

JFN Empower – Module 4 P4
Lesson 4: The art of Spiritual Warfare

Summary of last week and short questions and answers discussion:

The art of Spiritual Warfare

Eph. 6:10-12. '10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.' NKJV

The art of spiritual warfare involves **standing firmly** in the Lord's authority and **resisting the enemy** until the victory of the cross of Jesus is fully **manifest**. In this way, the devil has no choice but to flee. God has equipped us with **spiritual weapons** that empower us to remain steadfast and resist the enemy with strength. The devil despises believers who stand in God's power and refuse to yield, as it is at that moment he understands he cannot claim any ground.

It is essential to understand these *seven foundational principles* of spiritual warfare:

- **A wrestling conflict:** Christians are engaged in a real struggle. The Greek word for “wrestle” in Ephesians 6:12 is *palé*, meaning a wrestling bout—one that is close, personal, ongoing, and intense. This is not a battle we can withdraw from; it requires active resistance and full engagement. If we fail to stand and contend, we give ground to the enemy. In other words, if you don’t show up, the enemy succeeds. Sadly, today, many Christians have stopped showing up!
- **A battle already won!** As we keep showing up, standing firm, and resisting the devil, he has no power over us. The devil cannot harm God’s children (Luke 10:19, Psalm 91, Prov. 18:10, Isa. 54:17). Our victory over the devil was secured more than 2000 years ago when Jesus shed His blood and died on the cross for us! His victory was further confirmed when He was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit! Resurrection Power! In other words, it is not a war we can lose; the victory has already been secured.
- **A call to stand and resist.** Our spiritual warfare (wrestle – *palé*) requires us to **stand firm** in God's power and authority, **resisting** the devil's schemes by **using spiritual weapons**. Remember, it is a war you cannot lose and has already been won by Jesus Christ. When we stand in God’s power and resist the devil, the victory of Jesus on the cross forces him to flee! The battle has been won!

- **Not a pursuit of demons.** Spiritual warfare is not about entering our prayer room to confront demons or chase after evil forces, but about standing firm and resisting the enemy's schemes by using the spiritual weapons God has given us, until the victory of Jesus (on the cross) manifests!
- **An enemy with deliberate strategies.** It is a fact that the devil employs certain strategies against God's children and that we must **not ignore them**. The term "wiles" in the NKJV refers to clever tricks or strategies used to manipulate or deceive individuals. This word is derived from the Greek term "methodeias," which means *"predictable methods used in organised evil-doing."*
According to the Topical Lexicon (<https://biblehub.com/greek/3180.htm>),
'Strong's Greek 3180 (methodeia) relates to the deliberate, systematic tactics by which Satan and his agents try to deceive, mislead, and ultimately destroy souls. The term refers not to random temptation but to a calculated plan aimed at neutralising faith, distorting doctrine, and undermining obedience.'
- **A structured kingdom of darkness.** Ephesians 6:10–12 shows us that the devil does not operate alone. He oversees a structured hierarchy of principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual hosts of wickedness. These forces are strategically organised with one purpose in mind: to kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10).

Know your enemy!

1. Who is the devil (diabolos)?

Lucifer, whose name means light bearer or morning star, fell when pride filled his heart and he said, *"I will ascend...I will make myself like the Most High"* (Isa 14:12–15; Ezek 28:17). He was an anointed high-ranking cherub and widely accepted that he was connected to worship! He held a position of great authority and honour! Because of this rebellion he was cast out of heaven, and Jesus testified to this moment when He said, *"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"* (Luke 10:18). After his fall he is no longer called Lucifer but Satan, the devil, the serpent, and the dragon. Scripture calls him *"the god of this world"* who blinds the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the Gospel (2 Cor 4:4).

He does not work alone—Paul describes a structured kingdom of darkness made up of principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12).

- **"Principalities"** These are high-ranking spiritual beings that hold authority over regions, cultures, or systems. The Greek word *archai* refers to *"first rulers"* or *"chief powers."* They influence the direction of societies and nations (cf. Dan 10:13).

- “Powers” These are delegated spiritual authorities operating under principalities. The Greek *exousiai* means “authorities” or “jurisdictions.” They enforce the enemy’s agenda through deception, oppression, and influence (Col 1:16).
- “Rulers of the darkness of this age” These are spiritual forces that spread moral and spiritual darkness. The Greek term *kosmokratores* refers to “world-rulers,” meaning they shape the values, beliefs, and behaviours of a fallen world (cf. 2 Cor 4:4). Rulers of the darkness resist the Truth of God.
- “Spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” This refers to vast numbers of evil spirits operating in the unseen realm. The phrase describes the collective army of demonic beings that promote wickedness, temptation, and spiritual corruption (cf. Eph 2:2). They resist God’s purposes.

Principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, and the spiritual hosts of wickedness are all categories of demonic forces. They are all demonic beings, but they operate at different levels of authority and influence.

Demons and Their Origin

According to **Dr. F. P. Möller**, demons are angels who rebelled against God together with Satan are referred to as *demons*. Scripture describes these fallen beings using several terms: *evil spirits* (Luke 7:21), *unclean spirits* (Matthew 10:1), and *messengers of Satan* (2 Corinthians 12:7). The Bible also indicates that their number is vast. In Mark 5:9 (cf. Mark 9 in popular reference), a demon-possessed man identified himself as *Legion*, implying many spirits.

Scripture reveals that demons are conscious and active beings. They fear judgment (Luke 8:31), can speak (Matthew 8:28–29), express desires (Matthew 8:31), display unusual strength (Mark 5:3–4), act aggressively (Matthew 8:28), inhabit the bodies of humans and animals (Matthew 12:43–45; Mark 5:12–13), and even attempt to afflict believers (2 Corinthians 12:7). (Dr. F. P. Möller, *The Wonder of Creation and the Enigma of Spiritual Beings*, 1997, p. 107).

Another view suggests that demons may be the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim—giants described in Genesis 6 who existed before the flood. However, it is important to note that this interpretation is **not explicitly confirmed in Scripture** and therefore remains speculative.

What Scripture makes absolutely clear is that Satan and his forces are active, deceptive, and destructive—yet ultimately defeated through Christ. They possess no lasting authority over believers who stand firmly in Christ (Colossians 2:15).

Satan's Agenda

Sin originated with the devil, and his character is expressed in terms of the king of Babylon:

“For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High” – Isaiah 14:13.

According to Möller, Satan's aim and policy is to prevent people from believing in and serving God. He also tries to undermine the faith of those who already serve the Lord and to lead them into apostasy. Satan wants his own counter-kingdom. (The wonder of creation and the enigma of spiritual beings, 1997, p. 108)

The devil's agenda is unmistakable: to oppose God and destroy His creation by drawing humanity away from God and toward sin and spiritual death. Jesus describes this clearly: *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy”* (John 10:10).

Satan's work aims to bring chaos—disrupting order, unity, and peace so that God's people are weakened. He **steals** by stripping people of vision, identity, and purpose. A clear example of this is found in Matthew 4:1–11, where Satan repeatedly attempted to distort Jesus' identity and mission.

He **kills** by leading people into spiritual death and separation from God (Romans 6:23), and he **destroys** by sowing fear, torment, lies, and oppressive burdens.

Jesus called him *“the father of lies”* (John 8:44), showing that deception is Satan's primary weapon. The root of his rebellion is pride (Isaiah 14:12–15), and pride remains the cornerstone of his strategy against humanity.

Ultimately, Satan seeks the destruction of souls. To achieve this, he must entice people into sin (*hamartia*—missing the mark of God's will). Peter warns believers: *“Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”* (1 Peter 5:8). Yet Scripture also assures us that he cannot prevail against those who remain firm in Christ (James 4:7).

In summary: **Satan's agenda is destruction through sin; his method is deception; his motive is hatred for God and His people.** In Christ, however, believers stand in truth, authority, and victory.

How Satan Works

To accomplish his agenda, Satan employs strategies, systems, and collaborators. His methods include temptation, deception, strategic attacks, love for worldly things (1 John

2:15–16), lies, lust of the eyes, greed, power, and manipulation—as seen again in his temptation of Jesus.

He seeks a *foothold* (Ephesians 4:27). When given access, he establishes *strongholds*—patterns of thinking or behavior that allow him influence in a person’s life. Some individuals open doors knowingly or unknowingly; once opened, Satan uses them to establish strongholds:

Stronghold, a Bible definition

2 Cor. 10: 4-5, *‘We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments.’* NLT

Ochuróma – Castle, argument. The term *ochuróma* (ochurōma) refers to a stronghold or fortress—a place of security and defense. In the New Testament, it is used metaphorically to describe mental or spiritual strongholds: patterns of thought or belief that resist the truth of God. This points to distorted thinking that leads to faulty reasoning, misguided arguments, and deceptive philosophies and can have the following **negative outcomes**:

1. Limitations and Hindrances

It can limit believers from receiving all that God has in store for them. Jericho (Joshua 6) illustrates how a physical castle prevented Israel from enjoying the experience of all that the promised land had in store for them. Israel could not fully possess what God had promised until the walls of Jericho were conquered and destroyed. Likewise, demonic strongholds can limit believers from experiencing the fullness of God’s promises.

2. Hinder spiritual growth

A stronghold acts like a **filter in the mind**. Even when the truth is heard, it gets misunderstood, resisted, or rejected. In 2 Cor. 4:4 we read that the god of this world (satan) has blinded the minds of people. In this sense, a stronghold often leads to repeated patterns:

- the same struggles (no victory over certain areas)
- the same reactions and behavior
- the same spiritual “plateau” (no spiritual growth)

3. Negative emotional patterns

Strongholds can trap people in fear and pain, which can lead to anger, depression, shame, and destructive behaviour. Strongholds can block a believer’s joy and peace and cause them to be easily offended, overreact or deeply hurt by small things.

Who Satan Employs

Satan operates through a hierarchical demonic structure (Ephesians 6:12), but he also uses people. Because he is a spirit, he requires human cooperation to act in the physical realm. Both believers and unbelievers can become instruments if they fail to discern spiritual realities.

Scripture reminds us that our struggle is *not* against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of darkness. Therefore, we must refuse to become unwitting tools of the enemy and instead submit fully to God.

Resisting the Devil—How?

James 4: 7, *‘Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.’* NKJV

The Greek word for *resist* (*anthistēmi*) means to take a complete stand against something, or to adopt a position that is 180 degrees contrary. We must stand firmly against the devil's plans and strategies by boldly declaring our convictions in God and His Word. Spiritual warfare requires us **to forcefully proclaim God's will and renounce the devil's agenda**.

To rest means to stand in the victory that Jesus won for us on the cross and to proclaim that victory.

Col. 2: 13-15, *‘You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. ¹⁴ He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.*

Colossians 2:13–15 teaches that through the cross, Jesus canceled our debt of sin, disarmed spiritual authorities, and publicly triumphed over them. Believers resist from a place of victory—not struggle.

Weapons of Our Warfare

2 Corinthians 10:3–4 reminds us that our weapons are spiritual and powerful, capable of demolishing strongholds and false arguments. Here is a list of weapons in our spiritual warfare:

- **Identity & Authority (Know who you are and who's you are):** *“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might”* (Ephesians 6:10). Spiritual authority flows from relationship and identity in Christ. This is why Satan attacked Jesus' identity in the wilderness and why the sons of Sceva failed (Acts 19:13–16). Authority is relational, not formulaic. When we know who we are and who's we are we can stand in our God-given authority:

‘Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you.’ (Luke 10: 18-19, NLT)

- **Position in God (Know your position in God):** *Ephesians 2:6* — “And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.”

“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe” (Proverbs 18:10); Psalm 91. Our strength and power come from God and being in God.

We are seated with Jesus in the heavenly realms. This means we share in His victory and rule. That is our fundamental position. We are positioned above the battle! (Eph. 1:20-21) We are also **in** His name and are protected as His children.

Knowing and proclaiming our identity, authority, and position in God is a mighty weapon in warfare!

- **Praise & Worship:** God brings victory through worship (2 Chronicles 20:22)
- **Prayer & Fasting:** Some resistance yields only through prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21)
- **The indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit:** Our fellowship with the Holy Spirit builds spiritual strength and alignment, therefore we must pray in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:14; Jude 1:20). Jesus cast out demons by the Spirit of God (Luke 11:20)
- **The Blood of Jesus:** *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb”* (Revelation 12:11)
- **The Word of God:** The Word is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). Spiritual warfare requires us to forcefully proclaim God's will and renounce the devil's agenda. Jesus defeated the devil through the sword of the Spirit in Matt. 4: 1-11.
- **Taking Authority:** Jesus rebuked Satan directly (Matthew 4:10). Believers are called to do the same in His name.
- **Rest.**
Exodus 14:14 — “The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”
Isaiah 30:15 — “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.”
Psalm 46:10 — “Be still, and know that I am God.”
- **The Armor of God:** Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word (Ephesians 6:13–18)

The Armor of God

¹³Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. ¹⁴Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. ¹⁵For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. ¹⁶In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. ¹⁷Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.' (Eph. 6: 13-18, NLT)

Two key words for understanding the Armor of God are **identity** and **position**. The armor reflects our **war** identity in God as His children. It is significant that Paul writes in Ephesians 4:24 that we must “put on the new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy,” and then in Ephesians 6:13 that we must “put on the full armor of God.”

As God's children, we know and walk in His truth, we stand as those made righteous and justified, we carry His peace, we live by faith, we are secure in our salvation, and we live out His Word. This is who we are in the Spirit—marked by God, belonging to Him. The armor is therefore a picture of our new and eternal identity, and a clear declaration to the enemy that we stand in the victory of the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

In this sense, the armor also speaks of our position in God.

To “put on” the armor, then, is to continually remind ourselves of who we are, whose we are, and where we stand in Him—walking in His power and authority made available through the victory of Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. As we do so, we actively live from this identity and position each day.

We remind ourselves of our war identity and position in God as we put on His armor:

- **Belt of Truth** — Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; truth is found in God's Word and not in human philosophy or compromise (John 14:6). The belt holds everything together—without truth, we become vulnerable. When believers contradict Scripture by what they say, do, or allow, they loosen the belt and risk standing exposed and ashamed.
- **Breastplate of Righteousness** — We are fully forgiven, justified, and cleansed; the enemy has no legal ground to accuse us (2 Corinthians 5:21). Our consciences are clean, and guilt has no place. This righteousness also calls us to holy living—if we choose ongoing sin while claiming righteousness, we leave ourselves spiritually exposed.
- **Shoes of the Gospel of Peace** — We stand firm in the peace that comes from the Good News and advance God's kingdom by proclaiming it (Ephesians 6:15). Where the gospel

is not carried into communities and nations, darkness rules and hearts remain restless. The gospel brings peace and establishes kingdom ground.

- **Shield of Faith** — We are not a people of empty confession, but of faith that trusts and obeys God (Ephesians 6:16). The shield is active when we live out Scripture—when we give as God leads, trust Him for provision, serve others, and pursue the salvation of people. Faith is proven complete by action.
- **Helmet of Salvation** — We live with confident assurance that we are God’s children and that our names are written in heaven (Romans 8:1). Our minds are guarded against lies, doubt, and accusations that seek to undermine our identity, salvation, and obedience to God.
- **Sword of the Spirit** — The Word of God is our highest authority for belief and living; it has the final say (Ephesians 6:17). Both the written Word (logos) and the spoken, Spirit-applied Word (rhema) are wielded through prayer, worship, fasting, and proclamation. The Holy Spirit uses the Word to enforce the victory of Christ and establish God’s will in every situation.

When the enemy comes in like a flood

‘When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.’ (Isa. 59: 19, NKJV)

There are times when we experience intense onslaughts—when challenges arise rapidly and we sense that we are under attack. The enemy is persistent, especially in targeting believers who are on fire for Jesus, as well as families, churches, and even businesses—particularly those that advance God’s Kingdom.

In such moments, we are reminded of the words of the prophet Isaiah: the enemy may come in like a flood. Yet the good news is this—the Holy Spirit raises a standard against him!

It is important to understand that as Christians, we should not wait until we feel under attack before engaging in intercession and spiritual warfare. We are called to be proactive and vigilant. This means our prayer lives should be marked by consistent intercession and spiritual alertness, as Peter encourages us in 1 Peter 5:8.

As we remain faithful in prayer and spiritual warfare, we can be confident that the Holy Spirit will raise up a standard against the enemy. As we do our part, He manifests and applies the victory that Jesus secured for us through His blood and His finished work on the cross—into every area of our lives.

Satan’s attack on the Church

‘Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. ¹⁹And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.’” (Matt. 16: 18-19, NLT)

‘Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people’s faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them.....²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.’ (Rom. 16: 17 & 20, NLT)

Satan hates the Church of Jesus Christ. God has a mission in this world that He sent His Son to die for—to seek and save the lost. For the sake of this mission, God created the Church. **The *missio Dei* has a church, not the other way around.** This is why the devil does everything he can to destroy the local church.

The mission of the local church is simple and clear: **to love God and love people together, to win souls, and to make disciples.** Because of this, the enemy continually seeks to attack the church—its leaders and its members—this family of God. We must therefore be diligent and ensure that the Church does not lose focus by becoming consumed with conflict, politics, offense, and division. These are classic strategies of the enemy to shift our attention away from loving God, loving people, and reaching the lost at any cost.

Today, many churches have drifted into becoming social clubs whose main aim is entertainment or conflict management, rather than advancing God’s kingdom. We must remain alert and recognize that the devil is actively working to destroy the work of God by distracting the Church from its mission.

Thankfully, Jesus has given us a powerful promise: **the gates of hell will not prevail against His Church.** We are called to exercise our God-given authority, stand against the attacks of the enemy, and refuse to be used in his schemes. The kingdom of darkness is highly structured and intentional in its opposition to God’s people; therefore, we must be all the more focused, disciplined, and spiritually serious—standing firm, resisting the devil, and overcoming him through the weapons of our warfare.

No weapon formed against us shall prosper

‘But in that coming day no weapon turned against you will succeed. You will silence every voice raised up to accuse you.’ (Isa. 54:17, NLT)

Christians do not need to fear the devil. Both the Old and New Testaments make it clear that when we abide in the Lord, the enemy cannot have his way with us. Psalm 91 speaks powerfully of God's protection, and Isaiah 54:17 assures us that although weapons may be formed against us and attacks may come, no weapon formed against us will prosper. Do you believe this? This truth is something we must regularly remind ourselves of and boldly declare against the enemy.

In the New Testament, we are given even greater assurance. Jesus Himself declared that He has given us authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and that nothing shall by any means harm us (Luke 10:19). Revelation 12:11 reminds us of the overcoming power of the blood of Jesus—we overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.

Take courage. Jesus has already defeated the devil. Let us therefore stand strong in the Lord, resist the enemy, and oppose his schemes with the weapons of our warfare. The victory is already ours through Christ.

In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Questions to Ponder

1. Name and briefly describe seven foundational principles for understanding spiritual warfare.
2. Paul teaches that we must withstand the wiles (methodeias)—the organized strategies—of the devil. Can you identify any patterns of organized evil influence in your own life, and what steps are you taking to address them?
3. Ephesians 6:12 refers to what appears to be a structured hierarchy of demonic authority. Describe this hierarchy by naming four ranks and briefly explaining what each one is and how it operates.
4. Write a short paragraph explaining who the devil is and where he comes from.
5. Where do demons come from?
6. Write a short paragraph explaining: What is Satan aiming to accomplish, and what is his agenda?
7. What is Satan's strategy, and how does he operate?
8. What does Ephesians 4:27 mean when it says, "give the devil no foothold"? Do you sometimes allow the enemy access to your life?
9. What is a demonic stronghold? Name and briefly explain three negative effects of strongholds in people's lives.
10. It is clear that Satan does not work alone. Whom does he use or employ?

11. What does it mean to resist the devil?
12. Identify and discuss the weapons of our warfare. Can you think of additional spiritual weapons?
13. How would you describe the significance of the Armor of God in your own words? What does it mean to you personally, and how do we practically “put it on” in daily life?
14. Please name and briefly describe each piece of the armor of God.
15. “*When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him*” (Isaiah 59:19, NKJV). What does this Scripture mean to you? Have you ever experienced the enemy attacking you “like a flood,” and if so, how did you respond?
16. Why does Satan attack the Church of Jesus Christ, and how should the Church respond to these attacks?
17. Do you agree with the statement, “*Christians do not need to fear the devil*”? Why do you agree or disagree?