

What is spiritual warfare?

by Robert S Sims www.battlefocused.org/articles/what-is-spiritual-warfare/

A definition of Spiritual Warfare

From a Christian perspective, *spiritual warfare* is the cosmic war of *good versus evil*: its battles are fought daily between God and Satan; between the Christian Church and the world system ruled by our spiritual enemy; and within every child of God, between the Holy Spirit and the lusts of the carnal flesh. The clear meanings of good and evil, as defined by God rather than man, are revealed within the verses of the Holy Bible and the life of Jesus Christ. [Scripture References](#)

Billy Graham explained the reality of spiritual warfare in his book *Angels*:

We live in a perpetual battlefield ...The wars among the nations on earth are mere popgun affairs compared to the fierceness of battle in the spiritual unseen world. This invisible spiritual conflict is waged around us incessantly and unremittingly. Where the Lord works, Satan's forces hinder; where angel beings carry out divine directives, the devils rage. All this comes about because the powers of darkness press their counterattack to recapture the ground held for the glory of God...

Since the fall of Lucifer, that angel of light and son of the morning, there has been no respite in the bitter Battle of the Ages. Night and day Lucifer, the master craftsman of the devices of darkness, labors to thwart God's plan of the ages. We can find inscribed on every page of human history the consequences of the evil brought to fruition by the powers of darkness with the devil in charge. Satan never yields an inch, nor does he ever pause in his opposition to the plan of God to redeem the "cosmos" from his control.

An overview of this spiritual battlefield can be seen in the [Battle Tracking Matrix](#). Each square of the chart links to pages with additional Bible verses.

Alternative viewpoints in teaching Spiritual Warfare

- **Discipleship:** This ministry emphasizes the process of Christian discipleship while we are being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ by the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit and the scriptures.
- **Deliverance:** Some Christian "deliverance ministries" choose to emphasize the end result with terms such as: generational curses; the use of authority in binding and loosing; and demonic oppression.
- **Exorcism:** Some Roman Catholic priests, as well as other ministries, place emphasis on demonic possession and the practice of exorcism.
- **Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare:** Peter Wagner explored the concepts of territorial spirits and the demonic hierarchy which Satan uses to rule the world system and oppose the plans and purposes of God. Practices such as spiritual mapping, and prayer walking are related to this teaching.

Answers to some common allegations concerning the study of Spiritual Warfare

- **Warmongering:** The purpose of teaching spiritual warfare is not to promote or glorify war – neither in the spiritual nor in the human realm. Rather it is meant to minimize the horrors of an already ongoing war... by sounding the alert at the advance of the enemy, training soldiers to overcome that enemy, and protecting innocent refugees from abuse and destruction. The old soldier Douglas MacArthur said "The soldier, above all other people, prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war", but he also warned future generations "In war, there is no substitute for victory". Lasting peace is bought only by paying the price of vigilance to secure victory in the aftermath of war.

- **Demonizing your adversary:** We must remember that Christ's enemies accused even Him of being demonic. The careful study of scripture delineates the demonic from the natural man rather than obscuring the line. The Holy Bible clearly identifies who is the enemy and who is the friend of God. Jesus Christ taught His disciples how to love their human enemies while simultaneously resisting the works of the devil. Love does no harm to your neighbor. That said, when the enemy *is* in fact a demon... name calling doesn't really hurt its feelings.
- **Dualism:** Satan is not equal to the Most High God. Dissecting a frog does not sully the image of the king. Studying the purposes, strategies and tactics of an enemy does not lead to a coup d'état. On the contrary, it helps ensure that the kingdom is not overthrown. While the soldier guards against the advance of the enemy, the country remains secure with liberty for all to serve the true king and to worship the only living God in peace.

Christian Spiritual Warfare is NOT:

- **Islamic Jihad, Holy War, or religious war:** Christianity does not threaten the non-believer with beheading by the sword if they will not convert. Nor with any other form of terrorism, or military campaign against a nation, or all "*infidels*" in general. **Note:** Christians should NOT equate all Muslims as terrorists.
- **Militarization of the Church:** No uniforms, goose stepping formations, rifles, grenades, tanks, or bomb vests. No destruction of the enemy by means of fire and maneuver with human weapons. See: [Spiritual Weapons](#)
- **Christianization of the military:** I was in the US Army for twenty years, and I testify that I was never once pressured by my chain of command to practice my faith. Occasionally just the opposite. This country does not send our troops into battle singing hymns or promising absolution. In today's military there are indeed "atheists in foxholes", but they often begin to have doubts about their lack of faith. Because when you are called to endure the hell of war, to recall nightly the scenes and smells of the battlefield, and to face the responsibility of putting the lives of young soldiers on the line... you tend to seek the face of God and the counsel of the chaplain.