

Strategic Study Plan for Spiritual Warfare

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The following material allows you the reader to put into practice, chapter by chapter, the principles of spiritual warfare found within the text. Without the application of the biblical teachings about dealing effectively with our adversary, mere head knowledge of his activity and our role is of little value. This excellent material constantly points to a response on the part of the reader. This study guide is meant to help you move in that direction.

Chapter 1: The Biblical Perspective of Warfare

1. The world either makes a joke of Satan or ascribes to him more power than he deserves. Give one example of each of these extremes coming from the media, respected thinkers, or leaders, or other sources. In each case, what do you think is the purpose behind Satan's strategy to mislead you?
 - a.
 - b.

2. Which imbalance in question 1 are you most often drawn to? Do your gaps of knowledge and practice in spiritual warfare cause you to minimize or exaggerate Satan's role in your life?

3. The author states that neither the right feelings and desires nor sincerity is sufficient to defeat Satan; rather, our authority comes from the power of God's Word. Assess your own growth as you confront Satan: Are you using His Word more than good intentions?

4. Consult the Scriptures as you recall actual events in your life in which you were tempted to sin. First, as you consider both the Scriptures and the events, distinguish the different characteristics of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Second, look at the elements that are common to all three and list them.

Distinctive Characteristics

The world:

The flesh:

The devil:

Common Elements:

5. Based on your responses to question 4, what different strategies could you develop for overcoming your weaknesses and the temptations from (a) the world system, (b) your flesh, (c) the devil's attacks and temptations?
- a.
 - b.
 - c.

Chapter 2: Warfare with the Flesh

1. The battle between flesh and spirit can sometimes appear contradictory. Recall an incident wherein you determined to follow the Spirit's wishes and ended up doing the opposite. What does this teach you about your own weaknesses as well as your own efforts?

2. The sins of the flesh listed in this chapter (pp. 31–35) may have deeper implications than you first thought (for example, witchcraft includes drug taking). Review this list and write down how you may be guilty of some of these sins in ways you have not previously considered. Choose two of these areas to work on in-depth in the coming months.

Your Sins of the Flesh:

Two Areas to Work On:

3. The author speaks of "willful indulgence in fleshly sins" (pp. 38–39), which produces bondage to Satan. In what areas are you presently not struggling but actually willfully sinning? Begin by confessing your rebellion and resistance to God's com-

mands and renounce these sins. Ask God for the grace to reject your willful disobedience.

4. The heart of this chapter is learning to wage war against the flesh. To do this effectively you must take three steps: (a) walk in honesty; (b) walk in death; and (c) walk in the Spirit (pp. 39–44). Choose a weakness or sin that “easily besets” you and plot a course with these three steps in mind in the upcoming month. Monitor your progress to determine whether you move from honesty, to the death of that sin, and on to victory in the Spirit.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

5. Though wonderful feelings may accompany the filling of the Holy Spirit for service, such is not always the case. Look back and identify where you have equated positive feelings with the Spirit’s blessing. When did this prove incorrect? When might you have been used by God without those feelings being present?

Chapter 3: Warfare with the World

1. The world can be defined as the spirit of the age in which we live. List three main philosophies, or ways of viewing reality, in this decade that oppose the Christian worldview. What are their main characteristics, and how may they have subtly influenced your own thinking and behavior?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. Just as there is a “world of sports” (p. 55), there are other worlds, such as fashion, music, television, and business, that can capture your heart and draw you away from God. Though many of these “worlds” are fine in moderation, they can be addictive and demand complete allegiance. Write a summary of how and why you may have become absorbed in one of these worlds and how you may be set free.
3. The world will offer us its “treasure”—success, wealth, and position (p. 58). This tempts us to exalt ourselves and become independent of God. When has the drive to succeed in life led you to the sins of the flesh: greed, selfish ambition, love of money, envy, and so on? Name the proper solutions: contentment, trust, and so on. How can you replace the fleshly with the spiritual?

4. The world also tempts us to be ashamed of Christ (p. 50).

Its exalted fleshly accomplishments conflict with the “foolishness” of the gospel. When have you felt foolish by the challenges of unbelievers? When have you held back from sharing the gospel for fear of rejection? Pray for the courage to “boast” in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Finally, we are tempted to conform to the world’s standards. The media, government, education, and many more “systems” put increasing pressure on us to conform to anti-Christian values. Choose two of these systems that attempt to exert specific pressure on you through their messages. Where in Scripture can they be proven wrong?

World System

Scripture

a.

b.

Chapter 4: The Sword of the Spirit Is Still the Word

1. Effective spiritual warfare is not possible without utilizing the Word of God. Memorization is the most effective way to utilize Scripture in a warfare situation. Devise a plan to choose one Scripture passage to memorize each week that will help you maintain victory over the satanic forces seeking to mislead you.

Week 1:

Week 2:

Week 3:

Week 4:

Week 5:

2. A second important tool is biblical meditation. This is the process of considering the many aspects of the meaning of a Scripture verse, especially in your own life. Begin by meditating on Scripture verses related to warfare. Pray them back to God in a devotional manner and write down your insights.

3. Read through all the Scriptures cited regarding Satan's original state and subsequent fall (pp. 69–70). What strikes you most about the enemy's early history? How do you better understand

the nature of his present position in regard to humankind? What did he lose and retain when he fell from his original position?

4. Review each Scripture related to Satan's names, power, activity, and strategy (pp. 71–76). Again, what new insights do you gain regarding his nature and role both in your life and in the great cosmic battle? What strategies or abilities does he have that you may not have been fully aware of? Name some new ways to resist him.

Satan's Nature and Role:

Satan's Strategies and Abilities:

New Ways to Resist Him:

5. Finally, study the Scriptures that deal with the ultimate destiny of Satan and our victory over him (pp. 77–80). How should this affect your daily struggles with the enemy? What has most encouraged you regarding your elevated position over the adversary? How can this victory be obstructed? (See p. 80.)

Chapter 5: Facing Satan's Kingdom

1. Name some of the recent books, movies, individuals, and articles that have legitimized occult thinking or practices in the general culture. What tactics have been used to deceive people into thinking that it is harmless or beneficial? Have any of the subtle ideas appealed to you? Ask God's forgiveness if that is the case.
2. Have you ever attempted to directly win unbelievers to Christ or spread the gospel message indirectly? What kind of satanic opposition have you encountered? What would you now do differently to overcome obstructions? Finally, how do you detect and overcome the enemy's distracting you from even attempting to spread the gospel?
3. Satan directly opposed and deceived Adam and Eve, but he also influenced other major persons in the Bible. Explain what you think is the line of argument and tactics he used with at least one evil character and one good character within the Scriptures.

Evil Character:

Good Character:

4. The devil is able to use seemingly opposite strategies to thwart our spiritual growth. For instance, he can fill us with pride by telling us how great we are or condemn us for being such terrible sinners. There is always an element of truth in his message. Examine your own walk with God to determine how Satan has at times pushed you to these extremes. Also look at other imbalances that may have caused you to stray off course.

5. Review Ephesians 6, which includes a section on spiritual armor. Rather than merely studying the meaning of the text, take the advice of the author and view it as a matter of prayer and an act of faith. Choose a week on your calendar to apply each piece of armor in daily prayer, then apply it by faith in daily circumstances.

Chapter 6: Understand and Don't Be Afraid

1. Many of us experience fear in various ways and to varying degrees. Make a list of the things in life, both big and small, that create fear in your heart. Analyze each in terms of the lies of the enemy and the truth of God's faithfulness and power so that you can overcome each one.

What Creates My Fears

The Enemy's Lies

God's Power

- a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. In the case of each fear, apply three different criteria: (a) the Spirit's power, (b) love, and (c) a sound mind. How would these three "spirits" replace the spirit of fear in each circumstance? In each case, determine to thank God, even with fearful feelings, for these three qualities that keep you standing firm.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 3. Recall decisions you have made, major and minor, over the last twelve months or so. Although you may have paid lip service to God, to what degree did you pray fervently and wait upon God to give you guidance? Where did you act more or less independently? Determine to submit all decisions to prayer and a searching of His Word.
 4. In accusing us, Satan poses questions such as "What kind of a Christian are you to have such wicked thoughts?" (pp. 99). What other kinds of confusing lies does Satan interject into your thoughts that make you feel depressed or condemned?

For each question you can think of, come up with a biblical answer. Also, look at yourself in God's eyes and write out how Satan distorts who you are.

Confusing Lies The Biblical Answer How Satan Distorts

a.

b.

c.

5. Write out a summary of the specific characteristics of demonic oppression, obsession, and possession. What claims and activities are involved in each? What are the chief differences between oppression and obsession? Between obsession and possession? Why is it sometimes difficult to detect clear differences? Finally, how might solutions differ among each problem area?

Summaries of

Oppression:

Obsession:

Possession:

Claims and Activities of

Oppression:

Obsession:

Possession:

Differences Between

Oppression and Obsession:

Obsession and Possession:

Why Sometimes Difficult to Detect:

Solutions for

Oppression:

Obsession:

Possession:

Chapter 7: There's Still a Place for Objective Doctrine

1. Take an inventory of any irrational, compulsive, or addictive behavior that is out of character for you. Have you consciously considered the enemy's involvement in these phenomena? How might this change your view of your behavior and the strategy for dealing with it?

2. Pick a teaching in Scripture that you may not know well or the implications of which you may not understand. Study it and try to apply its meaning to your daily circumstances. After a few days, measure how it has changed your outlook and behavior.

3. Doctrinal praying allows us to speak God's words back to Him in such a way that His Spirit can then bring them alive in our own walk. Take one problem or need that you are facing at present and pray the scriptural solution (in the form of petition) back to God. Measure the effects internally and externally over the course of time.

4. Beyond petition, examine areas of doctrinal truth that may be used in both praise and intercession. Incorporate the praise portion into your daily worship for a set period of time. Also, as you pray for others in the upcoming month, search the Scriptures to find an appropriate passage to pray back to God for each person.

5. Analyze your present prayer life. As the author states, much of our prayer rests on worn-out clichés or emotional desires. Jot down ways that you pray or things that you pray for that may fit this category. How might you improve this situation with the addition of biblical content into your prayer life? How might your Bible reading and prayer life become better intertwined?

Chapter 8: Aggressive Prayer Wins Again

1. Has there been any time in your life when, like the author (pp. 128–30), you accomplished a significant spiritual feat? How did prayer enter the picture? Often we do not realize the significance of prayer in spiritual victory. Choose two ways in which you would like to please God but feel they are beyond your grasp. Determine to pray biblically and fervently and watch God lead you.
 - a.
 - b.
2. Choose a particular “stronghold” that you believe is God’s will to tear down. It may be a personal weakness, another person’s difficulties, or a national problem. Yet if Satan is obstructing freedom and victory, it is your mandate to deal with it. Aggressively intercede with spiritual weapons and record your progress.
3. The prayers listed in this chapter are perhaps some of the most aggressive and effective tools for standing up to Satan in another individual’s life. Alternate each of these prayers in the morning and evening each day for a week, and choose one individual in serious trouble or need for whom the Lord leads you to pray.

4. Take a careful look at the prayers of three biblical characters other than those mentioned in the chapter. What impresses you most about the content, sincerity, fervency, and faith of the one praying? What impact did these prayers have in the given situation, and what principles did they use to succeed, especially in the area of spiritual warfare? How can you apply them?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

5. Marriage and the family are key areas where Satan strikes because they are the training ground for godliness. How has the enemy attempted to divide family members through misunderstandings, competing interests, and so on? How can a better understanding of his wiles, as well as prayer and repentance, help your relationships? Go to family members and discuss ways to counteract his tactics.

Chapter 9: Bold Confrontation May Be Needed

1. Though your beliefs may be correct, do you actually experience the full benefits of your position in Christ? Do you strive to “ascend” to where God is to receive His favor, blessing, and authority? Or do you automatically claim your authority because you are seated with Christ (and in Him) on the throne? How does your under standing affect your spiritual warfare?

2. Seek God in prayer to determine whether any of your children may be influenced by demonic activity. It may be subtle, relating to abnormal fear or depression, or it may be dangerous behavior that is partially hidden. If this is true, take authority in prayer in a fashion similar to that of the author (pp. 145–48).

3. Make certain that your children have first committed their lives to Christ and have a knowledge of His saving grace. Freedom from demonic oppression cannot take place without the ownership of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are not fully certain of this, pray for your children’s salvation and discuss the claims of the gospel with them.

4. Briefly summarize in your own words the “don’ts” of spiritual warfare that are listed (p. 152–53) as you confront Satan. Which are you most prone to violate? Now list the “dos” (pp. 153–54) as they relate to you. Which of these is the most difficult for you to perform? Set up an imaginary encounter where you might confront satanic opposition (perhaps only in prayer).

The Most-Prone-to-Violate “Don’ts”	The Most Difficult “Dos”
a.	a.
b.	b.
c.	c.

5. In what ways does Satan undercut your ability to be successful in spiritual warfare? How much progress have you made in the following areas: abiding in Christ, avoiding worldliness, avoiding sins of the flesh, being filled with the Spirit and a knowledge of His Word? Create an improvement plan with God’s grace in any of the above areas where you may be weak or may have experienced failure.

Chapter 10: Challenging Satan's Hindrance of Revival

1. What do you consider to be the major hindrances to revival in the church today? Examine this at the local church, denominational, and universal church levels. Why are many church members lukewarm or ignorant concerning the need for revival? What can be done about this serious situation?

2. Do you have a burden for revival on a local, regional, national, or international level? If your concern is insufficient, what is the main reason—lack of knowledge, interest, or disobedience to God's calling? Do you agree that the problems a country faces can only be solved by revival? How do you think this may be accomplished?

3. How would you argue against those who say that revival isn't necessary because this is the time of great apostasy as we approach the second coming of Christ? What about churches such as Laodicea (Revelation 3:14–22) that seem beyond hope and under judgment? Why does God knock at the door of every believer's (and church's) heart for greater entry, and what will this accomplish?

4. In the church today, Satan can imitate the signs of true revival. What evidence do you see of this? How do you think it can be exposed and counteracted? What are the signs of true revival that can help keep a check on the tendencies of our flesh? How might you pray (and lead others to pray) for true revival, preparing yourself and being prepared to avoid the false imbalances that might occur?

5. Set up a schedule to pray daily for revival in your own life and in the life of the church. Pray also for those in authority and for unbelievers. Pray for the spiritual leaders who guide the church. Pray for Christian ministries that are on the “front lines” to serve the cause of Christ. Finally, pray that Satan cannot disrupt the prayers going up to the throne from all around the world regarding the desperate need for revival.

Chapter 11: Weapons for Warfare

1. The proper tools are critical for completing a task well. Recall a time when you used tools that were improperly suited for the task at hand. How did the wrong tools, even with your good intentions and skills, adversely affect the outcome? How might this apply to spiritual warfare?
2. Perhaps we have the proper tools but they are not kept in good working condition. This could happen due to our ignorance, misinformation, or mere neglect. Although the tools are right and our intentions are fine, we may still fail. How can you not only employ the proper tools in spiritual warfare but also practice and apply them regularly?
3. Many of us have a difficult time accepting the fact that God loves us and completely accepts us in Christ, no matter what we have done. Review the six affirmations of faith by Victor Matthews (pp. 169–70). Which one do you have most difficulty accepting for yourself and why? Which affirmation do you have the most assurance about and why?

4. Most Christians struggle with at least one chronic weakness or problem in their lives. Oftentimes we can't achieve victory, and wonder if spiritual forces are working against us. Scan through the thirteen symptoms the author presents (pp. 178–79) that might be evidence of demonic oppression. Pray about any that might apply to you, but remember that these symptoms don't provide conclusive evidence of demonic activity. Seek God's release from these bondages.

5. The author concludes this chapter with an important two-step approach to attaining spiritual victory (pp. 186–87) that should be practiced on a regular basis. Begin by searching your heart regarding the eight types of sins listed (pp. 186–87), then add any others that might give Satan a stronghold. Now look at the ten actions necessary to wage aggressive warfare against the enemy (pp. 188–90). Focus on at least two that you may be totally neglecting.

Chapter 12: Warfare through Our Oneness Together

1. Create a word picture similar to the analogy of the bundled wood (p. 191) that describes the unity necessary to function effectively as the body of Christ. Why do we no longer feel the need for each other, and what is the result?
2. A large number of believers provide strong “fire power” against Satan’s legions. Attempt to gather together with other brothers and sisters in your church to bind the satanic strongholds in your family, community, or other groups. Choose a partner and pray especially for that person on a regular basis, maintaining mutual accountability.
3. If possible, approach the elders in your church about an officially sanctioned prayer group or adult education series regarding the principles of spiritual warfare. Attempt to merge the vision and goals of your local church with the biblical concepts involved in warfare.
4. Whether or not the return of Christ will happen soon, the enemy’s activity is on the increase dramatically. What signs in the culture might presage the imminent return of Christ? At the same time, there are encouraging signs of revival in society.

What might they be and how do the two, blended together, point to intensified spiritual warfare?

5. The promise of the Lord's return gave the early Christians courage and strength. How might the second coming of Christ give you a different perspective on your own struggles and the state of our world? How do we know that we already have the victory that culminates in Christ's return? How can we use this significant realization in our spiritual warfare?