

# WINNING THE WAR

By

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Something unmatched in history is taking place today as leaders of nations and religions join forces to bring about a New World Order, supported by a new religion which excludes the Christian faith. This is a struggle for control of the minds of men, and no one is exempt from its impact.

It is a war being waged on all levels of society; in schools, in the media, in the business world in the arts and in religion. Every day and almost every hour we are being bombarded with expressions, ideas and suggestions designed to capture our thoughts, mold our opinions and change our behavior.

As is often the case in history, the majority of people do not awaken to the processes going on until the change has already taken place. This struggle has already brought drastic changes in families, trade, education, religion and our basic culture. However, Christians should not be among those taken unaware. From the beginning of the Faith there has been an intense effort to destroy it, even as His enemies tried to destroy Jesus (John 8:37).

Paul wrote. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty through God to the casting down of strongholds: Casting down reasoning, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

The warfare today is being fought on a much wider scale than the apostle Paul could ever imagine, but it is the same warfare he described in which it is our task to cast down the strongholds of Satan and all the theories and philosophies which are exalted against God and to bring men's thoughts to the point of obedience to Jesus, God's anointed son.

The majority of Christians seem to be unaware that this epochal battle is taking place: their chief interests are about the same as those of the rest of the world. This may be because they think of warfare as something to be fought with guns, planes and missiles: but this warfare is spiritual. In a sense it is invisible, a war of thoughts, ideas, words, intentions and desires.

Our struggle is not about land, independence, nor even freedom, although all these may be affected. Many think that the battle can be won at the ballot box. Wrong! Minds and hearts are not changed by majority vote! Changing one's politics does not change his relationship to God. One may be extremely patriotic and still not be in the battle on the side of God. Paul put it like this: "Now the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for these are foolishness to him: and he cannot know them, because they

are spiritually judged” (1 Cor. 2:11). Our mission is not to reform society, but to bring thinking people to the truth of Jesus that they may put their faith in Him.

In this warfare, we have only one weapon, “the sword of the Spirit” (God’s revealed truth), and no other instrument will be effective. This can be seen in that for the past several decades Christian leaders have been using the various approaches of modern psychology, refined by the best educated and most sophisticated leaders in the world, but they have been losing the war. The “church growth” gurus have instructed tens of thousands of preachers in the methods of manipulation designed to fill church buildings, but which do not make a dent in the strongholds of the enemy and which fail to produce obedience to Christ.

The other side is skilled in using psychology, deception, witchcraft, sensual appeals, sensitivity training, guile, fraud and trickery. Many people, who ignorantly accept their lies, willingly repeat them, not aware that they are giving aid to the enemy.

Against this array of weaponry, the Christian is given one weapon: the truth of God. Nothing will defeat a lie but the truth. If we are to take seriously this spiritual World War, we must learn more of the word of God, and then boldly use it. Peter put it this way, “Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord, being ready always to give answer to every man that asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you” (1 Pet. 3:15).

Peter was addressing all Christians with this admonition. It is time for Christians to stop depending on the preacher to do all the sword-wielding as he speaks to a house full of lethargic pew warmers on Sunday morning. (A note to my fellow preachers: The people don’t really need jokes, funny stories, and comments on the ball game to equip them for this warfare.) As people face issues like New Age religion, reincarnation, earth worship, homosexuality etc., it is an insult to them to preach on trivial things and tell them how to feel good about themselves.

At a social gathering, I said something about political trends to a man sitting next to me. He said, “I never discuss politics or religion. Too controversial.” You have often heard this. But what is more important than these two issues which impact all our lives: Baseball scores, TV and movie trivia? Where are we to engage in this spiritual warfare if not in social intercourse?

Jesus openly waged spiritual warfare day and night. Wherever He went, He was physically non-violent, willing to turn the other cheek, but aggressively gave voice to the facts concerning man’s relationship to God, concerning death, judgment, and eternal life. He never missed the opportunity to turn minds to God and His purpose and to correct the thinking of those steeped in erroneous tradition. Churchdom today is almost buried under layers of human tradition, and the emotional force of these traditions keeps the members in the darkness of confusion and silences their witness for the truth. Here is a place for the sword of the Spirit to be unsheathed.

This spiritual war has no limits to the battleground. Jesus said to speak the message from the housetops, to all the world. Paul said we are to bring every thought into captivity to Christ. But government says NOT in the public school, which is the logical place to quench the fires of false ideas. It says NOT in the work place – that’s discrimination. Society says NOT at the social gathering, where all must be neutral regarding religion and politics. Those who allow these restrictions to silence them have already surrendered to the enemy.

Jesus foretold the cost of being faithful in this spiritual warfare (John 15:19-20). History records the fulfillment of His words in accounts of persecution of Christians who resisted the official powers in order to translate scriptures and proclaim the good news of God’s grace through Christ. Paul wrote how they were persecuted by the Jews (1 Thess. 2:1-16). Then beginning with Nero they were persecuted by the state. They were falsely accused of terrible crimes and declared to be enemies of the state. (We see shades of these tactics with regard to Christian home-schoolers today.) They were branded as rebels against the empire, and brutally crucified or thrown to wild animals to the cheers and applause of the spectators. This same attitude is present today when vocal and effectual Christians are labeled in the media as bigots and a danger to the government.

Such opposition emphasizes the fact that the battle for men’s minds is, indeed, the most important thing in the world, and every one who is united by faith with Christ is in this battle. If we claim to be His disciples we must be courageous and aggressive vessels of truth, taking a stand for truth wherever the issue is raised, attacking the hypocrisy of the pagans and the false doctrines of tradition-laden churches.

Like Paul and the early Christians, we may suffer. We will be ridiculed, opposed and perhaps persecuted. Some may be slain – in a politically correct way, of course. Millions have already been killed in foreign countries.

But it’s not over until the day, the last day, when Jesus returns. That will be our day of victory, when His enemies will be executed (Luke 19:27), and all who have held to the truth in faith and obedience to Him will be given life and immortality. We will win. We are winners as long as we are faithful to Him.

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

“So that if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him” (Rom. 8:17).

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