

SPIRITUAL WARFARE 1



“For we are not warring against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.”

Eph 6:12

At the Louvre art museum in France there is a picture by Friedrich Retzsch called ‘*Checkmate*’. On one side of the chess board sits the devil with a fiendish, triumphant smile. On the other is a young man with his head hung low in defeat about to lose his soul. One day a famous chess player studied the remaining pieces on the board and suddenly screamed, “*Son! Don’t give up. It’s not over! You have one more move!*” Men often feel checkmated, discouraged, defeated and failing in life’s inner battles where it really counts. Your Father God understands and is screaming from every page of the Bible “**IN CHRIST YOU ALWAYS HAVE ONE MORE MOVE!**” And that one move is toward the love, forgiveness, mercy, grace, wisdom, patience, power and promises of the risen Christ! Wake up! Life is not a game on a **playground** but a war on a **battlefield**.

Ever wonder why the Bible is such a bloody book with so many battles? Because we are at war! You do not have the power or wisdom to fight on your own strength and wisdom. The closer you follow Christ the more you will experience victory. This year our theme is **SPIRITUAL WARFARE**. Men are daily being deceived, distracted, discouraged, tempted, tried, guilt tripped and accused by our unseen enemy. God's men need to experience victory and know how to fight the good fight for their marriages, families and witness in the marketplace. **What are some signs that men are at war? Where is the battle raging in your life? How have we treated life more like a play-ground end zone celebration rather than a battlefield warzone? In what ways do men feel they are at war (checkmated)? What does it look like to make that one more move towards Christ?**

INVISIBLE WAR The Bible is filled with military words/illustrations as a constant reminder that we are at war for the total capture of our **HEADS** (Rom 1:18-20; 8:1-11; 12:1-2; II Cor 10:4) and **HEARTS** (Rom 1:21-24; Prov 4:23) as well as the destruction of our **HOMES** (Gen 4; Eph 5:18-6:4). Because the Apostle Paul was so often in prison chained to Roman soldiers (Eph 6:20; Acts 21:33) he used a centurion to illustrate spiritual principles of war that we might experience the victory Christ won for us at the cross. What insights grab you from **Ephesians 6:10-12**?

BATTLEFIELD BASICS

- There is an **INVISIBLE** war just as real and even more deadly than a visible war. (Eph 6:12; II Cor 4:4, 10:3-6; II Kings 6:15-19)
- We fight **FROM** the base of victory Christ won at the cross using His power and wisdom to fight **FOR** victory in the daily battles of life. As we walk with Christ daily, we have His resources to resist satanic attacks (Eph 1-2; Rom 8:31-39; I Cor 15:54-58; I John 4:4, 5:4-5; Rev 12:11; James 4:7). How would you respond differently to a robber if you knew his gun was empty? Empty shell casings.

➤ Though still formidable, satan was **DEFEATED** at the cross by our Lord making us victors in Christ. Yet even in our victory he desires to destroy, disgrace, distract, disable, discredit, devastate, devour, deter, discourage and demoralize God's men. We must respect but never fear him. The war can be over but the fighting still persists. How does knowing for certain that your favorite sports team will win change your stress level, frustration, countenance, anxiety? Why? (Eph 4:25; Col 1:13-14; 2:13-14; Heb 2:14; John 16:33; I Cor 15:55-57)

➤ We must be aware of but never preoccupied with the **METHODS** and strategies our enemies. (Eph 6:12; I John 4:4; Gen 3:1-8; Luke 4:1-13)

ASSIGNMENT 1. Read Ephesians 6:10-20 daily this week thanking Jesus for the victory which is ours at the Cross. 2. Memorize Ephesians 6:10 as the truth of God's Word is only offense against our enemy attack. is on the front of your mind to defend against his lies.

TAG TEAM DISCUSSION

1. How often to you remember that you are in a real war and that it is invisible?
2. What truth encouraged you the most? Why?
3. Where are you getting shot at in life?

“Bummer of a birthmark, Hal!”

The Farside by
Gary Larson

