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# **23** | 1 PETER 5:8-14 Growing in Spiritual Warfare

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**Announcements**

1. Welcome visitors!
2. Midweek Prayer meeting this week.
3. Great to see Michael Anthony Tiberi III is with us. So happy for Pastor Michal and Emily!

Open your Bible if you will to 1 Peter 5:8-11. Today we are looking at “Growing in Spiritual Warfare.” It’s our last message in Peter.

## Pilgrim’s Progress

The book Pilgrim’s Progress tells the story of Pilgrim who becomes Christian. He flees from the city of destruction. He sees the glories of heaven above him and the horrors of hell underneath him, and he sticks his fingers in his ears fleeing from the City of Destruction yelling, “Eternal life! Eternal life!” That’s a picture of everyone of us.

As Christian was on his way to the Celestial City, but before he got there he had to cross a path of two lions, one on either side. Their roar was fierce and vicious. He felt like they would tear him limb from limb. Thankfully, there was a friend named Watchful, and he cried out to Christian to have courage.

He shouted, “Is thy strength so small? Fear not the lions, for they are chained, and are placed there for trial of faith where it is, and for discovery of those that have none. Keep in the middle of the path, and no hurt shall come unto thee. Then I saw that he went on, trembling for fear of the lions, but taking good heed to the directions of the porter; he heard them roar, but they did him no harm.”

We are at war with the devil, but because Christ has bound him on a chain, he can do us no harm, as long as we walk in the middle of the road, in obedience to the Lord.

## A Declaration of War

Remember that famous video that shows President Franklin Roosevelt addressing Congress the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941?

He described that day as “a day that will live in infamy.” When the president made that statement, in reality, America was already at war. Roosevelt just needed a declaration of Congress to make it official.

I am not a member of Congress or the president, but I have a declaration to make: You and I are at war! In fact, we are engaged right now in the mother of all battles. No war in history can compare with the battle you and I are fighting. It can be the cause of either your greatest joy as a Christian or your deepest pain.[[1]](#footnote-2)

We read about this war in our text **1 Peter 5:8-11**, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

## Every Christian’s Battle

The war I am talking about is the spiritual warfare that you became a part of the day you received Jesus Christ as your Savior. This war affects every area of your life. There is no way you can avoid the conflict. There is no bunker or foxhole you can crawl into that will shield you from the effects of this cosmic battle between the forces of God and the forces of Satan.

You may not even know you’re at war. A lot of Christians don’t. But other people can see the results of the battle in those people’s lives, because they have become casualties of spiritual warfare.

Some Christians are **emotional** casualties of spiritual warfare. They are discouraged, depressed, downtrodden, and defeated.

Others are **marital** and family casualties. Divorce, conflict, and abuse are some of the “battle scars” these believers bear.

Still others have been wounded **morally** in the battle. They cannot control their **passions**, or they make **poor moral choices**.

For some Christians, the wounds have been inflicted on their **finances**. They are losing the financial battle because they are losing the spiritual battle. It’s not just a matter of how they use their credit cards.

Since we are all at war, and since there is so much at stake both here on earth and in eternity, we’d better find out what spiritual warfare is all about and how to fight the battle successfully.

Don’t let your weaknesses be a gateway to Satan’s control. Remember what Jesus says to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (**2 Cor 12:9-11**).

God wants us to understand that it is his will for every Christian to live in victory against the devil. How do we do that?

##### Be Ready for the Fight (5:8-9)

## Don’t Be Uncaring

**1 Peter 5:8**, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

With all the pain and suffering of life, it’s easy to check out or be distracted. Peter says, you have to take this seriously. Now, we're to cast our burdens upon the Lord, but to be carefree doesn't mean to be careless. Peter is deadly serious about what he has to say. We are to remember that this has been a war since the beginning. God created hell not for you, but for the devil and his angels. Yet all who follow Satan will end up in hell. That’s serious. That’s why Peter says, “Be sober-minded.” This life has serious consequences.

Notice what he says, “…your adversary the devil....” Did you know you have an adversary? He doesn’t merely say *the* adversary. “... *your* adversary...” Satan has a personal vendetta against you now because you are God’s child. Be serious. Be sober. We cast our cares on Jesus, but we are not careless. We are serious about the battle. Don’t be uncaring.

***Prepare for Action***. Peter says in **1 Peter 1:13**, “Prepare your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” He says literally, “Gird up the loins of your mind.” Roll up the garment of your mind so you don’t get it caught on anything.

The work of the new life is mind renewal. We are to put off the old life, the former way of thinking and put on the new life and be “renewed in the spirit of your mind.”

This makes sense because Ezekiel says we have the old stubborn heart of stone removed and a new tender heart with the Spirit of God given to us. We now have a lot of work to remove and replace our thinking.

## Don’t Be Unthinking

**1 Peter 5:8**, “be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Paul says in **2 Cor 2:11** that we should “not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.” We already know the enemy’s battle plans. He doesn’t just want to hurt you temporarily. He wants to destroy you eternally. Don’t be ignorant of your enemy.

You have an enemy. You'd better recognize him. He has plans to sabotage your life The dynamite is in place, the fuse is laid, and the match is struck.

##### *Satan is a Hidden Lion.*

Satan is raging and roaring as Peter says in **1 Peter 5:8**, “your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, **seeking whom he may devour**.” But don’t think you are going to see him directly. He works through people, culture, what’s popular. He works through philosophy. The devil is a roaring lion, but he’s always undercover.

Paul tells us it’s a real war, but it’s a spiritual and invisible war. **Ephesians 6:12–13**, “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. 13 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**.”

There is an unseen war. In Daniel 10, we see that the demons are territorial. The demonic principality (governor) of Persia and Greece are mentioned. But God says to Daniel “O man greatly loved” (Dan 10:19), I have sent the archangel Michael to be by your side.

God has sent to us angels as “ministering spirits” to help the saints. We can’t see them, and sometimes in our hospitality we “minister to angels unawares.”

##### *Satan is a Hungry Lion.*

He is “seeking whom he may devour” (**5:8b**). This is way you need to be “sober-minded.” Be “watchful.” How do you do that? Remember Satan is a hungry lion. Joaquim Fragoso and I were talking and he told me that when he and Christine bring their kids to the zoo, the lion is always tired and lazy. Have you ever noticed that? Why are the lions at the zoo so lazy? Because they are *well fed.*

Satan is not that way. He’s hungry. He’s being starved because he is a defeated enemy. He knows his time is short. His strategy is to take you down with him.

You are now free from this enemy. He had you in his grip when you were lost, but “the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” (**1 Jn 3:8**).

##### *Satan is a Hateful Lion.*

He is “seeking whom he may devour” (**5:8b**). He’s not looking to wound you. He’s looking to take you out permanently. He “knows his time is short.” He wants to destroy you. Christians no longer belong to Satan, but they certainly can be harassed and demonized by the enemy.

The enemy is territorial. He’s roaming about the earth looking for an opportunity. Now not everyone is harassed by Satan himself. Peter is using a literary device called synecdoche – naming part of something for the whole. There is a whole host of demons. When we refer to demonic activity as “Satan,” we are not just talking about the father of lies, but about any demonic activity.

* **John 5:19b**, “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”
* There is “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience” (**Eph 2:2**).
* “the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not” (**2 Cor 4:4**).

Satan is **hateful**. He’s the accuser of the brothers and sisters.

He is **hateful**. He’ll do anything to stop us. He wants to prevent us from going forward for the kingdom of God. Paul says to the Thessalonians, “We wanted very much to come to you, and I, Paul, tried again and again, but Satan prevented us” (**1 Thess 2:18**).

## Don’t Be Unengaged

**1 Peter 5:9a**, “Resist him, firm in your faith…” You can’t just coast in the Christian life. You have to be proactive. Put on the whole armor of God. Be ready to fight.

##### *Engage in the Fight.*

Paul says, “I have fought the good fight…” The idea of resisting is fighting. Paul explains in Ephesians 6 that we have a war chest filled with armor. We’re going to need to put on the full armor of God.

We are to fight against the wicked one. How? You can’t do it. You are no match for him. Resist Satan, “firm in your faith.” It’s your faith in Christ that will “quench the fiery arrows of the devil.” Paul says, “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds” (**2 Cor 10:4**, KJV).

You were a rebel against God, taken captive by the wicked one. You were behind the prison bars and you could not free yourself. Your prison was impenetrable. You cannot escape. You’re doomed – because when the enemy comes in, at the very end, he’s going to finish you off. He has legal right to destroy you, and he relishes moment your final destruction comes.

In comes your Intercessor, your Advocate – your Warrior. And He stands between you and your accuser. And He takes the hit that was rightfully yours. He takes the blow that was intended for you. This is an extraordinary reality, that Jesus Christ was turned to a pulp for you. God’s very Word, His very Expression took on human form and God in human flesh – He died for you!

Over your prison cell, it has always said “condemned” – “separated eternally from God” – “Guilty!” But suddenly it switches. In a moment everything changes. It now says, “Justified” – “Forgiven” – “No Condemnation” – “Redeemed”!

But we need to be engaged in the fight. The enemy can be overcome by prayer. Jesus said, “This kind comes out only through prayer” (**Mk 9:29**).

##### *Engage in Faith.*

Satan wants you to panic. God wants you to rest and “be firm.”

**1 Peter 5:9**, “Resist him, firm in your faith…” James says: “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Our enemy is a defeated foe.

**1 John 4:4** says we are fighting from a point of victory. He says, “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”

We don’t stand in our own power to resist Satan. We are “firm” in our faith in Christ.

##### Remain Focused (5:9)

## Look at the Cage

Peter says in **1 Peter 5:9**, “Resist him, firm in your faith.” How are we to resist a hungry, hateful, roaring lion?

One day a father and his little boy were watching the lions at the zoo when a lion let out a deafening roar. The terrified boy screamed and ran off, begging his father to run too. But his father told him to come back because the lion wouldn’t hurt him.

“Son,” the father said, “don’t look at the lion. Look at the cage.” As long as we focus on the Person and power of Christ, we won’t have to worry about Satan’s roar.

Listen, if you keep your eyes on the Lord, and you will be relieved. The cage that’s around Satan are God’s hands. God will never let that lion lose on you. He’ll only hurt you if you make your way near to him and stick your arm in the cage.

## Focus on Christ, not Your Suffering

**1 Peter 5:9**, “Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the **same kinds of suffering** are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”

Satan wants to isolate you and make you think you are the only one going through this type of suffering.

The enemy has many tools in his tool house, but he likes to use suffering to bring **discouragement**, bitterness, chaos and confusion. God always brings perfect peace. Satan can roar but he cannot defeat you. You belong to the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

Often we get so hurt in life that we can’t see the Lord. We need to stay focused. Be like Peter in the storm. He focused on Jesus and began walking on water. That’s what God wants for us. We need to live above the circumstances of our lives, focused on Jesus.

In a moment, Jesus can command the wind and the waves: “Peace be still.”

## Focus on Christ, not Your Sin

Ephesians 4 gives us insight into Satan’s devices. Any sin you give way to will open the door for the devil. “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil” (**Eph 4:26-27**).

**Eph 6:11-12**, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 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.”

All life is war. From the cradle to the grave, we fight. Before the new birth, we were held captive by the devil. Now we must “stand against the schemes of the devil”. Though Christ has delivered the death blow to the powers of darkness, they are not yet fully destroyed. At the end of Paul’s life he said “I have fought a good fight”.

## Focus on Christ & His Weapons

**1 Peter 5:9**, “Resist him, firm in your faith…” Paul says in Eph 6 to “put on the full armor of God.”

Recognize the enemies weapons: chaos, discouragement, confusion. How do you resist the devil? Fix your eyes on Jesus. Heb 12:2, “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.”

**2 Corinthians 10:3–4**, “For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.” God’s weapons are means of grace.

1. Spiritual Armor: Living Faith in Christ
2. Prayer
3. Words of Scripture – Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word
4. Worship
5. Faith
6. Godly living
7. Fellowship with the saints

Paul tells us in **Ephesians 6** to “put on the full armor of God.” Now just outside of the very near presence of God is a war chest. God says, “My children will not lose. Give me your Body – your whole being, and I will come in and make it my own. Your hands, your feet, your mouth, will be my hands, feet, and mouth. And I will take out your heart of stone and make it a heart of flesh and I will give you my burdens to bear and you will speak my words and go forth in my power and you will be my instrument!

Now go into that war chest and put on the whole armor of God. Put on…

• Belt of Truth

• Breastplate of Righteousness—righteousness of Christ

• Shoes of Peace—sharing the Gospel

• Shield of Faith

• Helmet of Salvation

• Sword of the Spirit

You don’t stand in your own power. Paul says in **Eph 6:13-14**, “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. 14 Stand therefore.” We are to stand in Christ.

If you go in your own power you will fail. “Not by might, nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord” (**Zech 4:6**).

##### Rest in God’s Favor (5:10-14)

**1 Peter 5:10-11**, “And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

## The Lord is with you in Suffering

Now suffering rightly reacted to will just toughen you and will stabilize you. And a, a mature person can stand in tough times. That’s the way you get mature, by the way. No pain, no gain.

## The Lord is with you in Sanctification

We stand in His grace. **1 Peter 5:10**, “And after you have suffered a little while, the **God of all grace**, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”

***Your sanctification is promised***! Paul said that God would bring about a complete sanctification of believer. “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.” (1 Thess. 5:23-24).

“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24-25).

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).

## The Lord is with you in His Sovereignty

**1 Peter 5:11**, “To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” “Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”

Little David, before he was king knew this. Here is this giant Goliath cursing David and his God. But David replies, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give you into our hand” (**1 Sam 17:45-46**). Do you understand that your battle is not your battle. The battle is the Lord’s!

We are resting in the sovereign one who has all dominion. Jesus is described in the prophets as the one who is going to crush all other kingdoms. John says he is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” He calls Jesus “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Almighty” (**Rev 1:8**). Wow. He’s sovereign over your enemy, and one day God is going to cast the enemy into a lake of fire and sulfur, prepared for the devil and his angels.

### The Five Missionaries

Consider God’s protection of Jim Elliot, missionary who was put to death by the people he came to reach. Elizabeth Elliot’s brother Dave Howard used to be a member of our church.

It is said the tribeman that killed Jim Elliot and the other missionaries saw angels who surrounded those missionaries when they died. Jim Elliot and those missionaries died preaching the Gospel to those who put him to death. The Auca Whoudani Indians who killed him, said at the death of the five missionaries, the curtains were thrown back and they saw a host of angels and heard singing.

God’s protection did not mean that he was immortal. It meant he was immortal until God was finished with him. Don’t fear the enemy! Fear the Lord!

## Examples of God’s Favor

Before we conclude, I want to look at the final verses of 1 Peter. We have two examples of God’s favor. Here are two people who really exemplify spiritual growth. They know what spiritual warfare is. 1 Peter 5:12-14, “By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. 13 She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. 14 Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.”

**Silvanus** (better known as Silas) was Peter (and Paul’s) faithful companion and brother in the Lord. He was faithful to write to the churches of Asia Minor. In other words, Paul dictated the letter, but Silas transcribed it. This is a major reason the Greek of the first epistle of Peter is much more refined than the second epistle.

What did Silas and Peter exort and declare to the churches? That God’s grace is sufficient in suffering. We are to “stand firm” in it, even though we are living in Babylon, a metaphor for Rome, representing the hostile world that every Christian faces (5:13). He speaks of the female who is at Babylon who is chosen. Who is this? It is the church at Rome. She sends “greetings” to the church in Asia Minor. There is affection to be shown by a “kiss of love” (5:14). What is this kiss? It’s different in every culture, but it is a sign that we treat each other as family.

**Mark** is then mentioned. He’s called Peter’s “son.” This is referring to John Mark (5:13), the author of the second Gospel, also considered to be Peter’s Gospel. It was John Mark who was with Peter listening to him and transcribing for him this Gospel that presents our Lord as a servant. This is important because in Rome estimates of slaves in the empire are as high as 50%.

The epistle closes with “Peace to all of you who are in Christ” (5:14b). This is what we can have if we are in Christ. Though there is suffering, slavery, spiritual warfare, there is peace in the storm. There is rest in the righteousness of Christ. This is the hope of 1 Peter.

Part of that peace comes as we think about the spiritual growth that takes place in all believers as they grow in humility. We are all to be “conformed to the image of God’s dear Son” (Rom 8:30). One major way we are transformed as Christians is by growing in humility.

Here we conclude the book of First Peter. This was a book of shining as lights in the midst of darkness, in the midst of suffering.

1. Tony Evans, [*Tony Evans Speaks Out on Spiritual Warfare*](https://ref.ly/logosres/evansspirtlwar?ref=Page.p+5&off=18&ctx=SPIRITUAL+WARFARE%0a~Remember+that+old+news) (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2000), 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)