

# Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc.

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## The Body and Spiritual Warfare

By Dan Trygg

There is a lot of ground I wish to cover here. I have four subpoints in mind: (1.) Why do we do this? (2.) How do we do this? (3.) The believer's authority. (4.) Spiritual warfare.

**(1.) Why do we do this?** Besides the reality that we are participants in a cosmic struggle of good and evil, we also have the more visible and personal responsibility to care for fellow-members of the Body of Christ. Paul said, "If one member suffers, we all suffer..." **If any of us are hurting, or stuck in any kind of bondage or impasse in our lives, our inability to be at our best affects everyone else.** So, like the relationship of marriage, when we love *one another*, we are loving and caring for *ourselves* as well. Every part is valuable, every member has a ministry function to contribute to all the rest of us. **We need each other. Thus, we must make it our responsibility to care for one another.** As the writer of the Hebrews wrote, "See to it that *no one* falls short of the grace of God..." (Heb. 12:15).

**(2.) How do we do this? We ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in dealing with whatever issue we are concerned about, and then we respond to His promptings and leadings.** Here again, there are many gifts in the Body, so He may speak to us in many ways, and may use several people to get to the bottom of what needs to be done. He generally desires our partnership in this process. Also, even though many of us have found that we have certain gifts which seem to more naturally or regularly surface in our lives, the Holy Spirit can distribute His gifts in any way He chooses. **Be prepared and open to new and different leadings than possibly what you have experienced in the past.** If you have never knowingly experienced some of the revelatory gifts, such as the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, and prophecy, you may not be attuned to picking up on the Holy Spirit's ways of communicating with you. These can be words that come into your head, pictures that appear in your mind, feelings or promptings to do or say something, or a "sense" or intuition about something, or even a pain or physical sensation in your own body. Don't be afraid to share these with the group. We are all learning, we are "testing out by experimentation to discover the will of God" (*dokimazō* in Rom. 12:2). **We gain knowledge by trying, and we learn from our successes and failures.** Trust that the Holy Spirit will not only guide you as to what to say, but also guide the group to where He wants us to go. Listen to what others say, and take note if possibly you have "heard" something similar within yourself. That gives great encouragement in this process.

**(3.) The believer's authority. When Jesus shed His blood on the cross, and gave His life for ours, He paid the price for our freedom.** He redeemed us from the enemy's dominion (Col. 1:13). He bought us out of slavery to sin and Satan, setting us free as children of God to serve Him. **If we choose to put our trust in Jesus, to go to Him for our salvation and our refuge, Satan and his minions have no legal claim upon us anymore,** though sometimes they will attempt to hold on to past footholds or "covenants" that we have had in our lives. Satan *does* have power (Gk., *dunamis*), but he no longer has authority (Gk., *exousia*), which includes the legal right and power. He has been stripped of his claims upon our lives, whatever they might be, because Christ cancelled them, removing them, and nailing them to the cross. He also disarmed, or "stripped", the rulers and authorities, and made a public display of His triumph over them (Col. 2:13-15). Even any curses levied against us are broken, because Christ has become a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). Thus, **when confronted with the authority of the Kingdom of God, the enemy must back down and leave.** He is like a trespasser, or an illegal squatter, who attempts to live where he has no right to live. When confronted by law, which is there to enforce the owner's (Jesus') legal authority to his own property, they will be forced to leave, or be arrested and taken off the property. Sometimes the forces of darkness have well established haunts that they do not wish to vacate, or they have had an "agreement" or an "easement" which they claim the property owner gave to them. In these cases, **they may be resistant to leave, but, if all "covenants" and "agreements" have been rescinded and broken, then they must leave, because the "police force" of the Kingdom of God is stronger, and will come and take them by force to escort them off the property.**

What is important for us to understand is that **we must take our stand with Jesus.** Christ paid for our freedom, and makes the authority and power *available to us*, but *we* must confront the powers of darkness in His name. **He gives us the freedom to turn from darkness and the dominion of Satan by turning to the light** of truth and the power, authority and freedom that comes as a rightful inheritance to those who choose to trust in God and follow Jesus. *We* must go up and take down the lies, strongholds and powerbases which the enemy has set up in our lives. Just as Joshua and the men of Israel had to go up and take possession of the land, even though the Lord had

given the land to them, in the same way we must *take the victory of Jesus to the enemy* and demand that He vacate. Furthermore, just as Israel had consecrate themselves, and not bring sin into the camp, **we must choose to relentlessly hunt out, expose and take captive every thought, every argument or line of reasoning that is in our minds which has blocked the love and grace of God from being experienced** in our lives. We must give the enemy no quarter. We must not hang onto any favorite sins. It leaves a doorway wide open for the enemy.

**Concerning the basis for our authority:** In Ephesians 1:19-23, Paul describes how we have not only been raised from death with Christ, but also seated with Him in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named. God put all things in subjection under Christ's feet, and gave Him, as head above all things, to the Church, which is His body. So, **Christ has authority over all things, and we are in and with Him, and He has been given to us, in a special way.** In Luke 10:17-20, the 70 returned from the mission Jesus had sent them on, rejoicing that even the demons were subject to them in Jesus' name. Jesus affirms their discovery, "Behold, I have given you authority (Gk. -- *exousia*) to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power (Gk. -- *dunamis*) of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you." **Jesus is able to give His people authority (legal right and power) to overcome the enemy, and specifically to cast out demons.** In Matt. 28:18-20, finally, Jesus says, "All authority has been given to Me (or, "by Me", or "in Me") in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples... and, behold, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age." **We have all the resources and authority we need to do Christ's work. He Himself will be with us in everything we face,** and out of His complete and all inclusive authority, He will give (or, has given) us all that we need to accomplish His work.

**(4.) Spiritual warfare.** In Ephesians 6:10-20, Paul speaks to the subject of spiritual warfare. We are to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His robust power. **It is not in our own power that we stand, or fight. We are co-workers with God, representatives of His authority.** He admonishes us to put on the full armor of God to be able to stand against the schemes, or trickery, of the enemy. Most of the armor he describes is defensive in nature, protection to ward off the enemy's attacks. Most of it is also about our position in Christ, our trust in Him as our Savior. This is because, again, all of our authority is to be found *in Him*. The enemy attempts to dislodge us from our firm faith in Him, in order to "buffalo us", to get us to retreat from enforcing our legal right to what is ours in Christ.

**The belt of truth -- Jesus is the truth,** He, and His authority, is what is the ultimate reality. The enemy wants to confuse us concerning what is real.

**The breastplate of righteousness -- Christ is our righteousness.** The breastplate covers our vital organs, to ward off any blows to our innermost parts. Our righteousness is *imputed* to us, i.e., it is "placed upon us", because of our trust in Jesus' finished work on our behalf. His shed blood, His payment for sin, His removal of any claim against us, our death and resurrection *with Him*, and our new birth as *holy ones*, is a *gift* given to us, a righteousness based upon *His* perfect and complete actions, not ours. As accuser and slanderer, the enemy attempts to get us to look at our own imperfect performance, to shake our confidence as God's representatives, and to distract us from our true basis of authority. If we understand that our righteousness is based in Christ, we will not be taken in by this type of attack.

**The shoes of the readiness of the Good News of peace -- The Good News is about Jesus' mission and finished work.** He came to tell us of God's heart of love for us, and to initiate the assault of the Kingdom of God to take back the world from the power of the enemy. The shoes described here are the hobnail boots that Roman soldiers wore. Our readiness to apply that Good News again keeps us from being swept away by the enemy's attacks.

**The shield of faith -- Our faith is in Jesus' finished work and continuing presence with us.**

**The helmet of salvation -- In order to protect our thinking, we need to rest assured in our salvation.** Y'shua, the actual Hebrew name of Jesus, literally means "Yahweh saves". Jesus is our salvation.

**The sword of the Spirit -- Paul further defines this as "the word of God".** This is the only part of the armor described that is capable of offensive action, as well as defensive protection. An important insight here is that the Greek for "word" is *not logos*, which would refer more to the revealed word of the Bible, but *rhēma*, which refers to a personal word or directive spoken to you by God. In other words, **the sword of the Spirit is not primarily Bible verses, it is hearing and doing what God instructs you to do in that given situation.** This puts us all on the same level. All of us are capable of hearing from God. It does not require hours and hours of study and memorization.

**Finally, prayer and petition -- We must always remember that the battle is the Lord's.** We ask Him to work on our behalf, and to reveal to us what He wants us to do. We are to be co-workers. **God wants us to be involved, but only as partners with Him.** Just like the early Israelites went up to take the land *in conjunction with* the power of God fighting for them, in the same way, we must both ask for God's working and direction *and* step into the fray as His representatives. Without prayer, we are on our own. Prayer keeps us properly dependent on, God.