

Section 11: Spiritual Warfare Prayer

Lesson 52

EXTENDING THE KINGDOM

Our role as believers is to extend God's kingdom. We do so by first allowing God to set up His kingdom in our own hearts and lives and then by working with the Spirit to fulfill the Great Commission. (Read Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15–16.) In other words, we become "change agents" by becoming "changed agents."

Extending God's kingdom involves our:

- Displacing Satan's kingdom and destroying the works of the devil (Read 1 John 3:8.)
- Overcoming darkness with light (Read Matthew 5:14–16; Acts 26:16–18.)
- Preaching the gospel, a debt we owe the nations (Read Romans 1:14–17.)
- Being on a rescue mission for the souls of men, women, boys and girls (Read Romans 1:18–20.)

THE GREAT "CO-MISSION"

The Great Commission is more than a great suggestion. It is actually a "Co-Mission" that God wishes for us to complete in partnership with Him. It must be done . . . and it will be done.

- Jesus said it. (Read Matthew 28:19–20.)
- John saw it. (Read Revelation 7:9–10.)
- And it's being done!

SPIRITUAL MAPPING

Night after night during the Desert Storm war, we watched on television infrared-recorded video footage of military exercises being carried out under the cover of total darkness. Similarly, there are two "night vision" tools God has given the church to equip her to carry out the last great assault on the gates of hell.

The first is "the prophetic" ability to hear God's voice. Through prophetic gifts and prophetic intercession God reveals previously unknown realities to us to enable us to prepare our prayer assaults.

The second is "spiritual mapping." *Spiritual mapping* is the discipline of researching, diagnosing and responding to the spiritual dynamics at work in a given community, city or nation. By combining objective information (facts obtained through research) and subjective impressions (revelation, words of knowledge, dreams and visions), God gives us a compass with which to discern the moral gateways between the spirit world and the material world. He reveals to us the nature and often the names of the territorial princes that govern regions in order for us to overturn their spiritual disorder and establish the orderly kingdom of God.

George Otis, Jr., who coined the term "spiritual mapping," says that there is a difference between the tools of the ages and the tools of the age. Spiritual mapping is a tool God has given our generation to help us complete the task before us.

As Otis says, "Spiritual mapping is to intercessors as x-rays are to doctors."

HISTORY'S LAST GREAT BATTLE

Isaiah gives us a window through which to see the church of our day: "I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel" (Isa. 45:3).

Just as Old Testament kings led Israel's armies into battle, New Testament apostles (the pastors of the pastors, or city-elders), under the command of their Captain, the Lord of Hosts, are beginning to lead the purified and unified church into what will likely be the last great battle against Satan's headquarters, located in the second heaven. Christ promises that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18, KJV).

Fighting from her knees in many parts of the world, Christ's bride is already beginning to push back the forces of darkness for periods of time, during which millions are having the opportunity to hear the gospel for the first time and to be saved. We are literally living in the day of Psalm 2:8—we are asking the Father for the nations and they are coming to Him!

But to win this war for souls we have to wage battle simultaneously on two fronts: the air war and the ground war.

Spiritual warriors in Third World countries are, for the most part, first-generation Christians. Many of them are the first in their families to know Christ. As such, they are able to focus the majority of their warfare prayer attention on the air war—where Satan (the prince and power of the air) and his hordes (territorial principalities) have their headquarters.

These vibrant Christians are busy identifying and pulling down strongholds. They are seeing magnificent results as tens of thousands are born again each day during the greatest harvest of souls in the history of the world!

But at this time, we in First World countries are discovering that we need to wage as great a ground war as the air war that is being waged. We have to wage war against the sins in our own lives and against the things that have divided us.

Americans, many whose families have known Christ for generations and who live in a nation that has been identified with Christ and His teachings since its inception, are discovering that the church has given place to the devil. His control was largely surrendered to him by the misbehavior of God's children and is supported by ongoing sin in the church and by the defilement of our land. Try as we might to overthrow demonic princes, we simply cannot pull down with one hand what we support with the other. As the church confronts and overcomes her own sin, she will be rightly positioned to confront and overcome Satan.

God is territorial. And Satan, who has said in his heart, "I will make myself like the Most High," is territorial as well (Isa. 14:14). Besides, unlike God, Satan is not omnipresent. He is not at all places at all times. In order to carry out his assignments and to accomplish his plan, Satan is, of necessity, territorial. Sadly, Satan successfully carries out his ancient territorial strategy as theologians sit idly by arguing over him and his purposes.

Question: What satanic strongholds exist in your community?

How could the Christians in your community unify to do battle against Satan?

Spiritual warfare is about retaking territory. We know that Christ died to reconcile us to God. But we must come to know that He died to reconcile "all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Col. 1:20, emphasis added). Nowhere is this stated more clearly than in Ezekiel 22:30: "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of *the land* so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none" (emphasis added).

Isaiah reveals Satan's ultimate strategy!

SATAN'S STRATEGY

When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, "I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes. For he says: 'By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings. As one reaches into a nest, so my hand reached for the wealth of the nations; as men gather abandoned eggs, so I gathered all the countries; not one flapped a wing, or opened its mouth to chirp.'" —ISAIAH 10:12–14

- Satan is filled with pride.
- He is an ancient deity with strength in his hand, and he manifests wisdom and understanding.
- He has successfully removed the spiritual boundaries of the nations.
- He has plundered their treasures (the souls of men, women, boys and girls).
- He has subdued their kings (by deceiving religious, political and social leaders).
- He has gathered the wealth (the value) of the nations as a man would gather eggs.

All the while, the church has not "flapped a wing, or opened its mouth to chirp." We have yet to contend with him!

ROBBING HELL'S TREASURY

Paul said that the purified, unified church, once clothed with the armor of God, would one day stand in authority and power against the forces of darkness in the second heaven.

He said, "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Eph. 6:11).

The Lord can't empower us with prayer authority over territorial spirits until we have gained authority over our own selves, our behavior and our relationship with others. Until the church begins to look like the body of Christ, she will not be able to stand in His authority against Satan. And, as someone has rightly said, today she barely looks like His first cousin!

The Lord Jesus has ultimately called the church to confront the rulers and authorities that sit and scheme at hell's gates.

Assaulting those gates and the rulers seated there is no assignment for a divided, "me-first" church that still has protecting its turf in mind. But Jesus prophesied that His bride, the church, would undertake a greater task than He did, one the Father has reserved for her. Jesus Himself said, "... and the gates of Hades will not overcome it [the church]" (Matt. 16:18).

Yes, we are the generation that will see the church, Christ's mature bride, arrayed in purity, standing in unity and declaring with authority to those ancient evil princes, "No more!"

We are seeing this happen in nation after nation around the world. As it does, a massive spiritual harvest occurs.

OUR ULTIMATE PURPOSE

- As intercessors and pastors (watchmen and gatekeepers), let's never forget this ultimate purpose for our partnership. After all:
- We are joint-heirs with Christ. (Read Romans 8:17.)
- We are complete in Christ. (Read Colossians 2:9–10.)
- We are a kingdom of priests. (Read Revelation 1:6.)
- We are authorized and appointed. (Read Luke 10:19.)

THE GROUND WAR VS. THE AIR WAR

The entire world impatiently held its breath waiting for the U.S.-led allied ground forces to assault Iraqi military positions during Desert Storm. It seemed to many of us that the ground war would never begin. But General Schwarzkopf explained that the ground war could not begin until the air war was completed.

As promised, once the air war was complete, the ground war began. And as hoped, the ground war was a piece of cake.

The strength of Saddam Hussein's troops had been dissipated. His foot soldiers were disillusioned, tired and hungry. Their communications system was devastated. Hussein's soldiers surrendered on the spot.

In this spiritual war against the forces of darkness we see just the opposite. Prophetically gifted individuals can almost taste the air war. Warfare prayer intercessors are more than ready and

willing. They've been revving up their engines for years. They can hardly wait until the Lord releases them against the gates of hell. Some are wondering, Why not now?

Others impatiently and presumptuously have decided to call their own shots. Like spiritual Rambos they are moving out, often without directives from our commander, Jesus Christ. They have charged hell with their water pistols and are conducting their spiritual sorties (air raids), only to see little change in their churches and cities. Many have suffered backlash, and some have even died.

A few years ago we attended a spiritual warfare gathering in a southern city. After two hours of warfare singing, the leader mounted the stage. "Everyone on your feet," he yelled with the gusto of a drill sergeant. More than seven hundred people jumped to their feet obediently.

"Now everyone hold up your right hand!" came the order. The impassioned audience followed the leader. (Do you remember that game?)

"Now I want you to grab the tail of the prince of pride that rules over our city. Get hold of Slue Foot's slimy old tail. Have you got it?" the leader queried.

The crowd thundered, "Yes!"

"Now on the count of three we're gonna pull the prince of pride down out of the heavenlies . . . are you ready? One, two, three . . . PULL!"

As we scanned the audience, we were shocked to see three small children (who had no idea what they were doing) standing beside an obese woman. Across the aisle from them stood a frail-looking man with a pack of Marlboro cigarettes in his shirt pocket. He was barely able to catch his next breath for the next cheer. Neither the woman nor the man had conquered their own body, yet they were being led to "assault ancient demonic deities."

King David first killed lions and bears, then he moved up to challenge giants. From there he graduated to taking cities, and ultimately he conquered kingdoms. It was obvious that across the room there were few, if any, who should have been taunting territorial powers that night.

Some ask, "Why? Why should we wait?" The reason is simple. *The air war can't begin until the ground war is finished!*

But what is the ground war? The ground war is the war within our own hearts and minds, and our relationships with each other. We win this war face down in repentance and reconciliation. It's neither fun nor exciting. But we cannot with one hand pull down the strongholds we support with our other. It is our sin that supplies the strength for the satanic strongholds over our cities. Pride in the church strengthens the spiritual princes of pride that rule our cities. Our greatest need? Not to declare war on hell, but to declare war on our sin and disunity. If we don't clean up our act, repent of our pride, pursue integrity, establish a biblical foundation and some accountability in spiritual warfare, foolishness is going to derail the prayer movement!

We (God's church) are an out-of-shape army. We lack effective organization, communication, discipline, training, commitment and endurance. Too many pastors are concerned about

"protecting the sheep," when in fact they are unwilling to challenge the sheep to leave their cream-puff, milk-toast selves and be transformed into a lean, mean, spiritual fighting machine! When it comes to equipping the saints, pastors are the drill sergeants who must challenge the church to get off "spiritual welfare" and into spiritual warfare!

Question: Think about the ground war within your own spirit. How do you need to clean up your act? Do you need to repent of pride in some area?

How can you be accountable in spiritual warfare?

God is gradually releasing some trained warfare intercessors into launching spiritual air raids. Other intercessors have been enlisted as guerilla warfare specialists, to fight against the entrenched pockets of darkness. But these assignments have at times come at a high price. Intercessors and pastors involved have counted the costs. Around the world seasoned men and women of prayer are laying down their very lives in the battle. This is the day of the martyr.

(Read Revelation 12:11.) This is not a game—this is real war with real casualties! So our advice is to understand what you are doing if you decide to pick a fight with the powers of darkness.

HOW TO WIN THE WAR

The keys to winning the spiritual war are:

- Seek God. (Read Proverbs 20:18.)
- Maintain a constant lifestyle of praise and worship. (Read Psalm 34:1–5; 149:6–9.)
- Dwell in unity with one another. (Read Psalm 133; Romans 15:5; Ephesians 4:3, 13; Colossians 3:14.)
- Be a witness and proclaim the gospel of Christ. (Read Romans 10:15.)
- Deal with power encounters only as the Lord reveals them, provides a strategy with which to deal with them and gives you permission to do so. (Read John 5:19.)

Christ is our head, and we are his body (1 Cor. 12:12). What the mouth, which is a member of the body, speaks is first conceived in the head. We are suggesting that the prophecy found in Psalm 2:8 is being fulfilled today. After two thousand years of church history, Christ in heaven is asking the Father for the nations as His inheritance. One proof is that it is also being spoken out of the mouth of His body here on earth. Another proof is that the nations really are coming to Christ in unprecedented numbers!

Let's ask the Father today for the nations!

Congratulations Graduate!!

You are amazing!

We certainly hope that you've learned lots in our year together.

If you don't already, please consider becoming a monthly partner to help us disciple the nations by equipping leaders like you!

Eternal blessings!

Eddie and Alice

"America's prayer coaches"

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