

BATTLE

"Pastor, I feel like I'm always in a battle. Does that mean I'm not in God's will?" Experiencing opposition does not mean that God is somehow ignoring or opposing you. As a Christian you are in a spiritual battle between the forces of good and evil. Therefore, awareness of the conflict that's raging around you is very important. Not only awareness, but vigilance, preparedness, courage and the right weaponry are crucial elements when engaging in battle. The apostle Paul highlights the reality of this struggle, stressing that it is both difficult and dangerous. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 Paul states, "***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 strongholds. 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.***" It is clear that "our warfare" is spiritual. We are not fighting a physical battle. Its opponents, its fortresses and its weapons are all spiritual. If we attempt to fight with human weapons, we will fail and the enemy will triumph.

It is important to note that Paul is not speaking only about battling with forces of evil here, the spiritual battle is primarily a battle of the mind. There are 'fortresses' all around us, and they are made up of the "speculations" that Paul mentioned in 2 Corinthians. The word "speculations" in the Greek means "ideas, concepts, reasonings, and philosophies." Such knowledge is present in the world system to prevent people from attaining 'knowledge of the Truth'. Superstitions, philosophies, humanistic views, and persuasive words of carnal wisdom, are all human weapons (1 Corinthians 2:4). None of them can win a spiritual battle. The only thing that is effective – the only offensive weapon we possess – is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). As soldiers in this spiritual battle, the Sword of the Spirit gives us many freedoms. We have freedom from fear - knowing that God is fighting for us (Joshua 1:7-9). We have freedom from despair - knowing that if we are persecuted, Jesus was persecuted first (John 15:18). We have freedom from destruction – knowing that if we are wounded in battle we will be lovingly and delicately restored (Matthew 5:10).

All of these freedoms come through using God's Word – our most powerful weapon. It is the Word of God that strengthens us as we engage in battle (Ephesians 5:26; John 7:38). If we use human weapons to fight against the devil, we will sustain failures and disappointment. On the other hand, the victories we secure by putting on the whole armour of God will establish peace and joy in our lives. So don't use the power of your mind, but rather, use the power of God's Word to defeat the forces of evil. The pride of your own intellect will lead you to ruin, but humility gained from the knowledge of who you are in Christ will bring about the victory. "***Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us***" (Romans 8:37).