

**WOMAN OF GOD PREPARED FOR BATTLE**

***Ephesians 6:10-20 (ESV)***

***Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.***

* **Lesson:** Equipping the Saints for spiritual warfare.
* **Key Passages**: Ephesians 6:10-12; 2 Cor. 2:11-14; 2 Cor. 11:1-15; 1 John 3:7-13
* **Writer**: Ginny Porter
* **Hear the Word**: This lesson is available in audio and (2) videos.
* **Companion book**: Fiery Darts by Janet Lane

**Introduction**

The city of Ephesus was a hub of idolatry and evil spirits, and for this reason Paul included this particular passage in his letter to the saints who lived there. What was true of Ephesus, is also true of the church in all ages until Jesus returns for His bride. We can ill afford to stick our heads in the sand and pretend this battle is not real. Because if we do, we are defeated already. So the aim of this lesson is to become better informed and prepared for spiritual battles. This lesson will be extremely practical in nature. And so, if you will take these truths to heart, you will be better equipped for the spiritual battle that rages around us.

**The Power of God in Christ**

In his historical and insightful book entitled Power and Magic, Clinton E. Arnold educates the church of Jesus Christ on spiritual warfare. On page 22 he said:

We have thus far characterized Ephesus both as a center for magical practices and as a center for the cult of Artemis for Asia Minor. One may wonder if there was any connection between the two, and if so, what type of relationship the Artemis cult had with the practice of magic. Although it has been claimed that the Ephesian Artemis was not by nature a goddess of magic, she does seem to have had a direct link with the magical practices of the time. She was considered a supremely powerful deity and could therefore exercise her power for the benefit of the devotee in the face of other opposing ‘powers’ and spirits. Her power in this respect is well illustrated in a papyrus containing a magical formula apparently for the purpose of compelling the passion of a woman toward a man. Directly under the text is a crude drawing of the Ephesians Artemis, indicating that she is the power called upon to fulfill the wish (line 4: ‘take a leaf of lead and with a nail write the figure…’). Artemis plays an important role in Greco-Roman times as a goddess of the underworld.

Have you ever experienced, heart pounding, life threatening, crippling fear? Have you ever felt powerless? The majority of the time, our fears are unfounded. But, even though these fears may not have validity, they can cause us to spiral down into a crippling pit of anxiety. Do you know people who are held captive by fear? Have you been a victim yourself? Until we are placed *in* *Christ,* we can easily become a slave to fear. Where does a *spirit of fear* come from? The Bible assures us that it doesn’t come from God.

However, when we have a holy reverence and fear of God -- we need not fear anyone else. You see; perfect love casts out fear, because perfect love is a person...God incarnate... Jesus Christ. (1 John 4:18) Yet, without a proper understanding of Jesus’ true identity you will not have a leg of faith to stand on when you feel powerless. A small view of God, leads to a world view skewed by fear, confusion and instability.

Now where does faith come from? Paul told the Romans that it comes from hearing the Word of God. So get ready to listen up, because we’re about to hear a lot of faith strengthening passages of Scripture. And, if we will hide it in our hearts, our lives will be empowered with enough faith to carry us through any fearful episode that we may face.

***Romans 8:15 (ESV)***

***For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”***

**The Battle is Close to Home**

As the day draws near when Jesus returns for His Bride, the battle is escalating. Satan is very busy working his plan to destroy holy matrimony between one man and one woman. Why would marriage be a target for Satan? Because he knows that marriage represents the union between Christ and His bride -- the church. Although Jesus said the gates of hell would not prevail against the church, He knew that the home would be a fierce battle ground. Paul addresses this cosmic battle in Ephesians 6:10-18. The apostle Peter also warned that the devil is on the prowl, looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8-9).

For the last 20 years I have been in women’s ministry, and I have heard the stories of one woman after another who have endured unspeakable horror and abuse in their own homes. The secret place of a mother’s womb has become the death chamber of 55 million babies in the United States since 1962. And then there are the innumerable homes where domestic violence begins with sexual abuse. We see that no place is safe from the one who comes to steal, kill and destroy.

Before the four hundred years of silence, the Old Testament ends with this warning: “***See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse” (Malachi 4:5-6).***Speaking through the prophet Malachi, the Lord gives us great insight into His purpose in establishing the family and how he feels about marriage.

***Malachi 2:13-16 (NIV)***

***Another thing you do: You flood the Lord’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, “Why?” It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? He seeks Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.“The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the Lord, the God of Israel, “does violence to the one he should protect,” says the Lord Almighty. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.***

Surely the Heavenly Father grieves as He looks upon His broken humanity. I wonder how much we resemble the world in the days before the flood.

Until we are placed *in Christ*, we are like defenseless sheep against the schemes of the evil-one. How have you personally been affected by Satan’s distortion of God’s plan for marriage and family? As the product of a broken home, my life has been greatly affected. My husband and I began our marriage separated from God who holds everything together. Therefore, we know from personal experience, that without Him everything comes apart. Most of us don’t even realize the diabolical plans that are being devised by Satan to destroy our homes and families.

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of any insights and personal applications.**

* 1 Timothy 1:18, 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:1-4, 4:7-8; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

**Unprepared for Spiritual Battle**

***2 Timothy 2:1-4 (NASB)***

***You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.***

Have you ever heard the old hymn “Onward Christian Soldier”? If so, have you ever considered what a Christian soldier is fighting against? Timothy was the pastor of the church of Ephesus when Paul, his spiritual parent and disciple maker, wrote 1 Timothy and 2Timothy. In these two personal letters, Paul repeatedly admonished his dear son to *fight the good fight of the faith*. It was here that we are introduced the concept that a Christian is a soldier in Christ’s army.

To be sure, precious few of us who have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, have been equipped with the armor to defend ourselves. I most certainly wasn’t. The world in which we live is not a *playground*; it’s a *battle ground*. And yet, as a child in the faith, I had no idea of the battles I would face, and furthermore, I was clueless about how to use the weapons of God.

Consequently, I’ve learned these lessons the hard way, mostly through defeat. Yet thankfully, in the last few years the Lord has graciously brought into my life several strong, godly women. One of these women is Janet Warren Lane. In her book Fiery Darts: Satan’s Weapons of Choice, she says:

Satan has at his disposal a vast arsenal of weapons with which to wage war against God’s people.  While it is obvious he often draws upon weapons such as war, evil rulers, persecution, discrimination, poverty, adultery, murder, and broken homes, to highlight only a few, there is one weapon that is so subtle many Christians fail to recognize it as a weapon at all! This weapon is negative thinking or what I have come to call fiery darts, a weapon seemingly insignificant yet incredibly dangerous.  (5)

Finally, now in my fifties, I’m learning about the tactics of the enemy and beginning to win more battles than I am losing. I’m so thankful!

Sadly, when new believers are not disciple, their faith could be shipwrecked when the enemy begins to assault their lives. I have a question for you. Are babies and children aware of the dangers that surround them? Of course they are not! Would you leave a defenseless child outside in a storm to defend itself? We would call this child abuse. A person who is an infant in their faith does not even know he has an enemy, much less, that he has the Sword of the Spirit as a defense. Can you imagine how our perfect Heavenly Father must feel about the neglect of His children? Without a doubt, He feels the same way you and I would if someone was neglecting our own children. Who will love and care for God’s babies? Disciple makers, that is who. Make no mistake about it, we will be held accountable at the judgment seat of Christ for the spiritual neglect of the babies in our sphere of influence.

***1 Corinthians 15:57-58 (NIV)***

***But thanks are to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.***

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make notes of any insights and personal applications.**

* 1 Corinthians 3:9-14; 2 Corinthian 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:17; Matthew 4:1-11; 1 John 2:14

**The Enemy and His Tactics**

***1 Peter 5:8-9(NIV)***

***Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.***

When we were still in the kingdom of darkness, we were defenseless against the schemes of the evil one. But now that we have been rescued from his clutches, the devil has staged an all-out war against us. Yet most of us are not even aware of who he is and the methods he uses.

Dr. David Jeremiah admonishes believers to be equipped for battle. He said, “*The goal of every Christian should be to learn the identity, plans and purposes of the devil and to stand firm against him*!” I don’t disagree with Doctor Jeremiah, but I would add that equally, if not more importantly, we need to know the power of God in Christ, and then, as well-equipped soldiers, we can take our stand and win the daily battles.

***Psalm 138:7-8 (KJV)***

***“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will revive me; You will stretch fourth your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand will save me. The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; your loving kindness, O LORD, is everlasting; do not forsake the works of your hands.”***

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of the insights and personal applications.**

* Col. 1:9-13; Acts 17:11; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 5:6-11; Deut. 1:29-31; 3:22; Psalms 97:9-10

**WORD SEARCH: from Strong’s Concordance:**

* **Devil** #1228 Greek word Diabolos: *false accuser, Satan, and slanderer*. (1Peter5:8, Acts 13:10, Heb. 2:4; Rev. 12:9; 20:10)
* **Schemes/Devices** #3540 Greek word Noema: *thoughts, perception, purpose, intelligence*. (2Cor.2:11)
* **Schemes/wiles** #3180 Greek word Methodeia: *trickery, to lie in wait*. (Eph. 6:11)

**Identify His Methods**

***2 Corinthians 2:10-1, 14 (NASB)***

***But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes. 14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.***

These are some of the methods that the enemy uses against us: temptations of flesh, offense, sinful anger, unforgiveness, disputes, insecurities, fear, ignorance or deceptions, pride, distractions, confusion, delusions and discouragement. In the previous list, can you identify the methods the enemy has used on you?

***2 Corinthians 11:3-5 (NIV)***

***But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.***

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of any insights and personal applications.**

* 1 Corinthians 7:2-5, Matthew 4:1-4, 7:7-14; James 1:19-25; **Ephesians 4:25-27;** James 4:1-11**;** 2 Corinthians 2: 10-11, 14-17, 11:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:3-4

**Identify His Messengers**

***1 John 3:7-13***

***Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. 8The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. 9No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. 10This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.11For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brothers were righteous. 13Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.***

***1 John 4:4-7 (NIV)***

***You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 5They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. 6We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.***

Although people are sometimes used as the devil’s instruments, we are not fighting people! We overcome evil with Good (Luke 6:27-36; Romans 12:14-21; Matthew 5:43-44). Pastor David Lawrence tells us what *forgiveness* is *not*: 1. approval of the offense 2. excusing the offense 3. justifying the offense 4. reconciling with the offender 5. forgetting the offense 6. pretending we’re not hurt. What is forgiveness? Dr. Chuck Hannaford defines it, “*Forgiveness is an act of my will making use of God’s grace in order to cancel a debt owed me…forgiveness is a choice.”*

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of the insights and personal applications.**

* Acts 20:20; 2 Corinthians 2:11, 10:3-6, 11:3-16; 1 John 3:7-13, 4:14; John 8:44-45; Galatians 4:29; Matthew 7:16-22, 13:36-43

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of the insights and personal applications.**

* Acts 17:11; 2 Peter 3:14-18; 2 Corinthians 4:2-6; Deuteronomy 4:2-6; Prov. 30:5-6; Revelations 22:18-20[**2 Corinthians 2:13**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+2%3A11-14&version=NIV#en-NIV-28838) **:** [**2Co 7:6, 13; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18; Gal 2:1, 3; Tit 1:4**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2Cor%207:6,%202Cor%207:13,%202Cor%208:6,%202Cor%208:16,%202Cor%208:23,%202Cor%2012:18,%20Gal%202:1,%20Gal%202:3,%20Titus%201:4&version=NIV)[**2 Corinthians 2:13**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+2%3A11-14&version=NIV#en-NIV-28838) **:** [**S Ac 16:9**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2016:9&version=NIV)[**2 Corinthians 2:14**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+2%3A11-14&version=NIV#en-NIV-28839) **:** [**Ro 6:17; 7:25; 1Co 15:57; 2Co 9:15**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom%206:17,%20Rom%207:25,%201Cor%2015:57,%202Cor%209:15&version=NIV)[**2 Corinthians 2:14**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+2%3A11-14&version=NIV#en-NIV-28839) **: Eze 20:41; Eph 5:2; Php 4:18**[**2 Corinthians 2:14**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+2%3A11-14&version=NIV#en-NIV-28839) **:** [**S 2Co 8:7**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2Cor%208:7&version=NIV)

**Defensive Armor**

***Romans 13:11-14 (NIV)***

***And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh]***



***Ephesians 6:13-17a (NASB)***

***Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousnessand having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.And take the helmet of salvation.***

* **Verse 14 Truth like a belt!** The breastplate of Righteousness helps us do what is right when the enemy comes against us. This is imparted righteousness.

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of the insights and personal applications.**

* John 14:6; 17:17; Revelation 19:7-9)
* **Verse 15 Feet ready with the Gospel of Peace.** We must be at peace with God, reconciled to Him through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus. Then, if our ways are pleasing to the Lord, our commander, He will make our enemy be at peace with us. ***Do you have beautiful feet? Who prepared you with the gospel?***

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of any insights and personal applications.**

* Romans 1:1-10, 8:5-11, 10:15-18; John 17:9-21; 2Timothy 2: 1-4; Proverbs 16:7;2 Cor. 5:18-20
* **Verse 16 Shield of faith. Who is teaching you the Word of God?**

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of any insights and personal applications.**

* Romans 10:17; John 6:63; Romans 8:11 1 Tim. 6:12
* **Verse 18 Helmet of salvation** guards your mind -- the battlefield. Where is your mind set? (Romans 8:5-11) **Arrows are thoughts, false perceptions, and speculations**. He will attack you with the following: past-Justification (1 Cor. 6:9-11), present-sanctification (2 Cor. 5:17; John 17:17; Ephesians 4:22-24), and future-glorification. He is already defeated, for we are in Christ!

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of any insights and personal applications.**

* Romans 5:1-11, 8:1-39, 12:1-2; Colossians 2:10-15

**Offensive Weapons of the Spirit**

***2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NASB)***

***For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.***

***2 Corinthians 6:7b (NIV)***

***with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left.***

***Ephesians 6:17b-20 (NASB)***

***The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.***

**Word of God**

***John 6:63 (NASB)***

***It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.***

We must use the very same strategy as Jesus to combat our enemy (Matthew 4:1-4). The Sword of the Spirit is the use of ***very*** ***specific scriptures***; truths that combat the lies. (See the **WORD SEARCH: from Strong’s Concordance** below to define the difference in the **two** words translated in Greek for ***Word*** of God.) In this spiritual battle, we must use spiritual weapons (Ephesians 5:1-18). To be filled with the Spirit, we must be yielded to the Spirit and under His control. However, if we turn from hearing God’s Word, He will turn his face away from us when we pray.

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of any insights and personal applications.**

* Proverbs 15:8-29, 28:9; Isaiah 1:15, 59:1-3, 49:24-26, 54:13-17; Micah 3:4; 1 Peter 3:12; John 15:7-8

For example, once my family had a real battle on our hands when we came in contact with a woman who was obviously possessed with the devil. (She was chasing her own children around with a butcher knife). My husband and I both had our guard down, and we began to argue about what should be done about this situation. We both were unaware that, through unforgiveness and going to bed angry at one another, we left an open door for the devil. That was all he needed to come into our home, and when he did, a man connected with the demonic woman began to call and threaten to kill my youngest son. We were tricked into thinking the other was the enemy, and all the while the devil was gaining ground. That is until we came to our senses and began to humble ourselves in prayer and go to the Word of God for direction and correction (Eph. 4:17-32; James 1:19-25; Matthew 6:16-22).

Taking back surrendered ground requires confession and repentance. When we see our sin in the mirror of God’s Word, we need to agree with God and come clean (James 4:6-10; 1 John 1:9). The devil loves to do his work in the dark. Yet when we confess our sins to others, we are shedding light on the work of the Devil.

To stand, you must first bow to Jesus in humble submission to His Lordship. Satan can only take the ground we give to him when we have failed to obey God’s Word! Some of us are living defeated lives because we have surrendered ground to the adversary by failing to bow to the authority of God. (2 Timothy 2:22-26; Luke 6:43-48)

**WORD SEARCH: from Strong’s Concordance**

* **WORD- Greek-Logos:** The divine expression –i.e. Christ-communication-utterance-mouth used in the following passages: John 1; 1-14 and 1 Peter 1: 23, Hebrew 4:12, John 8:31, 14:23, 1 John 1:1, Rev. 19:13
* **WORD- Greek- Rhema**: an utterance a specific a matter or topic command –Word. See this used in the following verses: **Matthew** **4**:**1**-**6**; Romans 10:8, 17; 1 Peter 1:26; Ephesians1:13; 5:26 & 6:1; Hebrews 1:3, 11:3; John3:34, 6:63 & 68; John 15:7; 1:25.
* **PRAY- Greek PROS-EUCHE or Prayer-PROS-EUCHOMAI**: Worship-oratory chapel-pray earnestly - pray to God i.e. supplicate, worship.
* **Worship- Greek is PROS-KUNEO**: to kiss like a dog licking his master’s hand-to fawn or crouch-to prostrate oneself in homage - do reverence to adore - WORSHIP. (John 4:20-24)
* **Continually-Greek PROS-KARTEREO:** earnest toward-persevere, constantly diligent-attend assiduously to all the exercises or to a person - to adhere closely to (as a servitor) attend give self continually, continue with - wait on continually. (Acts 6:4) KJV

**The Power of Prayer**

***James 4:3-10 (NIV)***

***When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.Your adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in u.But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud****but* ***shows favor to the humble.”7Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.***

There's a direct correlation to my humbling myself in prayer and my awareness of His presence in the midst of spiritual battle. Because when we pray, not only do we draw near to God, but he also He comes near to us.

“Prayer is the greatest power on earth if it is practiced in the true fear of the LORD.” -- A. W. Tozer.

***Deuteronomy 4:7 (NIV)***

***“What other Nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our GOD is NEAR US whenever we pray to him?”***

The Lord Jesus prayed for us and taught us to pray for deliverance from the evil one (John 17:13-21). The prayers that start in heaven will be powerful on earth!

***Psalms 145:18 (NIV)***

***“The LORD is Near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in TRUTH.”***

God’s Word is truth! Whose prayers are powerful?

***James 5:13-16 (NIV)***

***Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.***

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make note of any insights and personal applications.**

* Romans 8:26-27; 31-39; 1Peter3:8-12; Proverbs 28:9; 15:8, 29; Isaiah 59:1-3

***Psalms 27:1-3 (ESV)***

***The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes,  
it is they who stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.***

In his book Power and Magic Clinton E. Arnold gives a thorough historical background of the concept of power as described in the book of Ephesus. On pages 38 and 39 he said:

The Epistle to the Ephesians was written to western Asia Minor with the likelihood of Ephesus as one, or perhaps the first destinations point. Ephesus functioned as a strategic center for Asia Minor- commercially, economically, in communications, and not least of all, in terms of its religious influence. In this respect, Ephesus served as the center for the worship of Artemis and the widespread practice of magic. An understanding of the worship and cult of Artemis and the practice of Hellenistic magic may therefore be quite important to an understanding of the background of the converts to whom Ephesians was written. The worshipers of Artemis extolled their goddess as supreme in power, a “cosmic” power that was believed to be superior to that of any other deity, astrological fate, and evil spirits. Artemis was closely linked with Hekate as a goddess of the underworld. For this reason, she could be called upon for protection from pernicious ‘powers.’ She could also be invoked to raise the dead, heal the sick, and protect the city.

He went on to say, “A knowledge of Hellenistic magic may very well be the most important background for understanding why the author highlights the power of God and the ‘powers’ of evil in Ephesians. This background may also help to explain the motivation for the lengthy admonition to prepare for engaging in ‘spiritual warfare’ and the particular emphases in the way the teaching on power is expressed in the epistle.”

**WORD SEARCH: FROM STRONG’S CONCORDANCE**

* **Power:** Strong’s # 1411 in Greek is Dunamis: force, miraculous power, a miracle itself, ability, abundance, power, strength, violence, mighty, wonderful work. (Ephesians 1:19A; 3:7, 3:30; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 1:3; Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:5; Matthew 24:30; 26:18)
* **Power**: Strong’s # 2904 in Greek is Kratos: vigor (great) dominion, mighty, power, strength. (Eph. 1:19B; Colossians 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:16; Rev. 5:13)
* **Power**: Strong’s # 1849 in Greek is Exousia: capacity, competency, privilege, freedom, right, strength, mastery, delegated influence; authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power. (Eph. 1:21; 2:2; Matt. 28:18; John 1:12; Rev. 18:1; Jude 25; Colossians 2:10)

In the following verses, you can see that power and belief are closely connected. Could it be that the all surpassing power is unleashed only when we believe the Word of God?

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make notes of any insights and personal applications.**

* + - * Mark 4:39, 9:23; Matthew 19:26; Luke 8:22-25, 9:37-43, 17:6, 18:18; James 1:5-8

Colossians 1:9-23; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 3:18-22; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; 13:4-6; 1 Cor. 1:18-25

With all the worship of false gods and evil deities in Asia Minor, no wonder they lived in fear. Prior to receiving salvation, these evil spirits ruled and dominated their lives. The powers of the kingdom of darkness is all they knew.

This explains why Paul put so much emphasis on the power of God in Christ. Evidently, after all the teaching and preaching they had received, they still needed to be reminded that God was in control. Sometime later, when Timothy was the pastor of the church at Ephesus, Paul wrote these words of encouragement to him: *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but* of power, *and* *of* *love*, *and* *of* *a* *sound* *mind*. (2 Timothy 1:7, KJV) Although the power of God had certainly dispelled and overcome the kingdom of darkness, believers still lived in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation as sheep among the wolves. And so it is with us. But the good news is that, while we may be outnumbered, we will not be overcome…the gates of hell will not prevail against us… not now, not ever! “Now that,” as my pastor would say, “would be a great place to say AMEN!”

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make notes of any insights and personal applications.**

* Romans 5:5-6, 8:15, 31-37; Luke 12:4-7, 24:49; Acts 19:11-20; 2 Corinthians 5:11; Psalms 27:1; 1 John 4:1-4; Philippians 2:15; Matthew 10:16; Matthew 16-17-19

***Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NIV)***

***Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.***

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.**

1. In the above passages, what is under the Lord Jesus’ power and authority?
2. Have you ever lived under the oppression of crippling fear?
3. If so, can you identify the root cause of this fear?
4. Read: Hebrews 2:12-18. In this passage, what did Jesus do to free us from the fear of death?
5. Read: Hebrew 1:1-3, what specifically does the Word of His power do?
6. Review the following list and see if you can identify the methods the enemy has used on you? His methods are: temptations of flesh, offense, sinful anger, unforgiveness, disputes, insecurities, fear, ignorance or deceptions, pride, distractions, confusion, delusions and discouragement.
7. Think about times of defeat. What weapons or armor were missing?
8. Who prepared you for this daily battle?
9. Is this person missing in your walk of faith?
10. Have you been taught to pray?
11. Read: Luke 11:1-3 and Matthew 6:16-22. Who teaches others to pray?
12. Are you preparing someone else to stand?
13. For a more in-depth study on this subject, we recommend the book, **Fiery Darts**, by Janet Lane. You can find her link on our resource page.

**Pearls of Wisdom**

***Romans 8:35-39 (NIV)***

***35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”37No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

**Cross references:**