

Second Corinthians VIII Spiritual Warfare

(2-Cor. 8, 9, 10)

Run the race and fight the good fight of faith putting on the whole armor of God

Fred R. Coulter—July 7, 2018

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services. This is going to work out just a little bit differently, because we're up through 2-Cor. 7. Chapters 8 & 9 are handling kind of administrative things.

2-Corinthians 8:1: "Now, brethren, we *wish* to make known to you the grace of God that has been given to the churches in Macedonia, that in a great trial of affliction, their abundant joy and their deep poverty has overflowed unto the wealth of their liberality. For I testify *that* according to *their* ability, and *even* beyond *their* ability, *they were* willing to *give* of themselves, earnestly entreating us to accept the gift, and *their* participation in the service for the saints. And not *only* as we had hoped, but they gave themselves first to the Lord, and to us by *the* will of God" (vs 1-5).

Verse 6: "So then, we exhorted Titus that as he had begun *this service*, so he might also with you *make* this gift complete. Now even as you are abounding in every *way*—in faith, and word, and knowledge, and *in* all diligence, and in the love *that* you have for us—so you should also abound in this gift. I am not saying *this* as a command, but *I am exhorting you* through the diligence of others in order to prove the genuineness of your love. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: that although He was rich, He became poor for your sakes, so that by His poverty you might become rich. Now I give *my* judgment in this because it is fitting for you, who began a year ago not only to perform *this service*, but also showed *your* willingness. But now complete the service, so that just as *there was* a willing readiness, so also *there may be* a completion out of what *you have*" (vs 6-11).

Verse 12: "For if there is a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. For *I do not desire* that others may be released and you be burdened, but *that there may be* equality—your present abundance *making up* for their deficiency. Likewise, their *future* abundance may also be for your deficiency, so that there may be equality, exactly as it is written: 'He that *gathered* much had nothing *left over*; and he that *gathered* little did not lack.' But thanks *be* to God, Who put the same earnest care for you in Titus' heart. For he truly accepted the exhortation; and being *even* more diligent, on his own initiative he

went to you. But we sent with him the brother, whose praise *is* known in the Gospel throughout all the churches; and that is not the only *reason*, for he had also been selected by the churches to accompany us with this gift, which *is being* ministered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and *as a witness of your willingness*" (vs 12-19).

Verse 20: "*He is accompanying us* to prevent anyone from accusing us concerning this abundance that *is being* ministered by us; providing honest things not only in the sight of *the* Lord, but also in the sight of men. And we sent with them our brother, whom we have often proved in many things to be diligent, and now much more diligent in the great confidence that *he has* toward you. If *anyone inquires* about Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker for you; and *if anyone inquires about* our brethren, *they are* messengers of *the churches and* the glory of Christ. Therefore, show the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf, to them and before the churches" (vs 20-24).

2-Corinthians 9:1: "It is not necessary for me to write to you concerning the ministry that *is* for the saints; because I know your willingness, for which I have boasted of you to *the* Macedonians—that Achaia was prepared a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up a greater number *to participate*. But I sent the brethren *ahead*, so that our boasting about you might not be made void in this respect, *and* that, according as I had said, you may be ready; lest perhaps, if *some of the* Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (in order that we may not say 'you') might be put to shame by this confident boasting. Therefore, I thought *it* necessary to exhort the brethren to go ahead *of us* to you, and to complete the *preparations* of this your bounty beforehand, since you had already proclaimed *a willingness*; so that it might be *received* as a blessing, and not as *it were of* covetousness" (vs 1-5).

Verse 6: "But this *I say*: the one who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and the one who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Each one as he purposes in his heart, *so let him give*, but not grudgingly or by compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver. For God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you so that in every *way* you may always have sufficiency in all *things, and* may

abound unto every good work, according as it is written: 'He has scattered abroad, *and* he has given to the poor; his righteousness remains forever.'" (vs 6-9).

Verse 10: "Now, may He Who supplies seed to the sower, and bread to eat, supply *your seed* and multiply your sowing; and may He increase the fruits of your righteousness, *so that you may* in every way be enriched unto all bountifulness, which causes thanksgiving to God through us. For the administration of this service is not only filling to overflowing the deficiencies of the saints, but *is* also abounding by the giving of many thanks to God. Through the performance of this service, *they* are glorifying God for your professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and *for the* liberality of the distribution toward them and toward all *the saints*; and in their supplications for you, *there is* a longing on your behalf, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. Now thanks *be* to God for His indescribable free gift" (vs 10-15).

This is what needs to be done with all the Churches of God and this is what we try and do:

2-Corinthians 8:21: "Providing honest things not only in the sight of *the* Lord, but also in the sight of men." *He did that because of the carnality of the Corinthians!*

Then we have the principle concerning sowing. This is a principle, not only in planting, but in whatever you do in your life:

2-Corinthians 9:6: "But this *I say*: the one who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly..."

Think about this for just a minute and tie that in with Deut. 15 where it says that if you find someone in need you shall extend your hand; you're not to be a curmudgeon, you are to provide; same thing here.

God says with that, if you provide for the poor, He will bless you. But if you don't provide for the poor, He's going to hold it against you, and you will have blessings withheld from you.

- it works in everything
- it works in tithing
- it works in offerings to God

If you withhold, I guarantee that if people quit tithing, they're still going to tithe. What do I mean by that? *Because they're going to spend all their money on expenses that come along because they're not tithing to God*, and they end up with less use of their extra money that they need, and it goes to other different things.

Either way, you tithe, you get the blessings of God. You don't tithe, then you don't get the blessings. So, you have to take the tithe money and spend it on different things, because you don't get blessings from God. It works both ways.

Also, sowing and reaping—remember the parable of the man who had the tree in the vineyard and it didn't bear any fruit for three years. He comes in there and tells the servant to cut it down. The servant says, 'Wait! Let me hoe it and dung it! If it produces fruit, fine. If it doesn't, then cut it down.' So, he said, 'Okay, go ahead.'

We need to have in planting, likewise with spiritual growth: hoeing. What do you do with hoeing? *You get rid of weeds!* What are weeds? *Nasty little things in your life!* What is *dung*? *Fertilizer, so you give nutrition to the plants.* God's Word is greater than that. It gives spiritual nourishment for us to change and grow. Those are the two parable things that are here out of 2-Cor. 8 & 9.

1-Corinthians 9:7: "Each one as he purposes in his heart..."

If you're going along and you say, 'I think I'm going to do this. I'm going to give this to so-and-so, I'm going to give this to God.' *You do it!* God is not judging just on your actions. Where does the judgment first start? *In the thought!* If you say, 'God,' in your heart, no one else knows. You hadn't told anybody, 'I'm going to do this.' You better do it.

"...so let him give, but not grudgingly or by compulsion... [I'll tithe because God says so!] ...for God loves a cheerful giver.... [notice this promise] ...For God *is* able to make **all grace** abound toward you..." (vs 7-8).

What is ultimate completion of all grace? *Eternal life!* We're not just dealing in a business or with people or things like this, ***we're dealing with God***, and with those who are His.

"...so that in every way you may always have sufficiency in all *things*, and may abound unto every good work" (v 8).

There's so much in 2-Cor. 10, which is one of those chapters that there's a lot buried in here when you put together all the other Scriptures. It's one of those chapters that verifies and tells you the reason for prayer and study. The reason is we are preparing for eternal life; ***we are preparing for the greatest work ever***, to take over the world.

For the Feast of Tabernacles I'm covering how much it says *all nations*. You get your map and you look at all nations—and it says unto the ends of the earth, and those in the isles, all the islands.

God has called us to the greatest, biggest, most important eternal thing we could do. It starts within the flesh. What does God want?

Matthew 5:48: "Therefore, you shall be... [become] ...perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect." ***That's what we have been called to!*** How do we do that?

Under the covenant with Israel, as long as your physical actions did not violate the letter of the Law, you were fine. ***But under the New Covenant, there's a greater, a higher standard, because we're dealing with eternity!*** We're dealing directly with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

What is our part in becoming perfect? *Not* so you can, 'O Lord, here I am. I'm this old and everything else.' Like one man foolishly said, 'I've been faithful for so long that Satan has no interest in me.' That was like dropping a gas bomb into a bonfire. If you've been faithful 50 years, Satan is most interested in you.

2-Corinthians 10:1: "Now, I Paul am personally exhorting you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ..."

A little later when he gets to the end of it, he says, 'What do you want, do you want me to come with a rod? I'm going to talk to all you rebels straight out.' He's approaching them the right way here.

"...On the one hand, when present with you I *am* base..." (v 1). 'Oh, look at him; how could he be an apostle of God. Look, all the things he went through and just look how difficult it is for him to do certain things because he was nearly stoned to death. If God were God, why didn't He prevent that?' If God were God, why didn't He prevent Christ from being crucified?

"...but on the other hand, when absent I am bold toward you.... [and send these long, strong nasty letters to you] ...But I am beseeching *you* so that, when I am present, I may not have to be bold with the confidence with which I intend to show boldness toward some, who think that we are walking according to *the flesh*" (vs 1-2). What does this tell you? *They were judging Paul!*

Sidebar: We have a sermon series and booklet, *Judge Righteous Judgment*. Isn't that what Jesus said? Isn't what the news is doing all the time?

Yes, trying to tell you what someone thinks when they haven't even talked with them.

Like they've been doing to the President on fake news, 'He's got a mental problem. He's unfit to be president. I'm a great psychologist and I can tell.' *Did you ever interview him?* 'No, but I can look at him and tell.' *Really!*

That's exactly what was going on here. They were judging Paul. You can judge certain things by the covering, but you can't, for example, if you have a fine vintage wine, but it's in a horrible looking bottle. You can't judge the excellence of the wine by the bottle. You must taste it. Likewise with this:

Verse 3: "For although we walk in *the flesh*, we do not **war** according to *the flesh*." *We are in a spiritual warfare!* That's what's important to understand. That spiritual warfare is not necessarily external. Probably 10% is external, and 90% is internal. What is it that needs to be perfected? *The mind, the heart!* All of those things together.

Verse 4: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds."

That's quite a statement right there. What God is requiring of us is that we cannot do it on our own, but He wants our full participation in active working.

1-Corinthians 9:19: "For although I am not under bondage to anyone, I have made myself a servant to all, so that I might gain the more." *Spiritually treating everyone the same way, but with a different reproach!*

Verse 20: "Now, to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain *the Jews*..." He'd probably say, 'In Judaism you have all these traditions:

- What have they amounted to?
- Are they compatible with the commandments of God?

We have the Gospel of Matthew already written. Didn't you read where Jesus said to the religious authorities, 'Have you never read?' How many times did He say that? Jesus told them, 'I know you, the love of God is not in you.' That also tells us how important all of this is.

"...to those who are **under law**, as under law" (v 20). We have a whole sermon or two on what it means to be under law or under grace:

1. Under Law/Under Grace
2. Under Law? Or Grace?

“...that I might gain those who are under law; to those who are without law, as without law (**not being without law to God, but within law to Christ**)...” (vs 20-21).

That’s quite a statement there, even though it’s a parenthetical one. This tells you that he’s keeping the commandments and laws of God under Christ.

“...that I might gain those who are without law” (v 21).

He probably says, ‘I understand how your life has been. It’s been a mess, a wreck. Look at it today.’

- How many people are without law? *They’re lawless!*
- What has that gotten you?
- How many of your friends died early?

Today we could say:

- How many of your friends have died of drug overdose?
- How many of your musical stars died at a young age?
- How has your life been with everything all mixed up?

You don’t know what’s right and don’t know what’s wrong and you’re on the verge of committing suicide.

That’s how you reach people in that way. Then you say, ‘God has a way to help you, but you have to do something. That something starts with repentance and belief.’

Verse 22: “To the weak, I became as weak, that I might gain those who are weak. To all these, I have become all things, so that I might by all means save some. Now, I do this for the sake of the Gospel, that I might be a fellow partaker with you. Don’t you know that those who run a race **all run**...” (vs 22-24).

All sports are a type of warfare, but the weapons are different. Some sports it’s a hockey puck; some sports it’s a football; some it’s a basketball; some it’s a baseball; some it’s track.

“...but *only* one receives the prize?... [eternal life and perfection, because that’s where we started] ...That is the way you *are to* run in order that you may obtain *the prize*. **For everyone who is striving for mastery controls himself in all things...**” (vs 24-25). Is that another way of describing perfection? *Yes, indeed!*

“...Of course, they *do this* so that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we *are striving for*

an incorruptible *crown*.... [we’re all going to be winners] ...I therefore, so run, not as one who is uncertain; so *also* I fight, not as beating *the air*” (vs 25-26). You see boxers preparing and they beat the air. When they get in the ring, it’s a different story.

Verse 27: “But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, after preaching to others, I myself might be rejected.”

The war: that’s what we need to look at. That’s what we need to fight against.

If you go along and say, ‘You know, when I first started, I didn’t know it was going to be this difficult.’ *Because you were blinded and you didn’t know how to control your mind!* We will see that’s the important thing.

1-Timothy 6:11: “But you, O man of God, flee these things...”—*all the carnal things!*

- What does it say concerning fornication? *Flee sexual immorality or fornication!*
- How many men in the Bible did that? *One! Joseph!* (not counting Christ).

Abraham didn’t sin, but he listened to his wife and we’ve been stuck with Ishmael from that time on.

“...and pursue righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, endurance *and* meekness.... [all of these are spiritual qualities] ...**Fight the good fight of the faith!**...” (vs 11-12).

All of these things in v 11 you have to fight for. The world is bombarding you and Satan is bombarding you, so that you don’t do it. In this age today, much more than in any other age.

The other day I was coming home from the grocery store, and I saw different people walking. I think it was 3 or 4 people. They’ve got to have their cell phone right there. What could come on your cell phone? *All of the deepest perversions in the world!* Those things probably won’t take us down, but we have to be careful of the things that *appear good, but are actually lawless*. That’s how the apostasy occurred:

- you do it easily
- you do it quietly
- you do it friendly
- you do it with love

Just like the person who says, ‘Oh, I love the Lord.’ He says, ‘I keep the Sabbath.’ What’s that? So, it’s a fight!

“...Take hold of eternal life...” (v 12). How do you take hold of eternal life?

- by using the Word of God
- by studying
- by praying
- by using the Holy Spirit

We're to be led by the Holy Spirit, but we must produce our own choices and energy to do it.

"...to which you were also called, and did profess a good profession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the sight of God, Who gives life to every *living* thing..." (vs 12-13).

That's quite a statement! Give life to everything, even the things that are inanimate. We're sitting on chairs and we have tables and we have Bibles. We're in a building; the lights are on. We call those inanimate, but they still have the life of their atomic construction. Those atoms are in there moving and we don't see it. Did God make those? *Yes!*

"...and Jesus Christ, Who *in* testifying before Pontius Pilate gave the exemplary profession of *faith*, that you keep this commandment without fault *and* without rebuke until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 13-14). *That tells you that's another way of saying the one who endures to the end shall be saved!*

Verse 15: "Which in His own times..." Everybody has missed that, including the Churches of God, all the way down through time.

In reading some of these things about what John Guenther is going to bring at the Feast in Blanchard, Idaho—whoever wants to go there, you're going to have a real treat if you go there. He's going to cover from Paul to the 1600s in three seminars that he's going to give. He's going to have charts and he's going to have other things.

The volume of information now is so much greater than it was when we first came into the Church—like with me 58 years ago. We didn't have very much information on the Churches in the Middle Ages. One of the things that got a lot of people to come to the Church was because they knew nothing about anything that went on with Israel and the Alps. Knew nothing about the conspiracy to take the Church down.

When Herbert Armstrong said the true Gospel hasn't been preached in 1800-years, they said what I'm hearing from him is so different, I guess that's true.

But now the facts come out and show that though he said that—and he should have known better, because Jesus said He wasn't going to let the

gates of the grave prevail against the Church—it was preached. There were thousands and thousands who gave their lives in martyrdom.

Doesn't that sound a lot like Mormonism? *Yes, indeed!* Mormonism started out this way with Joseph Smith. One day he was going along and he was knocked down on his back and a bright light shone. Who appears as a bright shining light? And said, 'The church has died out and I'm going to raise it up through you.' That was none other than Satan the devil. ***You never worship God prostrate on your back!*** You are on your belly, *with your face in the ground.*

One man who was on the *Plain Truth* mailing list wanted a visit by a minister. So, they sent it out to me, because I was pastoring Salt Lake and Boise. I went out to visit him. I come into his house and sit down and we're talking and then all of a sudden here come a couple of other men. I'm sitting there thinking, 'I wonder what this is?' He said, 'These are elders from the Church of the Latter Day Saints.' I said, 'How do you do?'

We got to talking and then I said—it was my parting comment after talking about different things and they brought up about what Joseph Smith said about it dying out and this great light. That was back in New York. Later I checked where it was in New York and there was a Church of God 50-miles away from him.

We're sitting there talking and I'm thinking what I'm going to say to them. They wanted to come and test me out. It was a setup and I didn't know it till I got there. I said, 'Let me ask you a question. You say that Joseph Smith said the church died out and God raised it up through him. Is that what you're saying?' They said *yes*. In those days I had my little handy small little Bible I took. I opened it up to Matt. 16 and I read where Jesus said that He's going to build the Church on this Rock—Himself—and that the gates of hell, or the grave, *would never prevail against it.*

So I said, 'I'm stuck with a problem. Either I believe Joseph Smith, or I believe Jesus Christ.' I got up and walked out. That you would say would be a spiritual fight. What do we fight against?

2-Corinthians 10:3: "For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh."

What did Jesus pray for all of the disciples? *I pray not for the world, but I pray for these that You keep them from the evil one* (John 17)—or wicked one—for, that is because, with the Spirit of God, they are not of the world, but are living in the world. ***That's why we have the fight!*** During the

Millennium it isn't going to be the fight like it is today.

- that's why we're the first-fruits and the first resurrection
- that's why we are going to take over the government and the world

"...we do not war according to *the* flesh... [we'll see how we need to war with that] ...For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal..." (vs 3-4). *In other words, no human psychology is ever going to help you permanently overcome sin within!*

- it may help you be a little nicer person
- it may help you be a little more considerate
- it may help you learn how to speak a little bit better
- it may teach you how to dress a little bit better
- it may teach you how to study a little bit better

But it doesn't change you spiritually; that's the important thing!

"...but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds" (v 4).

- Where are those strongholds? *In the mind!*
- Who wants to get in to the stronghold and take over?

These Scriptures we have read before, but now let's read them and apply it with what we're doing today.

The comment was made what if someone in the Church commits suicide? We don't know the inner workings of the individual mind. That will happen occasionally. I know of a man recently who was so overwhelmed because of the death of his father that he couldn't stand it any longer. How God looks at that, *we have to leave that in God's hands.*

When you come to an absolute crisis in your life, don't get so despondent that you give up and take your own life. That won't work. God is the ultimate Judge of the whole thing.

In some cases, some people are so secretive they never tell anybody anything, so you have no warning signs of anything at all. All of sudden BANG! and you say, 'How could that happen?' Some people are like that. They just don't tell you anything and they keep it all bundled up. Unless they're praying and studying and unloading that burden to God, which is what they should do—and

that's part of the warfare in fighting that we have to do—then drastic things can happen.

If you start going to the counselors in the world, you're going to the fleshly advice. What most psychologists generally end up doing is giving you a thought pattern to justify your sinful behavior and be comfortable with it.

Sometimes you have to resolve difficulties with people. That's also part of the battle. What is part of the battle? *Terms of peace!* You have to go make peace with them. Don't go around and have thoughts in your head against anybody within the Church that you haven't resolved either by unloading with prayer and the Word of God, or you haven't talked to the person.

Sometimes you can unload the whole thing and put it away. You don't even have to go talk to the person. But when you go, you don't go and say, 'Did you know you offended me?' *Me? I'm kind and good and gentle; how could I do that?*

Let's understand that *we have to fight Satan the devil and all of his weapons are different!* Most of them can appear very, very good at first.

I've got a book, *Stairway to Hell: Rescuing Teens From Their Well-Planned Destruction* by Richard T. Jones, he says for teenagers. The devil has a very well thought-out plan to destroy you.

But he doesn't start out by coming up and saying, 'I'm here and I'm going to kill you.' No, he said, *'I'm here. Did you know? How would you like to feel the best you've ever felt in your whole life? It doesn't take much. You just take a little bit of this.'* And BAM! That's true. **Gotcha!** First step.

(go to the next track)

We're going to examine Eph. 6 very closely, too, because this has to do with the warfare. There are things we have to fight:

1. Satan
2. sin
3. self
4. society

When all of them come against us—and we're not prepared—this is what happens:

- like when the Laodiceans become lukewarm
- like with Pergamos, they began to allow those who had false doctrines to come in
- like Thyatira who really had a lot of difficulties and problems

You read that; that's the only place in the whole Bible that God says of those who were with Jezebel and her children, and those in the Church who gave up and went with them, *He will kill*—if you kill they die—*with death*. What does that mean? *That means the Lake of Fire!*

Those are the things we're fighting against and **Satan is #1** because:

- he controls the *society*
- he is the father of *sin*
- he wants *you*

Before you're converted you have *the law of sin and death* within you that you didn't know was there and you didn't know how to control it. There may be some things you could control.

And then *self*: we could end up being our own worst enemy. ***This is our warfare!*** We have to know the four enemies.

Here it is, this is the one concerning Satan, Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, **be strong in the Lord...**"

Think of this for a minute: ***Whenever you are not strong and maintain that strength, you become vulnerable!***

What does Trump say about the army, the armed forces, and everything? ***Peace through strength!***

- ***if you're strong in the Lord***, you have peace with God
- ***if you're strong in the Lord***, you'll be able to fight against Satan the devil

But you're not going to do it with carnal means or with human thoughts alone.

"...and in the might of His strength (v 10). What do you do? *When you have something you're working against and fighting against*—and there are some things you have to keep at it—***you can't give up because Satan wants to win!***

Recently, they gave a medal of honor posthumously to one of the soldiers in WWII. He was one of these advanced that he would get up close to the front lines and he would call back the enemy positions to the artillery and they would send the artillery to bombard them. Nearly his whole company got killed. He charged ahead and went way ahead into the enemy territory where he could see all the enemy soldiers and even some of their artillery. So, he was up there alone, no one with him, calling back the position.

Then they would send the rounds in and then he would call back and say to the right, to the left, ahead, behind. That's how the artillery observers do. He alone won the battle, because if he had not been up there, way, way up there—and he went up there, went running up there, so he could up and see it—they would have lost the battle.

Same with us, we have to have the strength that comes from Christ. There are a lot of people who are good at self-will. That will do you good for a while. But do people who have a lot of self-will still have sin? *Of course!* That's why Paul said the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, or fleshly.

Verse 11: "**Put on the whole armor of God...**" Think of it this way: Lots of time you see the picture of a knight and he's got all this armor on. Think of it that way with God. We'll talk about protecting the head, the heart, the emotions, and so forth.

"...so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (v 11). You have to stand against it and you have to overcome it.

Satan comes along, and we'll see a little later how clever that is. He never comes along and says, 'Go rob a bank.' He might do that to someone deeper in sin. For people who are not, he comes along and he says, 'How would you like to earn a little money?' That's how sin comes, a step at a time.

You have to stand! Remember this: when you turn your back and run away from the enemy, unless you have protection to cover you, you're most vulnerable parts are exposed. "...the wiles of the devil," and that's how all the apostasy came in.

We're going to see that the devil is able to project and put in the thoughts of people what he wants to in many different venues today, not only personally, but by his various servants that he has to do it.

Verse 12: "**Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood...**"

Sometimes something will come along and it will be BANG! Where did that come from? *From Satan!* Wrestling is close-in fighting. When you're wrestling you use leverage. Satan likes to leverage people, catch them where they're vulnerable and get them to the point that they say, 'Okay, just this one time.' ***Then he's got you!***

"...but against principalities..." (v 12). Are we going to rule in the Kingdom of God? *Yes, indeed!* Are we going to be some of the principal people who are going to serve Christ in bringing

peace to this world? *Yes!* When it talks about principalities, that is *demon spirits in high offices*.

How many of those are there, we don't know. But we know that we have in Rev. 12 and 13 seven heads and ten horns. So that tells you about the principalities.

"...and against powers..." (v 12). These are powers that are able to come after your mind and your emotions, as well as your circumstances.

"...against the world rulers of the darkness of this age..." (v 12). Sooner or later it's coming against us.

Did you know that right now in Sacramento, in the legislature they are working on a bill to ban all publications that are against the LBGTQ, perverted nonsense, which then would include the Bible.

Who do you suppose is putting that into the minds of those people to do it? *They've been serving him for a long, long time!* So, to them this seems natural, because they look at the rest of the world and say, 'How can the rest of the world say that we're perverts, when we know we're not? It's just those who follow the Bible. It's just those who preach the things that are old-fashioned.' That's how they bring it in.

Will it pass? *Don't know, but I assume as soon as the ink is dry they're in court, because of the first amendment!* But that's what we're up against—world rulers of the darkness of this age. The higher you go, the more wicked they become. That's the whole story of Nebuchadnezzar, going clear back to the Babylon #1 and clear forward to the great Babylon at the end.

"...against the spiritual power of wickedness in high places" (v 12). That means where they make laws, where they control religion.

Do you know what the Episcopalians are doing—and I need to do a **churchathome.org** on this. They are taking their prayer book—they haven't done it yet to the Bible, but there are those who are doing it to the Bible—making it neuter-gender. You don't call God your Father.

When you look in the world, how did you come here? What are they trying to do? *Create human life outside the womb!* That's what they're working on. You can't say your Father, but they still can't get away from the contribution of a man and woman, male and female, even if it's outside of the womb. I don't know how they're going to do that.

What does Gen. 11 tell us? *That now anything they imagine to do, they will do!* That's

the danger of human life under Satan's world with human beings made in the image and likeness of God, who have the ability to think, to reason, to build, to plan and to make. *It's always led into total sin; not at first, but it's always led into it.*

Verse 13: "Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day..." *You have to resist in the faith!*

1-Peter 5:5: "In the same manner, *you* younger men be subject to *the* older men; and all of *you* be subject to one another, being clothed with humility because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble. Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God..." (vs 5-6).

- through His Word
- through His Spirit

Everything comes back to study and prayer, then living what you study and what you pray.

- study
- prayer
- living

"...so that He may exalt you in *due* time" (v 6). When are we going to be exalted? *The resurrection, the greatest exaltation of all!* He who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist, who is the greatest prophet of all. That tells you how great the goal is.

Verse 7: "Casting all your cares upon Him... [rather than keeping them bottled up inside; that's why prayer, you cast them upon Him by praying and repenting] ...because He cares for you." More than that, *He loves you!*

The reason you are called is because He loves you. Sometimes that love gets pretty tough, because of the circumstances. When you have to stand and fight and defend the faith—remember what I read between Jacob and the Friar concerning his inquisition? {note sermon: *The 1569 A.D. Inquisition & Be Diligent*} That was something. I imagine the many times that that was repeated.

Not like us, we're detracted with all the modern things we have around us. They were able to study the Bible, perhaps much more than we. Jacob was able to answer with Scripture and fulfill the promise that God will inspire you when you need it. If you don't pray, if you don't study, if you're not ready, how can God inspire you?

Verse 8: "Be sober! Be vigilant!.... [that tells you always to be on the alert] ...For your

adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour.”

He doesn't roar until after he has captured the victim. He sneaks up! If there's the whole pride, they will come up against some of the biggest animals around. Have you ever seen them take down a small elephant, just the lions? It takes five of them. It takes at least three to bring down a water buffalo. They all work together.

Satan has a lot of his troops out there working, looking around. They will influence people to try and influence us. *That's why you have to be strong in the Lord and resist!* “Be sober! Be vigilant!....”

Verse 9: “Whom resist, steadfast in the faith... [the only way you build the faith is to stay close to God] ...knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in the world.”

Think about the places in the world where the Gospel is being preached. You might really pray for all the brethren in South Africa, because all of the natives there are into killing all the whites and taking their farming lands. They don't know how to farm and they don't know how to do these things, but because of being driven by wicked spirits and lust and greed they want to take it from them. Their hatred is so great.

Look what they did in Rhodesia. Rhodesia was exporting food everywhere. After all the natives took over and killed off all the whites: famine, starvation, plague; same way in Kenya. This is what's going on in South Africa.

Remember how that started, and that even started under President Reagan. ‘These people do not have democracy there, everything is unequal. So we're going to sanction all companies that do business with South Africa.’ So, they collapsed it. Then the natives took over and you have the typical corruption that Africa is noted for. Rather than serving and helping the people in doing good for each one, they used them as pawns and keep them in poverty. *That's Satan's way! We have to resist in the faith!*

Verse 10: “Now, may the God of all grace, Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus...” That's quite a statement! God is going to give us His eternal glory; that's hard to contemplate. How's it going to be as a spirit being, that you can appear as a human being, and then whatever you do, whenever it's necessary, you can make yourself

shine like the sun. *Think on that!* That's why it's so much greater than we've ever thought.

“...after *you* have suffered a little while... [there is suffering involved] ...Himself **perfect you...**” (v 10). Where did we start? *Matt. 5:48! God the Father, Who is perfect, is going to perfect us!* That's amazing.

“...**establish, strengthen, and settle you.** To Him *be* the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 10-11).

Sometime when you're praying about it, think of this: Think of a drop of water. With everything that's in that drop and you would look at it under a microscope. Then think about some of the pictures of the universe that you have seen. Just as you can see all the things in the water, but there are still a lot of things you don't see, and all the glory that's out there in the universe. *This is what God wants to share with us!*

God says of the world: *I did not create it in vain; I created it to be inhabited!* Think of what He is going to do with the universe and think how powerful that is going to be because there's going to be a New Heaven and a New Earth. Then go read about New Jerusalem the way it's described in Rev. 20. See if you can think about what that will be like. I cannot fathom streets of gold, all of those precious stones, all of the colors, and everything being there. And then we're going to live there. We're promised that, aren't we? Didn't Jesus say, ‘*If I go, I'll prepare a place for you and I'll come again so that you can be where I am.*’ That ultimately is New Jerusalem!

So all of the things we go through, and I know sometimes we go through some pretty difficult things. Those are all worth it. He says He will “...**establish, strengthen and settle you.**”

You have stand, *stand, stand* and *resist*. That defines the warfare; Ephesians 6:14: “**Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth...**”

Have you ever watched *Forged in Fire*? It starts out they're to make a knife. There's a lot of work to making blades and all the things they have to do. They have these electronic machines now that will stamp it, but think when they had to just have the anvil and the hammer. God talks about the smith in the Old Testament quite a bit.

There are so many things that are necessary to make a blade, the right thickness at the top, the right sharpness on the bottom. You have to make it so there are no cracks. Every once in a while they

have a blade that they use to test and blade snaps in two. You can't have any chinks in the blade. You have to have it sharp because the test sometimes is pretty difficult. You take a knife, you have to have the right handle so you can hold onto it, then they start cutting cured bamboo or beef bones.

If it isn't done right, the blade will bend, have nicks and things like this. Some of them they make so sharp that they could in one whack cut the back of a hanging hog and it'll drop.

Then they take some of these swords and they have this manikin, make it as much like flesh as possible. They take the sword—that's why you don't want to fight with swords. They thrust it into the abdomen and slice across the front of it and smash on the chest. If it's a good sword it will cut right through, break the bone, go right to the heart, or gouge out all the intestines. Look there's no medic on earth, if you get jabbed in the guts like that with the sword, you're a dead dodo. That's just the way it is.

Think of it that way for us. We cannot let these things get the best of us. "...having your loins girded about **with Truth...**" (v 14). That's how you combat a liar. *Satan is the father of lies!*

"...and **wearing the breastplate of righteousness**" (v 14). Isn't it true, when are you more vulnerable to sin? When you haven't prayed, haven't studied. So the self-deception sets in and you go along and everything's all right. Then the enemy is going to sneak up on you and WHAM-BAM!

Verse 15: "And having **your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.**" That is always walking in the path of Christ, walking in the way of God.

Verse 16: "Besides all *these*, **take up the shield of the faith**, with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; and **put on the helmet of salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (vs 16-17).

This shows us we have to be ready for battle. It can be a fight all the time. Just to give you an example, have you ever had something stick in your mind, you can't get out of your mind? It just kind of plays over and over, like a commercial or a song. The one I always turn off, when it comes on, that's the kids doing their little fake concert for cars for kids. I put that on mute and go to another channel right away. They have such a tricky song.

What happens when you hear music, it goes in your little ding-dong brain, and it plays over and over again. How long do they stay there? Can they stay there and be dormant and don't bother you? That's true, but when do they bother you every year? *Christmas carols!* Yes, indeed!

There's a whole lot to the warfare that we have!

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Corinthians 8:1-24
- 2) 2-Corinthians 9:1-15
- 3) 2-Corinthians 8:21
- 4) 2-Corinthians 9:6-8
- 5) Matthew 5:48
- 6) 2-Corinthians 10:1-4
- 7) 1-Corinthians 9:19-27
- 8) 1-Timothy 6:11-15
- 9) 2-Corinthians 10:3-4
- 10) Ephesians 6:10-13
- 11) 1-Peter 5:5-11
- 12) Ephesians 6:14-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Deuteronomy 15
- Matthew 16
- John 17
- Revelation 12, 13
- Genesis 11
- Revelation 20

Also referenced:

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- Under Law/Under Grace
- Under Law? Or Grace?
- *The 1569 A.D. Inquisition & Be Diligent*

Book: *Stairway to Hell: Rescuing Teens From Their Well-Planned Destruction* by Richard F. Jones

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