must be more written in the Bible about how to experience this victory. We need to search the Word of God so that we can **know our enemy**, and **fight with the resources God provides**.

Know the enemy

"One who knows the enemy and knows himself will not be endangered in a hundred engagements. One who does not know the enemy but knows himself will sometimes be victorious, sometimes meet with defeat. One who knows neither the enemy nor himself will invariably be defeated in every engagement"

Sun- tzu, "The Art of War"

".....in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."

2 Cor 2:11

What is he like?

Names of Satan (adversary)	method of warfare
Accuser (Rev 12:10)	Accuse the saints day and night
Roaring Lion (1 Pet 5:8)	Make us afraid so we will run
Angel of light 2(Cor 11:4)	Pretends to be good, attractive, and beautiful
Thief (John 10:1)	Takes things that are precious to us and precious to God and makes them his.
Father of Lies (John 8:44)	Deceives us into believing lies
Murderer (John 8:44)	Seeks to destroy us and take life from us
God of this Age (2 Cor 4:4)	Blinds the minds of unbelievers

"The highest realization of warfare is to attack the enemy's plans; next is to attack their alliances; next to attack their army; and the lowest is to attack their fortified cities. Thus one who excels at employing the military subjugates other people's armies without engaging in battle, captures other people's states without prolonged fighting."

"Warfare must be viewed as a matter of deception, of constantly creating false appearances, spreading disinformation, and employing trickery and deceit. When imaginatively created and effectively implemented, the enemy will neither know where to attack nor what formations to employ, and will accordingly be condemned to making fatal errors."

Fight with the resources God provides

"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.

Therefore put on the full armor 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. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

Eph 6:10-18

To be victorious in level 1 warfare we must:

1. Be strong in the Lord (take our position in Christ with all the rights and authority that comes with it)
2. Take a stand against him - stand your ground (we must oppose the work of the enemy)
3. Put on the armour of God
 - a. The belt of truth
 - b. Breastplate of righteousness
 - c. Ready with the gospel (shoes)
 - d. Shield of faith
 - e. Helmet of salvation
 - f. Sword of the Spirit (God's Word)
 - g. Spirit-led prayer

Why does God allow Satan to continue to rebel against him?

1. God uses Satan to judge those with hard hearts and those who will not believe.
Mark 4:15
2 Cor 4:4
2. God uses Satan to refine the obedient
Job 2:9-10
Job 23:10
Luke 22:31-32
3. God uses Satan to discipline the disobedient
I Kings 22:9-23
I Cor 5:1-5
I Tim 1:20
4. God uses Satan to purify his chosen ones
2 Cor 12:7-10

We must, however, distinguish between what God wants and Satan wants. Satan and God are both actively involved in our temptations, but they have radically different purposes. While God always works for our good, the Devil's aim is always to destroy. Satan wanted to destroy Job; God wanted to test him. We must submit to the purposes of God and resist the purposes of Satan. In Christ we have VICTORY.

*But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. 1 Cor 15:57-58*