Stand Firm

A Christian Guide to Spiritual Warfare
and the Armour of God

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FAITHFUL PATH COMMUNITY

Stand Firm: A Christian Guide to Spiritual Warfare and the Armour of God

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The illustrative stories in this book are not accounts of real people. See “A Note to the Reader.”

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A Note to the Reader

Few subjects in the Christian life stir up as much confusion, or as much fear, as spiritual warfare. Some believers have been taught to see a demon behind every difficulty. Others have been taught, in effect, to ignore the subject altogether. Many simply have questions no one has ever answered clearly.

This book is written for ordinary Christians who want biblical clarity and confidence. My aim is simple: **to help you recognise spiritual opposition, stand firm in Christ, and practise daily faith without living in fear.**

I write as a pastor. For more than twenty years I have served in churches in different countries, and I have sat with many believers who were frightened, confused or worn down by struggles they did not understand. I grew up in the Pentecostal tradition and later studied at a Baptist seminary. You will notice both influences in these pages. I believe the Holy Spirit’s gifts and power are for today, and I also believe every spiritual claim must be tested carefully by Scripture.

Where sincere Christians understand a passage differently, I have tried to say so honestly, rather than presenting one view as the only possible one. And where Scripture speaks clearly, I have tried to let it speak plainly.

About the Stories in This Book

Each chapter includes an illustrative story, introduced with the words “Imagine…”. These stories are not accounts of real people. They are illustrations, created to show how biblical truth might apply in situations many believers face. Any resemblance to particular individuals is unintended. The stories are not meant to provide a pattern for every situation, and their outcomes are not promises. In real life, God works in many different ways and at many different speeds.

What This Book Is Not

This book is not a manual of techniques, and it does not offer a formula for removing every difficulty. Nor is it a replacement for your local church, your pastor or other help you may need. Throughout the book you will find encouragement to seek wise counsel, to stay connected with God’s people and, where needed, to receive medical or professional care alongside prayer. These belong together.

Above all, this is a book about Jesus Christ. He has already won the decisive victory. Everything in these pages rests on that truth.

Richmond Kobe
Faithful Path Community

If You Are Not Sure You Belong to Christ

This book is written mainly for those who already follow Jesus. But perhaps you are reading it and are not sure where you stand with God. If so, this page is for you, and it is the most important place to begin.

The armour of God described in Ephesians 6 is not something we can put on by our own effort. It belongs to those who belong to Christ. And the good news is that God invites everyone to come to Him.

God made us to know Him. He created us for a relationship with Himself, and He loves us deeply. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Our sin separates us from God. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). We cannot fix that separation by being good enough or religious enough.

Jesus died and rose again for us. Jesus, the Son of God, died on the cross to take the penalty for our sin, and He rose from the dead. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

We receive this gift by faith. “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

If you want to turn from your sin and trust Jesus, you can tell Him so now, in your own words. You might pray something like this:

Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for me and rose again. I turn from my sin and put my trust in You. Please forgive me, fill me with Your Holy Spirit and make me Yours. Help me to follow You. Amen.

The words themselves are not magic. What matters is turning to Christ in faith. If you have turned to Christ in faith, you belong to God’s family. Tell a Christian you trust, find a church where Scripture is taught faithfully, and ask about baptism. You do not have to walk this path alone.

How to Use This Book

You can read this book on your own, with a friend, with your family or in a small group. However you use it, I encourage you to read slowly and with your Bible open.

How the Book Is Arranged

The book has four parts. **Part One** explains what spiritual warfare is and who our enemy is. **Part Two** walks through each piece of the armour of God in Ephesians 6. **Part Three** brings that teaching into everyday life. **Part Four** looks ahead to faithfulness over a lifetime and the hope of Christ's return. A short conclusion draws the whole book together.

What You Will Find in Each Chapter

- **An illustrative story** that raises the chapter's main question.
- **A key Scripture passage**, read in its setting.
- **Teaching** that explains the passage and applies it carefully.
- **A common misunderstanding** to avoid.
- **Putting It Into Practice**: a few simple steps to take.
- **For Reflection**: questions for personal thought or group discussion.

- **A prayer and a declaration** to pray and speak in faith.

These declarations express trust in God and commitment to follow Him. Reciting them is not a technique for securing protection or guaranteeing an outcome.

Suggestions for Reading

Take your time. Reading one chapter each week allows space to think, pray and practise what you have read.

Read the passages. Look up the Scripture references and read them in their surrounding context. The book is meant to lead you into God's Word, not replace it.

Use the questions honestly. The reflection questions are not tests. They are invitations to think and pray about your own life.

Read with others. Spiritual warfare is not meant to be fought alone. A group can work through one chapter each week, or two chapters each week over ten weeks, using the reflection questions for discussion and closing in prayer together.

Use the back of the book. The 7-Day Armour of God Prayer Guide and the list of Scriptures for the Battle are designed to help you continue praying and standing long after you finish reading.

PART ONE · UNDERSTANDING THE BATTLE

CHAPTER 1

What Is Spiritual Warfare?

Imagine a man named Simon. He has followed Jesus for eleven years. For most of that time his faith has felt steady. But this year everything seems to be going wrong at once. His car broke down twice. His manager has become cold towards him. He and his wife keep arguing about small things. When he tries to pray, his mind wanders, and a troubling thought comes: *God is tired of you.*

On Sunday, a friend at church listens to all of this and says, “Brother, this is spiritual warfare. The enemy is attacking you.” Simon goes home unsure what to think. Part of him feels relieved, because at least there is a name for it. Another part feels frightened. Is the devil behind his car, his manager and his marriage? And what is he supposed to do about it?

Many Christians stand where Simon is standing. Some of us have been taught to see a demon behind every problem. Others have quietly learned that the devil is an old-fashioned idea. Neither view comes from the Bible.

So let me give a simple definition. **Spiritual warfare is the Christian's struggle to remain faithful to Christ amid the pressures of the world, the desires of the flesh and the opposition of the devil. We stand through God's strength and the resources He gives us.**

My prayer is that this book will help you recognise spiritual opposition, stand firm in Christ, and practise daily faith without living in fear. We begin with the passage that gives the whole book its shape.

> *"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."*
> *EPHESIANS 6:10–12*

Paul Was Not Writing From a Comfortable Chair

When Paul wrote these words, he was a prisoner. Three times in this letter he refers to his imprisonment (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). He was not imagining spiritual battle from a safe distance. He had lived it.

His readers lived it too. Ephesus was full of magic, idols and fear of unseen powers, and when people there came to faith, many burned their books of magic arts in public (Acts 19:18–19).

So Paul is not inventing a new fear for these believers. He is telling them the truth about a world they already knew was not empty. And notice what he does *first*. Before he names a single enemy, he points them to the Lord: “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.” The battle begins with where our strength comes from, not with the enemy.

“We Do Not Wrestle Against Flesh and Blood”

The word translated “wrestle” in verse 12 was used for wrestling as a contest.[1] It suggests a struggle that is close and personal. Spiritual warfare is often close to home: in our thoughts, our choices, our relationships and our faithfulness.

And then Paul tells us who our struggle is *not* against: “flesh and blood.” This is one of the most important lines in the whole passage. The people who hurt us, oppose us or frustrate us are not our ultimate enemy. Simon’s manager is not a demon. His wife is not his enemy. Paul’s words protect us from turning people into targets.

That does not mean people are never responsible for what they do. Wrongs should be named, and sometimes they must be confronted or reported. But a Christian who understands spiritual warfare will be slower to hate, quicker to pray, and more careful to fight the right battle.

Three Fronts: The World, the Flesh and the Devil

Ephesians 6 is not the only place where Paul describes the forces at work against us. Earlier in the same letter, he describes our life before Christ like this:

> *"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind…"*
> *EPHESIANS 2:1–3*

Look closely, and you will see three influences in one sentence. Christians through the centuries have summarised them as **the world, the flesh and the devil**.

The world ("the course of this world") is the pattern of life around us that leaves God out. It shapes us through culture, pressure, values and voices that tell us what matters. John warns that "the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life" are "not from the Father but… from the world" (1 John 2:16).

The flesh ("the passions of our flesh") refers here to our sinful orientation: the fallen desires within us that pull us away from God. It does not suggest that the body itself is evil; God made it good. James is honest about this: "each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own

desire” (James 1:14). Not every temptation needs an outside explanation. Sometimes the problem is my own heart.

The devil (“the prince of the power of the air”) is a real, personal enemy who opposes God and His people. Paul speaks of his “schemes” (Ephesians 6:11), which means his plans, strategies and methods. These influences can overlap: the devil can exploit the pressures of the world and the desires of the flesh.

A healthy understanding keeps all three in view. If we only talk about the devil, we may stop taking responsibility for our own sin. If we never talk about him, we may be unprepared for his schemes.

Real, But Not Behind Every Problem

Many years ago C. S. Lewis described two opposite errors concerning devils: denying their existence and developing “an excessive and unhealthy interest” in them.[2] Both errors are still with us.

The Bible does not allow us to dismiss the devil. Jesus Himself spoke of him, confronted him in the wilderness and set people free from unclean spirits. Peter warns, “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

But the Bible never encourages us to become fascinated by him, afraid of him, or to blame him for everything. Simon’s worn-out car, stressed manager and tired arguments may

be the ordinary troubles of a fallen world. They still call for prayer. They may also call for a mechanic, an honest conversation at work and a humble apology at home.

Four first questions for reflection

When something difficult happens, these questions can help you pray honestly. They are prompts for reflection, not a test that identifies the cause of a difficulty.

1. **My own heart:** Is there sin in me that I need to confess or turn from?
2. **The world around me:** Am I being shaped by pressures, values or voices that pull me away from God?
3. **Truth and lies:** Is there a thought, accusation, fear or temptation pressing on me that contradicts what God says?
4. **Ordinary needs:** Is there a practical, physical, relational or medical need that should be cared for as well?

More than one answer may be true at the same time. Chapter 13 returns to these questions in more depth.

Look again at the thought that came to Simon when he prayed: *God is tired of you*. It needs to be tested against the gospel, and the gospel says otherwise. Simon does not need to establish its precise source before responding. Whether it arises from discouragement, learned beliefs or spiritual opposition, he can bring it to God, answer it with what God has said in Christ, and seek support.

You Are Not Meant to Stand Alone

Notice that Ephesians 6 was written to a church, not to one person. The commands are plural: *you all* put on the

armour, *you all* stand. Standing firm includes asking trusted believers to pray with us, to help us examine our assumptions, and to offer practical support. A mature Christian friend may help Simon see what he cannot see on his own, and may simply help him get his car to the mechanic. We will explore this fully in Chapter 16, but it belongs at the start: no Christian is meant to fight alone.

A Common Misunderstanding

Some people imagine that spiritual warfare is mainly about loud prayers, dramatic encounters and special techniques for defeating the enemy. Prayer is essential, and there are real moments of confrontation, as we will see later. But read Ephesians 6 again and notice how ordinary the armour sounds: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God and prayer.

In other words, the main way we fight is by living faithfully. When you tell the truth when a lie would be easier, refuse an accusation God has already answered at the cross, open your Bible on a tired morning, or forgive someone who hurt you, you are standing firm.

Victory Is Not the Same as an Easy Life

Notice the word that Paul repeats: *stand*. “That you may be able to *stand*” (verse 11). “That you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to *stand* firm” (verse 13). “*Stand* therefore” (verse 14).

Paul does not promise that the evil day will never come. He promises that in Christ we can stand when it does. Some battles end quickly. Others last a long time. Paul himself prayed three times for a painful “thorn” to be removed, a trouble he called “a messenger of Satan,” and the Lord answered, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:7–9).

So if your difficulty has not gone away, that does not, by itself, mean you have failed at spiritual warfare. Standing firm may look like still trusting God on the hundredth difficult morning. That is not defeat. That is faith.

The Battle Belongs to a Victorious King

The devil is real, but he is not God’s equal. He is a created being, and his defeat has already been secured. “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). At the cross, God “disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him” (Colossians 2:15).

We do not fight *for* victory as though the outcome were uncertain. We stand *in* the victory Christ has already won, and we wait for the day when the victory He has secured will be fully revealed and evil finally judged. This is why Paul says, “Be strong in the Lord.” Our confidence is not in our strength, our knowledge or our techniques. It is in Him.

Putting It Into Practice

Here are four simple ways to begin living this out this week:

- **See people clearly.** Think of a person you have been treating as your enemy. Ask God to help you see them as someone made in His image, and pray for them by name. Loving and praying for someone can still include keeping wise boundaries.
- **Ask the four questions.** Choose one difficulty in your life right now, and slowly work through the four questions in prayer.
- **Talk to a trusted Christian.** Speak with a mature believer you trust about the difficulty you identified, and ask them to pray with you.
- **Answer one lie with truth.** If there is an accusation you keep hearing, such as *God is tired of you*, find a verse that answers it and write it where you will see it. For example: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

For Reflection

1. What did “spiritual warfare” make you think of before this chapter? Has that changed?
2. Which error do you lean towards: ignoring the devil, or giving him too much attention?
3. Which of the three (the world, the flesh or the devil) do you find easiest to overlook in your own life?
4. Is there a difficulty you have been praying about that may also need a practical step?

A Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that You came to destroy the works of the devil, and that You have triumphed over every power of darkness. Thank You that I do not have to live in fear. Give me wisdom to see my life clearly: to confess my own sin, to resist the pull of the world, to recognise the lies of the enemy, and to care for the ordinary needs in front of me. Where I have treated people as my enemies, forgive me and teach me to love. When the battle is long, help me to keep standing. Make me strong in You and in the strength of Your might. Amen.

When I am afraid, I will put my trust in Christ.
I will not live carelessly.
My strength is in the Lord.
Christ has already won, and by His grace I will stand.