

Intercession and Spiritual Warfare

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Introduction

Intercessors are a great gift to the body of Christ. As a pastor I am thankful for every person who feels a special calling to intercede for me and for the church I pastor. I recognize that intercessors have played a key role in what God has done and is doing. The place of spiritual warfare in intercession has become a very popular and debated topic in the body of Christ in the last few years. People are acknowledging that their battle is not against flesh and blood but against evil spiritual powers in heavenly places. The war against satanic forces has moved from the realm of casting out demons to actual warfare in the heavenly realm through prayer, worship, and prophetic acts. The concept of intercessory prayer has moved from praying for individuals and circumstances to direct confrontations with demonic powers in the heavenly places.

Casualties of War

In recent years spiritual warfare rallies and conferences have been organized to directly challenge and wage war on ruling principalities and powers over regions. The testimonies of believers and intercessors who have entered the realm of spiritual warfare have been a mixture of both triumph and defeat. Most are victorious testimonies of breakthrough. However, some also testify of very devastating repercussions from the enemy.

Personally I have seen how Satan has targeted pastors, intercessors, and churches that have entered into spiritual warfare. These “counter attacks” at times seem to be more than mere coincidence. People who say they have received demonic counter attacks as a result of spiritual warfare point to things such as sickness, disease, financial setbacks, mood swings, problems in the marriage, problems with the children, divorce, oppression, depression, great temptation, tormenting fear, bad dreams, disunity in the church, problems among intercessors, church splits, deception, and even destruction. Some teach that we have been commissioned and empowered to wage war in the heavenly realm while others teach that we should avoid spiritual warfare all together. What is the truth? How should we approach this subject of spiritual warfare? Is it scriptural? Is it possible to maintain spiritual victory without experiencing the counter attacks of the devil? Is there reason to fear?

Let me state that my purpose here is not to exhaust the subject of intercession and spiritual warfare or to discuss issues such as travail, manifestations, or where and when to intercede. Although I will expose areas where I believe the enemy has gained advantage, my purpose is not to deal harshly with the ministry of intercession or with intercessors. Time and experience has given us great opportunity to learn, make mistakes, and to adjust. My purpose here is to bring Biblical principles and whatever pastoral wisdom and experience I have received into this very controversial subject so that people involved in intercession and spiritual warfare can walk in victory. I believe the following information will help bring the ministry of intercession into its proper place in the church while helping those involved avoid becoming a casualty of war.

The enemy

Warfare is the result of unresolved enemy conflict. Where there is no enemy, there is no need for war. The enemy of God is called “Lucifer,” the “Devil,” the “serpent of old,” and Satan (See Isaiah 14:12 and Revelation 12:9). He fell from his place before God because of his pride and rebellion. He is now the archenemy of God and of the saints. He was in the Garden of Eden and deceived Adam and Eve into disobeying God. He is the accuser of the brethren and goes about to deceive the whole world (Revelation 12:9-11). The Bible is clear that he is full of wrath in waging war on the saints (Revelation 12:17). Our presence as saints on this earth presents a direct threat to his rule of darkness in the lives of men. As a result, it is conceivable and likely that the enemy would seek to launch a counter attack against the saints (see Revelation 12:17). The natural enemies of Israel in the Old Testament are types and shadows of the nature of the demonic enemies of the church today.

The kingdom of Satan

Revelation 12:9 reveals that Satan was cast out of heaven with a third of the angels. These “fallen angels” are enemy forces who obey Satan and come to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). Jesus encountered these forces in His earthly ministry when He cast out demons. Our contact with these forces is inevitable. Ephesians 6:12 tells us, *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* While Satan is the archenemy of God and of the saints, he is not omnipresent. Few have actually encountered Satan personally. However he works in this world through his army of demonic forces. These forces make up the kingdom of Satan (Matthew 12:26). By design, a kingdom has differing levels of rule and authority. Satan is the king of his kingdom with different levels of delegated authority beneath him. Ephesians 6:12 reveals four distinct levels:

1. **Principalities:** The Greek word here is “archas” which describes the highest order of delegated rule in Satan’s kingdom. We get the English word “architect” from this word. Principalities are delegated rulers assigned over geographical nations and regions (see Daniel 10:1-21). They are the masters “architects” of Satan’s rule in these regions. Regional religious and political systems take on the nature of the principalities that rule over them.
2. **Powers:** The Greek word here is “exousias” which means “authorities.” These “powers” are delegated authorities in Satan’s kingdom under principalities. They might be described as the “contractors” who build the “architect’s” master plan. Satan is called the prince of the power (“exousia”) of the air (Ephesians 2:2).
3. **Rulers of the darkness of this world:** The Greek word for “rulers” is “kosmo-kratoras” which means, “word rulers.” It can also be translated “lords of this world” and “princes of this age.” “Darkness” includes the concepts of destitution, lack of light, obscurity, concealment, covering, secrecy, murkiness, shadiness, dimness, and death. In other words, spiritual darkness is the spiritual atmosphere that is void of the true wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and authority of God. Rulers of the darkness of this world are demons assigned to cover this world in darkness in order to conceal the true knowledge of God and of salvation through Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:4) These rulers of darkness are masters of human deception. This darkness is rooted in “philosophy and empty deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.” (Colossians 2:8) False religions, political mindsets, humanistic philosophies, and man-made traditions are powerful influences through which Satan blinds men to the truth in different areas of the world.

4. **Spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places:** “Hosts” is a word that can also be translated “armies.” “Wickedness” describes the nature of these spirits as being morally bad or evil. The English word for “wicked” is derived from the root word that means, “twisted.” [We get the word “wick” (for a candle) from this concept]. Spiritual hosts of wickedness are armies of wicked spirits sent forth to twist the truth of God into a lie. They work to twist man’s behavior, thinking, and character against the moral standard of God. These are the front line demons that oppose our pursuit after God. It is these wicked spirits that come to oppress and demonize the bodies, minds, and souls of men.

Jesus and spiritual warfare

If warfare in the heavens was all it took to get this earth free from Satan’s hold, then the battle could have taken place there without the cross. But Satan’s spiritual hold on human lives had to be broken in the earthly realm. The battle was spiritual, but it was fought on an earthly battlefield. Jesus came as the last Adam to take back what the first Adam lost. When He came to this earth, Jesus took on the form of a servant and became obedient even to the point of death on the cross (Philippians 2:5-9). The Bible tells us that Jesus was manifested in order to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). Jesus laid down His divine authority in heaven and operated as a man with delegated authority on this earth. Jesus did nothing by His own initiative, but carried out only what He saw His Father doing (John 5:19; 30). As a man under delegated authority, Jesus exercised great authority and power over the devil. As with the first Adam, Satan came to Jesus to tempt him to misuse God’s authority. The issue behind every temptation in the wilderness was trying to deceive Jesus into exercising His authority independently of God. Jesus submitted Himself to the authority of God’s Word in every temptation. Submission to God was demonstrated through submission to His word. As a result Satan could not touch him.

Based on the life of Jesus, it seems that it is possible to enter a place under God’s authority where the devil cannot touch us. This doesn’t mean that the devil will not attack us, but it means that he does not have to succeed. The key to God’s protection is whether we will walk according to our flesh or according to the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18). When we give in to the temptations of the flesh—lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—we can find ourselves defeated and enslaved (1 John 2:16). I believe there are reasons we sometimes experience defeat in our personal battles with demonic forces. I will cover some of these. Satan could find no weakness in Jesus (John 14:30). Satan was so powerless to destroy Him that Jesus often walked right through the midst of a crowd of people who intended to kill Him. Jesus declared that no one could take His life from Him but that He laid it down willingly for our sake (John 10:17-18).

Jesus did not overcome the devil by rebuking him out of this world. Satan had a right to be there based on the sin of man. Jesus did tell Satan to get behind Him when Peter opposed God’s plan in the crucifixion. Jesus cast out many demons operating in the earthly realm, but there is not an account in the Gospels where Jesus directly taught His disciples to initiate battles with unseen principalities and powers. His instructions were to preach the gospel of the kingdom in all of the earth. As men and women submit their lives to Jesus, the kingdom of darkness diminishes and the kingdom of God increases. The kingdom of God is manifested where men and women are obedient to His lordship and follow His commands.

The role of intercessors

Because of the separation and deception that sin brings, God initiated in the Old Testament a plan for intercession (mediation) by instituting priests who could stand in the gap between

Himself and His people. The High Priest was the highest and most important intercessor among the people. In the New Testament, Jesus is our High Priest and we have become a holy priesthood unto our God (Hebrews 4:14; 1 Peter 2:9). Every believer in Jesus Christ is an intercessor by virtue of His priesthood. It is not the job of a special elite force of "intercessors" in the church. Every believer is to be involved in the ministry of intercession.

An intercessor is one "who stands in the gap for another": *"So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one."* (Ezekiel 22:30) God wants to save people from destruction but He must find someone to stand in the gap and plead for mercy. Isaiah 59 tells us that God's arm is not so short that it cannot save nor His ear too dull that it cannot hear. God could not save because of sin and the absence of an intercessor. In this passage God could find no one to intercede. God had intercessors in the form of prophets and priests, but evidently they too were a part of the problem rather than the solution. The people of Israel were involved in violence, iniquity, lies, gossip, deception, weaving and fashioning lies, reproducing and hatching vipers, evil thoughts, plans and acts of murder, and a lack of justice. Therefore the curse had been released and the people were being destroyed. God could find no one to stand in the gap and plead for truth and justice in order to bring reconciliation and peace between God and man and between man and man: *"He saw that there were was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor."* (Isaiah 59:16) God is not looking for those who can see the sin and faults in others and then proceed to expose and curse it. Anyone can and will do that. No, Jesus is looking for those who can see beyond the problem and seek the solution. He is looking for those who can see God's plan for the people and then stand in the gap as intercessors *so that God will not have to destroy in judgment.* It is not the job of intercessors to pray judgment and destruction upon sinners and rebels but in every case to plead the mercy of God until repentance and restoration come. Intercessors stand in the gap believing that when people are willing to turn to God, God's mercy will always triumph over pending judgment (James 2:13). Even if sinners refuse to repent and God executes judgment, the heart of a true intercessor will weep and mourn for those who have suffered this fate (Lamentations 3:48; Luke 19:41-44).

The issue of fear

The Bible is clear: *"God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."* (2 Timothy 1:7) Fear of the devil is not from God. Jesus defeated the devil on the cross and stripped him of his power to hold us in bondage based on our sin. Paul stated in Colossians 2:13-15, *"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."* Jesus disarmed the devil of his power because of sin, but He did not disarm the devil of power. Satan still has power, but his *legal* authority based on our sin has been taken away through the cross. Jesus declared in Matthew 28:18, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore . . ."* His authority He has delegated unto every believer. Jesus said in Mark 16:17, *"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons . . ."* Jesus said in Luke 10:19, *"Behold, I give you the **authority** to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the **power** of the enemy, and **nothing shall by any means hurt you.**"* God has given us both *authority* and *power* over the enemy. We do not have to fear the power of the enemy as long as we operate within the boundaries of the authority and power given to

us. Isaiah 54:17 declares, “*No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord.*” Satan uses fear as a weapon against us. It is designed to cause us to drop our shield of faith. If we give in to fear we surrender our authority over him. We must conquer fear with faith in Christ’s victory over the devil.

The issue of authority

Because the issue of authority is at the core of Satan’s rebellion, the ministry of intercession demands that all issues of authority be settled in our heart. Mature intercessors understand that God alone has all *divine* authority and that He *delegates* His authority to whomever He wishes. Therefore they do not struggle against God’s delegation process but honor those He has delegated as His agents and representatives in the earth.

Delegated authority is always given with expressed parameters and boundaries. For example those who are granted authority as law enforcement officers in one city do not have the same authority in another city. Law enforcement officers must operate with a clear understanding of where the boundaries of their jurisdiction begin and ends. When entering another jurisdiction, they must cooperate and work under the authorization of those in authority there. A person who has been given the power of attorney is authorized to conduct legal transactions in the name of another person. They do have no legal authority to do whatever they want. To do so would be illegal and result in tragic consequences. As believers in Christ, we have been given heaven’s power of attorney to carry out kingdom business in Jesus’ name. As ambassadors of Christ, we are commissioned to represent our Homeland (Heaven).

Psalm 24:1 tells us that the earth and all of its inhabitants belong to the Lord. God owns everything. When He created this earth He also created man and gave him authority: “*Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves on the earth.’*” (Genesis 1:28) God gave man authority to subdue His earth and to have dominion over every created thing on the earth. In essence, man was given rule in the earth as God’s delegated authority. The Word of God defined Adam and Eve’s boundaries in the Garden of Eden. The Word of God also defines our boundaries in spiritual matters. The Word of God is our written authorization. Psalm 149:5-9 declares that our privilege and honor as saints is to execute God’s *written* judgments.

Man’s authority is manifested in the earth through the government in the home, church, city, and nations. When Satan appeared as the serpent in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had the authority to exercise dominion over him. But rather than using their authority to represent God, Eve chose to act independently of her husband and Adam chose to act independently from God. As a result, they came under the slavery of sin and the devil.

It is important to see that the forbidden fruit represented something that lay outside of the boundary lines of authority. By choosing to eat the fruit, they chose to step outside of their delegated boundaries. Knowing your God-ordained boundaries is vital in intercession and spiritual warfare. Just because we have power over the enemy does not mean we can start blasting our spiritual canons. Jesus has given us authority much like a Sheriff does a deputy. But any deputy knows that he must still look to the Sheriff for regional assignments and for specific authorization to perform certain tasks. We need to seek the Lord for divine strategy, timing and specific authorization in spiritual warfare. Again, the key is not to act independently from God. Entering battles that God has not assigned to us is presumptuous. Many times believers can “drift” across spiritual boundaries and suffer great harm without knowing what

happened. Some have even drawn “friendly fire” from the saints when crossing these boundaries. Needless to say, operating within our God-ordained boundaries helps keep things from getting confused in the heat of battle. In spiritual warfare presumption can be deadly and ignorance is no excuse.

God worked His plan of redemption through men and women who would yield to His divine authority over their lives. In the same way today God has chosen to delegate His kingdom authority and power through those who will come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. When men and women yield their lives in obedience to Jesus, the kingdom of God (His authority and power) is manifested in the earth. When men and women yield their lives in obedience to sin, the kingdom of Satan is manifested in the earth. The great conflict in the earth revolves around who will have authority.

The issue of pride

Because of the high level of spiritual activity and revelation received during intercession, intercessors must be on the alert for the development of spiritual pride in their heart. Intercessors must understand that everyone is called to the ministry of intercession and there is no official gift of “intercessor” mentioned in the Bible. Intercessors must avoid the temptation to elevate this ministry above what God ordained it to be—a ministry of the priesthood of all believers. I wish that all of God’s people were given to this ministry. However, because of time or the direction of the Lord, some will have a greater involvement, anointing, and effectiveness in intercession. When the term “intercessor” is used, it should always emphasize the “ministry” of prayer rather than an “office” of prayer.

Pride was the sin of Lucifer that caused him to rebel against God (Isaiah 14:12-15). Pride is the sin of thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought. As a result pride leads to spiritual blindness concerning God’s principle of authority. Those who have become deceived by pride cannot see their error because their views of themselves and the principle of authority become distorted. They do not perceive their thoughts and actions to be rebellious because they have already assumed a position in their heart where their actions would normally be appropriate. God created Lucifer a beautiful and magnificent angel (Ezekiel 28:11-19). Yet he elevated himself in his own heart to a place equal with God. Because of pride, his rebellious reasoning seemed totally appropriate to him. In fact, there is no evidence in the Word of God that he has changed his mind. Pride can be very stubborn and unrepentant.

Pride always leads into deep deception. People who are deceived do not know they are deceived. If they did, they would not be deceived. The nature of pride is to lift us beyond the boundaries and placements of God. This results in rebellion and in a fall from the place where we once stood (Proverbs 16:18). It also leads to the judgment of God: *“And the angels **who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day**”* (Jude 6). Our only defense against pride is to walk in humility before our God and to resist the temptation to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. If God chooses to promote us, it is in our best interest not to strive to take it by our own power, but to wait until God confirms and establishes our boundaries through legitimate and proven leadership. Then we become responsible to walk in within our boundaries in humility as a servant of God.

Intercessors are warriors in the spirit realm. They must be aware of the domain they have been given and not seek to lift themselves up beyond their calling. Intercessors may see into the spirit realm but this does not make them prophets. They may battle principalities and powers, but this does not make them apostles. They may see what God wants to do in the

church, but this does not make them pastors. Those who operate in the spirit realm must not assume more than what God has given into their hand.

Pride comes when we stop being thankful within the measure of rule that God has assigned to us. David had the right heart when he said, “*O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance.*” (Psalm 16:5-6) He was satisfied with the Lord and what God had assigned to him. He did not fear another taking it from him for God maintained his lot. Unfortunately Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did not have this heart. They became envious of the portion assigned to Moses and Aaron. Although God had given these men the great privilege of serving daily in His tabernacle, it was not enough. They rose up in rebellion to take the priesthood also. Moses said to them: “*Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all of your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also?*” (Numbers 16:9-10). It is of great importance to see that they did not perceive their actions as rebellious. Why? They had already lifted themselves up to be priests *in their heart*. To them, the issue was clear: Moses and Aaron were controlling and full of pride. What they *thought* they saw in Moses and Aaron turned out to be the reflection of their own heart in the mirror of pride. We must beware lest this same temptation and deception can come to us!

Familiarity with the anointing and presence of God has a way of making us think more highly of ourselves than we ought. It is like being chosen by a king to be one of the servants in his house. At first we are in awe of this privilege and of our new surroundings! But once inside we notice others who have more “honorable” positions. After a while we can become desensitized to the great privilege we have entered into as we begin to resent our *lowly place*. Rather than being promoted, the king sets us aside for a new servant who is grateful for the opportunity to serve in his house.

As God allows us to carry His authority and anointing, we can be tempted to receive part of the glory and praise of man for ourselves. We may not say it, but inside our heart can begin to swell. In our heart we subtly begin to see ourselves higher than we really are—just like Lucifer. If unchecked we too can begin to step beyond our boundaries and grab for what has not been legitimately given to us.

Another error in pride is a false belief that operating in God’s anointing and presence overrides the principle of authority. When God raises a person to a new level of authority He will seal it with the recognition of earthly authority. Spiritually, David was *anointed* to be king by the prophet Samuel. But it was years later before he was *recognized* and *anointed* by the people to be king. When Samuel anointed David he became God’s “king elect.” In God’s mind and in David’s mind it was settled. Yet Saul was still king. God allowed Saul’s reign to come to an end *before* allowing David to come to the throne. David walked in submission to Saul’s authority and did not attempt to take the throne prematurely. David kept his heart submitted and served thankfully and faithfully in the measure of rule given him until the day he was appointed by the people to be king. As a result, David has become a model through which God has chosen to establish His kingdom authority in the earth.

The issue of accountability

Accountability is one of the most important things intercessors need when becoming involved in spiritual warfare. Intercessors are prime targets for the devil. Sadly I have seen and heard testimonies of how anointed intercessors were led astray and shipwrecked by the devil. This

could have been avoided if they had allowed themselves to be accountable. Let me share with you what seems to be a typical progression for intercessors unwilling to become accountable. Intercessors can spend so much time in the spiritual realm that they can lose all sense of God's wisdom in the natural realm. Without proper accountability intercessors can get flaky and out of touch. Their family life often suffers. They often need a higher and higher "goose bump" level in order to be fulfilled. If greater spiritual "highs" become the focus, things can get off base quick. Without accountability intercessors can begin to feel that they are above natural duties such as cleaning the church, serving in the nursery, and helping others in need. Nothing matters anymore but prayer, and they alone must do it. They can begin to feel that there is no such thing as "fun" activities because everything has to be super spiritual. They feel that anything organized must be unspiritual. They begin to think others, rather than they, are out of touch. As a result they can judge others as unspiritual—even their pastors and leaders—and begin isolating themselves. They stop receiving input or correction from their leadership because they "know" more about what is going on in the spirit realm. This can lead to a deeper and deeper digression into deception. They begin to feel that everyone is against them. Depression often occurs as they feel "rejected" by the pastor and those in the church. No one is worthy of his or her submission. They don't feel they need church or the pastor anymore and begin depending upon conferences, seminars, tapes and Christian television for their spiritual nourishment. They have become a part of the church "universal" and commitment to the local church is deemed a "cramping" of this spiritual "freedom" they have found. They no longer believe in the principle of submission because leaders have become "religious" while they have not. Proverbs 18:1 says, *"A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment."* Hebrews 13:17 states, *"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."* It is dangerous to feel that we are above scrutiny and evaluation. Accountability is necessary for our protection from the deceitful plotting of the enemy. Those who intend to remain free from the enemy's deception will seek and embrace this process of accountability.

The issue of the flesh

Another thing that has caused casualties in the area of intercession and spiritual warfare is "smoke screening" the works of the flesh behind a cloak of spirituality. Human beings are great at making "fig leave coverings" to cover the nakedness of the flesh. When confronted we do just like Adam and Eve and shift the blame to everyone else but ourselves. Yes, others may be involved, but we will never be free until we stop blaming others and making excuses. Humility, confession, and repentance are our only way back into God's blessing.

God had to get Adam and Eve to confess their guilt. When they did He covered their flesh in the blood (skin) of a lamb. Sadly, like Eve, it is easier to blame the devil or someone else than it is to fall on our face before God and repent. Rather than saying, "I was wrong", we choose to hide behind of a façade of being "under attack by the devil" and "I'm being targeted by people under the control of evil spirits." Although this is sometimes the case, more often than not God is dealing with an area of sensitive flesh in our lives.

"It's not my fault!" and "I didn't do anything wrong!" is the cry of many people I have visited in jail and in prison. Sadly the same is true for many Christians. Guilt, shame and fear keep them locked up in an emotional and spiritual prison. People don't realize that they place themselves in bondage to the devil through fleshly responses and behavior. It is very difficult to reach people who justify themselves while blaming others. They are irreconcilable because

they refuse to come out of hiding or to let go of the “fig leaves.” When a person gets to this point, only the voice of God calling their name can penetrate their hiding place and bring them to confession and repentance unto freedom.

What are the works of the flesh? Paul states clearly in Galatians 5:19-21, *“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery (or witchcraft), hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like, of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* On the other hand, how do we know when we are operating in the Spirit rather than in the flesh? Paul goes on to tell us in Galatians 5:22-23: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”*

Before we begin to blame the devil, we must get rid of any smoke screens of the flesh. Flesh will not prosper behind the “fig leaves” of religious activity and false spirituality. Flesh is not removed by spiritual warfare and rebuking demons. It is removed when we do as Jesus said and “crucify it”. When we get rid of the flesh, we automatically get rid of the demons that feed on the flesh. We will never have lasting victory over the demons in our lives until we get rid of the flesh they are feeding on.

We must humble our pride and die to the will of the flesh if we are going to avoid becoming a casualty in spiritual warfare. When people deal honestly with their flesh through repentance and dying to self, the demons have no more room to operate. No amount of spiritual warfare will prevail when the flesh remains alive and in operation. God has promised us in Proverbs 28:13: *“He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”*

Many times people carry personal struggles with other individuals into the arena of spiritual warfare. For instance, due to a feeling of hurt or threat people can get caught up “discerning demons” in each other rather than obeying the clear instructions of Scripture to go to a brother or sister who has offended, who has been offended, or who has fallen into sin. Even if a person has come under the influence of demons, it only reinforces our Scriptural duty to pray for their deliverance and to go seek reconciliation and restoration in love. Love covers a multitude of sins while the flesh exposes sin with a motive to destroy. Attempting to do spiritual warfare by “discerning” and “exposing” one another’s “demons” is not only a smokescreen for the sin of judging, but it is also highly subjective and breeds mistrust and division. It is the work of the Accuser of the Brethren, Satan himself. It results in a miry pit of suspicion and mistrust from which only God can deliver us. As much as possible, we must stick to the natural issues involved in bringing reconciliation and restoration.

The issue of forgiveness

We cannot intercede sincerely for those we have not forgiven from our heart. Forgiveness is an area where intercessors must excel, especially when entering intense spiritual warfare. During intense counter attacks of Satan even small offenses left unforgiven can become magnified greatly. Many times when intercessors feel tempted to pray judgment rather than mercy it is because they have become personally wounded in battle. Out of a festering wound they start calling for God’s judgment rather than for His mercy. They fail to realize that they have removed themselves from the seat of intercession to sit in the seat of a judge. Obviously there is a problem in our heart when we feel compelled to condemn, judge, and destroy those for whom Jesus died. Intercessors who begin warring against flesh and blood in their prayers will also be judged themselves (Matthew 7:21).

In Luke 9:54-56 we read the account of Jesus attempting to pass through Samaria on His way to Jerusalem. Because of the racial tension between the Jews and the Samaritans, the Samaritans refused to let Jesus pass. Two of the disciples, James and John, responded with an Old Testament approach when they said, “*Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?*” Jesus responded, “*You do not know what spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.*” Jesus said again in John 3:17, “*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*”

Intercessors must insure that the beam of judgment in their own eye has been removed before attempting to remove the splinter from the eyes of those for whom they intercede. We are really never able to intercede for those we are not willing to die for. We need to ask God for a revelation of His love for those for whom we pray. Most problems that separate human beings are usually small matters (splinters) that have become magnified (beams) in our eyes. Ceasing our criticism and judgment of others can bring the problem back down to splinter size so that we can deal with truth rather than distortions. Intercessors are to plead for mercy and salvation even when the ones for whom they intercede turn against them. Jesus looked down from the cross and cried out, “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.*” (Luke 23:34). Stephen, the church’s first martyr, cried out as he was being stoned, “*Lord, do not charge them with this sin!*” (Acts 7:60) Because of this type of forgiving intercession, one of the men who had participated in his stoning—Saul (Paul)—was later saved and used gloriously to win many souls to Christ. If Jesus and Stephen had been like many of us they would have cried out “*Father—look upon their offense against me and judge!*” Intercessors are to be motivated by the same love that Jesus demonstrated on the cross: “*In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*” (1 John 4:10-11)

The issue of competitive jealousy

Another area that has led to casualties in intercession and spiritual warfare is competitive jealousy between intercessors. We must remember that we are not competing against one another. We will each stand as individuals in our own race. What is important is not how we compare to each other, but how we compare to the measure of Jesus. Competitive jealousy enters when individuals get their eyes off of Jesus and on each other. Anytime this happens people can become puffed up, envious, dissatisfied, or threatened by others. Insecurity and the struggle for significance can make this a difficult thing to overcome. Competitive jealousy can become very cruel when slander, gossip, lies, and even flattery are used to deceitfully undermine the position, character, influence, and favor of others. When we begin to compete for greater power and influence within the rank and file we sacrifice the team for the sake of personal gain. Competitive jealousy undermines the foundation of trust and good will needed to maintain unity. We must overcome this work of the flesh through repentance, reconciliation, and getting our eyes back on Jesus. We must then keep competitive jealousy out through preferring one another in love. David had an army of mighty men who could do greater things than him, but they complimented and strengthened each other rather than competing with each other. As a result they were said to be like “the army of God.”

The issue of unity in intercession

Intercessors must understand that they are not lone rangers but are part of a team. God is bringing forth His army in these last days. Why? Armies, rather than individual soldiers, are raised up to possess territories. There is no spiritual precedent for the John Wayne or Rambo

mentality that operates in the minds of some believers. Unity and interdependence in the army of God are key elements involved in taking cities, regions, and nations. Jesus stated in Matthew 12:25, *“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.”* Satan will seek to divide us in order to destroy us. A military strategy used to conquer mighty armies is “divide and conquer.” Satan cannot defeat us if he cannot divide us. However that is more easily said than done.

I have noticed that almost every time the church begins to take ground from the devil, an issue will arise within the church or between key leaders to bring division. Issues are important, but not usually at the cost of division. Most issues fall into the area of offense. It is important in spiritual warfare that we do not wear our feelings on our sleeves. If we are easily offended, we will have many opportunities. We must choose to walk in love, unity and forgiveness. We must not pursue personal battles that cause God’s army to suffer damage and defeat. It is not our cause for which we fight. It is the cause of Jesus Christ. Armies deal severely with personal squabbles within the rank and file because it threatens the survival of the entire unit. The same is true in the army of God. Division cannot be tolerated in the realm of spiritual warfare. Any church or intercessory prayer group divided cannot stand. We must relinquish all personal battles to the Lord for the sake of the kingdom knowing that righteousness and truth will always prevail in the end. Paul admonishes us to *“walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* (Ephesians 4:1-3) There is a saying that is true in spiritual warfare, *“United we stand, divided we fall!”*

The issue of witchcraft in intercession

Witchcraft is listed among the sins of the flesh in Galatians 5:20 (KJV). Witchcraft is an attempt to control others in any of three ways: intimidation, manipulation, and domination. The simple work of the flesh is bad enough, but when spiritual forces are implemented it can become diabolical. Thus we have the medieval concept of witches casting spells and hexes in order to control others. When Christians enter into spiritual warfare in a fleshly manner to push their own agenda, the same results of intimidation, manipulation, and domination can begin to manifest. It can destroy individuals, homes, and the church. God is not obliged to protect those who would enter into such independent and selfish activity. God is looking for those with a humble attitude who will submit themselves under the mighty hand of God to do His will rather than their own.

True intercessors have a loyalty and a respect for those in authority over them. They understand that God has positioned these authorities and will perform His will through them (Proverbs 21:1). Paul even stated that the angels of God recognize us based on our recognition of God’s order (1 Corinthians 11:10). When we step outside of the boundaries of God’s authority in our lives, we open ourselves up to the evil forces of destruction. People therefore must continually walk under submission to authority. We are not called to use prayer as some type of spiritual “sorcery” to get others around us to do what we think should be done. Intercessors are not to take on a super-spiritual attitude and begin believing that their time in prayer gives them spiritual insight and authority to lead or dictate the direction of people’s lives. No, on the contrary, intercessors must be careful not to think of themselves more highly than they ought lest they become puffed up with pride and launch out in areas outside of their God-ordained boundaries. It is important for intercessors to remain in submission to the authorities in the home and in the church in addition to being subject to God, for God has established all

of these authorities. Great harm has been done when intercessors have fought against rather than mediated for the leadership in their homes and in the church.

True intercessors pray in line with the vision of the house. They are not interested in praying their own vision. Two differing visions create “di-vision.” They ask the leadership of the house to share their vision and they go into prayer like Joshua and Hur to hold up the hands of these who hold forth the rod of God. Witchcraft prayer, on the other hand, sets ambushments against the leadership of the house. They pray their own agenda and don’t mind praying against the vision of the house.

Three levels of spiritual warfare

Not all encounters with demonic forces are fought on the same level. As previously noted, there are different ranks of spiritual forces working around us. We must understand what level of demonic activity we are encountering if we are to wage war effectively. There are three basic levels where demonic forces operate:

- 1. Ground level warfare:** (Luke 10:17-20; Mark 16:15-20) This level of spiritual warfare is the most common in our daily lives. It is at this level that we wage war through salvation, repentance, and by casting out demons. This is the most common type of demonic encounter that Jesus faced while on this earth. Every believer has authority and power to operate on this level in setting people free. Casualties among saints in this area are usually minimal and a lot depends upon a person’s right standing with God, their maturity, and their level of faith.
- 2. Occult level warfare:** (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; James 3) At this level demons are activated against us through words and/or curses. Curses release the voice of demons to begin speaking in our minds and in our hearts. Blessing changes the inner voices. The first sign that occult level warfare is engaged against an individual or congregation is when people begin to *hear* and *voice* cursing. These critical voices will keep a person or congregation from hearing what they need to hear. When we refer to people on the basis of their race we bind them into their cultural genetics after the flesh rather than referring to them as saints, which releases the spiritual genetics of the new creation. If we do not engage the occult level voices through prayer and blessing, then it will destroy the people involved. Every believer has the ability and authority to release God’s word and blessing in order to see people set free from this level of demonic activity. Casualties in this area can be avoided by staying free from offence, bitterness, rebellion, and pride. The heart and mind is the chief battleground in this level of warfare and the tongue is the chief weapon.
- 3. Territorial level warfare:** (Daniel 10; Mark 5:10) This level of spiritual warfare is over geographical neighborhoods, cities, counties, regions, states, and nations. This level of warfare engages principalities and powers that directly influence and control lives in that region both in the political and religious realm. These demonic forces do not usually go away but they can become weaker. While believers have authority over these powers, territorial spirits have deep-seated roots in the sins of the forefathers. They are best dealt with by “armies of saints” rather than with individual saints. In this type of warfare, rank and file unity within the army and strategic operation in the army seems to be of great importance in order to avoid unnecessary casualties of war. Rambo-type intercession at this level can be very dangerous and costly. Identificational repentance and confession of sin (Daniel 9), submission under the mighty hand of God, and the preaching of the gospel of peace and of the kingdom of God to those who live in the

territory are the most biblical and effective ways to weaken or to uproot these principalities and powers. Binding and loosing spiritual activity at this level must be orchestrated from the throne of God: *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind—that is, declare to be improper and unlawful—on earth **must be already bound in heaven**; and whatever you loose on earth—declare lawful—**must be what is already loosed in heaven.**”* (Matthew 16:19, Amplified Bible)

The issue of revelation in intercession

Casualties in spiritual warfare can take place by warring with the wrong type of revelation. Intercessors must be careful where they receive their revelation for prayer. Understanding where certain revelation is coming from will help us avoid misguided intercession. There are three basic spheres of revelation (2 Corinthians 12:2).

- 1. First Heaven Revelation:** (Genesis 1:20) This first heaven is the natural atmosphere that surrounds the earth. The type of revelation received in this earthly realm is “sense knowledge.” In the natural realm we gain knowledge of things around us based on our five physical senses—what we see, taste, touch, smell, and hear. While this type of knowledge may be important, it can lead us into inaccurate intercession. We are not to make judgments about individuals or situations based on the outward appearance alone, for God knows the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). It is from the knowledge gained from this realm that we recognize the *need* for food, clothing, shelter, healing, provision, physical strength, peace, etc. But we will get little results if we pray solely on the basis of the need. Jesus was not moved simply by the need in people’s lives. He was moved by faith and by what He saw His Father doing. We will never experience the kind of results we long for if we base our prayers solely on sense knowledge alone.
- 2. Second Heaven Revelation:** (Ephesians 6:12) The second heaven is the realm in which demonic spirits operate. The type of revelation received in this realm comes through the demonic realm. Because we are spiritual beings we have the ability to detect or discern demonic or evil influences at work around us. But just because we detect or discern this negative information does not mean we are to act on the basis of that information. Anyone can see the negative and attack it with criticism and judgment. For instance James and John discerned the negative spiritual attitude in the Samaritans and concluded that they should respond by calling down fire out of heaven. Jesus revealed that they were operating in the wrong spirit. What they discerned was true, but their response was wrong. He proceeded to give them a higher revelation, that is, He did not come to destroy but to save. Many people have been hurt by Christians who have tried to minister to people on the basis of this type of revelation. If we respond to people based on what Satan is doing in their lives, we fail to remember the difference Jesus came to make. God sees sinners as hostages to these demonic “kidnappers”. We must not deal with kidnappers by blowing up both the kidnapper and the hostage. No, we must rescue hostages with a strategy that can loose them and set them free. Second heaven revelation, although it may appear to be spiritual wisdom and discernment in operation, is not the wisdom of God at all. Rather it is earthly, sensual, and demonic and produces the negative results of self-seeking, confusion, strife and every type of evil work (James 3:13-18). Although this type of revelation may give us insight into what the enemy is doing, it must not become the basis of our direction in intercession.
- 3. Third Heaven Revelation:** (2 Corinthians 12:2; Ephesians 1:20-23) This is the heaven in which God lives. It is here that we can approach the throne of God. This realm is

free from demonic influence. The revelation that we receive from this realm is given by the Holy Spirit. It is at this level that we can discover God's eternal perspective and His perfect will. It is in this place that Jesus our Intercessor is interceding for us (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). ***Intercession must always be initiated from this realm.*** We are not the intercessor, but Jesus is our High Priest Intercessor. We must enter into His intercessions. We are not to pray what originates in our own heart. On the contrary, we must come before His throne and pray until the Holy Spirit reveals what is on His heart to pray. In this realm God reveals His intended destiny and plan for an individual or people. From this realm we see beyond the natural and the demonic and we see people as God sees people. From this realm it is clearly seen who is the enemy and who is the victim. From this realm we see the sacrifice of Jesus and the end from the beginning. This is the realm where vision is clear and love prevails. From this realm we can begin to love a Saul of Tarsus because we can see the plan of God for his life. From this realm God sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins while we were yet sinners. From this realm we can lay down our lives for those who seem to be our enemies because we can "see" their ultimate destiny in Christ. This is the first place where intercessors must go if they are to minister effectively in the first and second heaven. We enter this realm in an attitude of worship allowing God simply waiting upon God to reveal His heart for the sinner, for our family, for our city, for our nation, and for our world. This is the revelation upon which we base our intercessions.

Intercession from the Third Heaven

Our intercession and spiritual warfare must be initiated and sustained from the third heaven. Much of our intercession has been ineffective or even counterproductive because of a failure to understand this. We are to pray for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Therefore we are not to impose our ideas upon this earth but to enter into the throne room in worship and prayer until the Lord reveals His will. Then we can pray in agreement with Him.

Our fleshly attempts to fight demonic forces are futile and dangerous. Attempting to fight demonic forces in the second heaven from a first heaven perspective can be like shooting arrows at the moon. It may actually activate demonic counter attacks against us from which we can suffer great harm. We must go to the third heaven to receive what we need to fight in the first and second heaven. We should never fight from the first heaven up but from the third heaven down. We are not to choose our battles or the time and place in which they will take place. Just because we see the enemy out there does not necessarily mean we are the ones assigned to launch the attack.

There is a *strategy* and *timing* for victory. Zealous presumption can lead to defeat. This does not mean that we should sit around doing nothing waiting for orders from heaven. No, we have already received our orders to "GO" take the gospel into all the world. We will naturally encounter enemy resistance as we do. In these cases we are able to respond with the authority and power necessary to carry out the Lord's command. Yet we must also understand that there is a *time* for the displacement of principalities and powers from a region (Genesis 15:13-16; Daniel 10). I believe it is wise not to engage principalities and powers in the second heaven without the Lord's direction. Jesus has given us authority to bind their activity in the lives of those to whom we minister and to spoil them. But we do not have the authority to cast them out of a region. In Daniel chapter 10, it was Gabriel and Michael who fought principalities and powers in the heavenly places as Daniel repented, fasted, prayed, and sought the Lord. In Revelation 12 we don't find the church fighting the dragon but birthing the plan of God into the earth. When this happened war took place in the heavens, but it was

Michael, and not the saints that had to engage in the war. However, on this earth it is clear that we will encounter and wrestle against their influence.

I believe that we should spend more time focusing upon God in worship and intercession over souls than in focusing on spiritual warfare in prayer. As we worship Him, God will reveal what is on His heart and what He desires to do. When He initiates the encounter in the second heaven, we can be sure that He has granted us the specific authority and anointing to enforce it. I believe much of our work in the second heaven will be prophesying the *rhema* word of the Lord that we have heard while in prayer. The only offensive weapon mentioned in Ephesians 6 is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word (“rhema”) of God. It was this same weapon that Jesus used against Satan on this earth.

Avoid reviling accusations

Although Satan is a defeated foe, the Scriptures seem to indicate that our attitude towards angels and principalities in heavenly places is to be that of respect. We must remember that we are not created above angels, but that they have been created above us in authority—operating under delegated authority in all three heavens. Although Paul states that we will one day judge angels, Psalm 8:5 tell us clearly that man was created a little lower than the angels. Man has been given delegated authority upon this earth. We should avoid flippant accusations and proud reviling of our flesh against Satan. Not even the holy angels of God will revile Satan. They only bring against Him the word of the Lord, nothing more and nothing less. Jude 8-10 declares, *“Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’ But these speak evil of whatever they do not know.”*

Although Satan and his demons have been conquered at the cross, we are to respect the principle of authority in the heavenly realm even as we do with earthly authorities who are also enemies of God. Michael, one of God’s chief angels, dared not bring a reviling accusation against the devil. Neither should we as human beings. Michael’s rebuke of Satan was not a personal initiative. The battle is the Lord’s. In the same way that Michael was a messenger of the Lord’s rebuke to Satan, so are we. We are messengers of good news to the lost and messengers of the Lord’s rebuke to the devil. Yet even with this, Jesus told His disciples not to rejoice because the demons were subject to them in His name, but to rejoice that their names were written down in heaven (Luke 10:20). We must remember that our greatest spiritual blessing is not to be granted authority over the devil but to be granted eternal life with the Father.

The battlefield of the mind

Our weapons are designed to bring down strongholds in our lives and in the lives of others. Most of these weapons have to do with delivering the mind from the power of Satan’s deception. The mind is really the battlefield upon which the battles between the truth of God and the deception of Satan are fought. We stand in this mental battlefield and must fight to keep God’s truth intact while capturing and casting out the lies of the devil. Strongholds are an organized set of thoughts and reasoning based on the devil’s lies. These lies keep us bound in deception, destruction and sin. These thoughts can be planted in our minds through the words of people or through the voice of the devil himself. The way to freedom is to put on the *armor of God* and to use the *weapons* that God has given us to pull down and destroy the devil’s *strongholds* in the mind.

The armor of God

Armor is meant for protection in battle. In order to avoid casualties in the battle against demonic forces, we are told to put on the full **armor of God**. This armor is not optional. Our battle is real. The armor is for our protection against enemy attack. If we are to survive, we must understand the nature and purpose of each piece of armor and implement it in battlefield. Don't enter the battle without it!

1. **Waist girded with truth:** The girding of the waist keeps the clothing secure as the warrior maneuvers in battle. It represents freedom in movement. Our freedom in movement against the enemy is found in girding our minds with truth (John 8:32; I Peter 1:13).
2. **Breastplate of righteousness:** The breastplate protects the heart. Satan comes to condemn us because of our past. The righteousness we wear is not our own, but is given to us by the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is purchased through the blood of Jesus for our sins. This piece of armor is the righteousness consciousness that we have in our heart that gives us confidence to stand against the devil when accused (Revelation 12:11).
3. **Shoes of the gospel of peace:** Shoes are very important in warfare. Without a solid footing, the enemy is sure to bring even the best of soldiers down. Therefore we must be sure of our standing with God. We must know without a shadow of a doubt that we belong to Him and have peace with God due to our faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The feet also take ground from the enemy. We are to go forth with the gospel taking ground away from the devil in people's lives. The feet also represent victory, as it was customary for the conqueror to place his foot on the head of the conquered foe. In the same way, we are assured that we will crush Satan underneath our feet with the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20).
4. **Shield of faith:** Shields were used both to push against the enemy and to block the blows and fiery arrows of the enemy. Shields were usually covered with leather and soaked in water before battle. Our shield is faith. Our faith in God and His word will help us push forward against the enemy and also extinguish the fiery darts of fear and doubt that are aimed at our heart and mind.
5. **Helmet of salvation:** The helmet protects the head and mind. The mind is the center of the body's thought processes. If the mind is not in proper functioning order, then the soldier will be unable to fight in such a way as to win. The helmet of salvation is needed to insure that we maintain a salvation or victory consciousness in Christ Jesus.
6. **Sword of the Spirit:** The sword is the only offensive weapon mentioned in this list of armor. This "sword" is called the "word ("rhema") of God." The *rhema* word of God is the specific revelation of God's word given to us for a specific purpose to overcome a specific strategy of the devil. This was the sword of God's word that Jesus used against Satan during the temptation in the wilderness. (see Hebrews 4:12)
7. **Prayer:** Prayer in this passage is not so much a weapon as it is the *engagement* of our weapons against the enemy. Just as warriors once fought against one another in great sports arenas during the days of the Roman Empire, so we also fight against principalities and powers in the place of prayer. All of the weapons of God are available to be used against our spiritual enemy in prayer before the battle is taken into the earthly arena of human life.

The weapons of our warfare

Believers have been given powerful weapons to use against the enemy. Ignorance of these weapons could result in defeat. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but they are *mighty in God* to the pulling down of strongholds. There are four basic weapons that God has given us. We must understand and use them effectively.

1. **The Word of God:** The word of God is called the “sword of the Spirit.” (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). The word of God is the “thought” of God expressed. Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us that God’s thoughts are higher (in eternal truth) than our thoughts. When we choose to accept God’s thoughts we come to odds with the devil’s lies. We fight the lie with the truth of God’s word. This is the weapon that Jesus used against the devil in temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4; Luke 4)
2. **The Name of Jesus:** The name of Jesus is the single most powerful thought in the word of God. He is the Truth. Jesus said that those who believe in His name would do mighty works (Mark 16:15-20). The early church was obsessed with the name of Jesus. Jesus is the word of God (John 1:1) and His name represents the summation of the authority of God (Philippians 2:5-9). The devil and his demons are subject to the name of Jesus.
3. **The Blood of Jesus:** The blood of Jesus represents the essential truth of man’s redemption and deliverance from the devil’s power. The blood of Jesus effectively eliminated the power of the devil’s accusation of the devil against us. When we invoke the blood of Jesus, we destroy the foundation upon which the strongholds of Satan are built.
4. **The Cross of Jesus:** The cross of Jesus is the power and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:18, 24). The cross was where the charges against us were wiped out (Colossians 2:14). Through the cross represents the reconciliation of God whereby all walls between people are broken down and they become one body in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16). The cross is the outstanding symbol of Satan’s defeat (Colossians 2:15). As a result, the cross is Satan’s most regretted military blunder and it demonstrates the surpassing wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-8). The cross of Jesus is the central theme in the message of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 2:17-2:8).

These four weapons are like nuclear warheads. They have great power against the enemy. Like missiles, however, these warheads must be mounted upon launching rockets in order to get them to their target. There are seven basic spiritual “launching rockets” that we have available to us. All seven find their release with the words of our mouth. They are:

1. **Prayer:** Prayer releases these weapons of God into the spiritual battlefield in heavenly places. There is no power in prayer against the enemy if our prayer is not armed with one or more of these spiritual warheads.
2. **Praise:** Praise is magnifying God with our lips. When we magnify the Lord, we invite His presence and activate His power over the enemy. Jehoshaphat discovered this key against the enemy in 2 Chronicles 20.
3. **Preaching:** Preaching is proclaiming the thought of God to others. When believed, the deception and power of the devil is broken in the lives of sinners.
4. **Testimony:** Testimony is our witness to the salvation of God in our lives. When we share our testimony, we become a personal lighthouse of hope so that others might overcome the power of hopelessness and embrace God’s truth and salvation.

5. **Confession:** Confession is proclaiming the truth of God's word in the face of opposition and trouble. It is elevating the truth of God's thought above the thoughts of doubt and unbelief that try to deny God's truth. When we believe with our heart and confess with our mouth the word of God, we will see the salvation of God (Mark 11:23-24; Romans 10:9-10).
6. **Prophesying:** Prophesying is activating the revealed will of God by speaking forth the word of God through divine unction. Prophesying releases the potential of God into a situation. God's way is to speak forth His will and then to bring to pass what He has spoken (Genesis 1; Romans 4:17; Amos 3:7). God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones and they were resurrected to be a mighty army (Ezekiel 37).
7. **Blessing:** Blessing is speaking forth God's divine destiny and favor in people's lives. The power of blessing is in the tongue and it can set in motion the course of existence (James 3:6; Matthew 5:44; Mark 10:16; Genesis 27:27-29; 48:1-16; Deuteronomy 33).

In conclusion

As believers and intercessors, it is a great honor to be entrusted with delegated authority as Christ's ambassadors in this earth. We have been given authority in Jesus' name to carry forth this gospel of Jesus Christ. We should use this authority wisely in submission unto God as we represent His will on earth as it is in heaven. We have been given authority and power over the evil one. We do not need to fear the weapons of Satan fashioned against us if we will not allow ourselves to enter into sin or presumption. The battle is not ours; the battle belongs to the Lord. Therefore we as intercessors must understand our role and operate within the scope of our delegated boundaries trusting that our Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, is ordering and leading His troops to victory. We have the authority and power to conquer Satan on any level as the Lord directs. The greatest threat we face in spiritual warfare is not the devil but the weakness of our own flesh. There is no need to become a casualty of war. There is only need to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and to be obedient soldiers in His army. Simply stated, this is the wisdom of God for victorious warfare.