

# Session 7: Foundations for Spiritual Warfare

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## I. Called to Spiritual Warfare

1. Many of those building an eternal purpose house of prayer will engage the enemy in spiritual warfare.
  - a. We recently completed studying the two topics of resisting the great harlot and the spirit behind her and restraining the spirit of antichrist. As you are aware, praying into these two topics will involve engaging the enemy in spiritual warfare. In this session, we will share several principles that we employ in spiritual warfare—parameters that will help keep you safe and approaches to lead you to effective engagement of the enemy.
  - b. At our home church, we have incorporated spiritual warfare into our prayer ministry from the time we began a corporate prayer ministry in the mid-1990's. Over that time, Jesus' words recorded in the book of Matthew have led us in spiritual warfare, "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force" (Mt. 11:12). We have learned a lot about spiritual warfare over the last 25 years, much of it on the job training through trial and error, successes and failures. We have learned the importance of being bold and at the same time staying within proper boundaries. Just like Jude expressed caution in "reviling angelic majesties" (Jude 8-10), we must also handle spiritual warfare in faith but also in caution. Therefore, the purpose of this session is to lay a foundation and to set some boundaries for aggressive spiritual warfare and at the same time to maintain safety. With that as our objective, let's get started.
2. The book of Ephesians explains that the church is in the midst of a spiritual war.
  - a. As you know, the book of Ephesians records the primary scriptural account of God's eternal purpose. The first chapter of Ephesians defines the subject of eternal purpose in the greatest and clearest detail of any passage in the Bible. Moreover, the entire book highlights different aspects of eternal purpose—issues like the coming forth of overcoming sons, the prepared bride, the family of God, the internal kingdom, and the call of the fivefold ministry to raise up a mature man.
  - b. For the purposes in this session, Ephesians also includes a call to spiritual warfare. Paul wrote these words,

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak (Eph. 6:10-20).

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- c. With the emphasis given by Paul to this passage, we understand that spiritual warfare is a necessary ingredient in pursuing God's eternal purpose. We won't attempt to analyze this passage in detail other than to highlight that it addresses several important aspects of spiritual warfare necessary in an eternal purpose house of prayer.
- First, it calls on the church to protect itself against the works of the devil by putting on spiritual armor (Eph. 6:11, 13-16).
  - Second, it calls the church to stand strong against the enemy's works in a defensive posture (Eph. 6:10, 11, 14).
  - Third, it calls on the church to arm itself with offensive weapons (Eph. 6:16-17), to join in the struggle against the demonic realm (Eph. 6:12-13), and to do so by going on the offense warring for the eternal purposes of God to be fulfilled (Eph. 6:18-20).
- d. Summarizing Ephesians 6, the church and an eternal purpose house of prayer must realize that: 1) it is in a spiritual battle, 2) it must protect itself in the midst of the battle, and 3) the battle is not only defensive but offensive as well.

## 3. Offensive spiritual warfare is necessary to enforce the victory Christ won on the cross.

- a. Believers must engage in spiritual warfare to enforce Christ's victory won at the cross. Throughout the scriptures, God's people are called to spiritual warfare, even going back to the time of Adam and Eve. The following passage from the time of the fall lays the foundation for the church's call to spiritual warfare. The Lord said to the serpent in the garden, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15).
- b. Genesis 3:15 is the first prophecy recorded in scripture and the first prophecy predicting Christ's work on the cross. In this passage, the seed of the woman refers to Christ and to those who are of His seed, that is, believers. Therefore, the seed of the woman includes the church in relationship with Christ. The seed of the serpent refers to the devil, and the rulers, powers, world forces of darkness, and spiritual forces of wickedness under his authority (Eph. 6:12). It also incorporates those under his influence including those being deceived, seduced, and controlled by the enemy. As this passage also states, until the end there will be enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Enmity is defined here as *the state of being actively opposed or hostile to someone or something*.<sup>1</sup> So we see that until Christ returns, there will be opposition and hostility directed toward God's people from the enemy and his spiritual forces of wickedness. The purpose of the enemy's opposition is to keep or hinder the Godhead from receiving the fullness of their inheritance and to delay the second coming of Christ.
- c. The good news for us is that this enemy we are at war with was disarmed at the cross. The book of Colossians reads, "When He [*Christ*] had disarmed the rulers and authorities [*at the cross*], He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him (Col 2:15). Thus, we are promised that the enemy has been disarmed through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. However, even though the enemy has been defeated, there will be hostility between the church in

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partnership with Christ and the enemy as Genesis 3:15 states--until Christ completely defeats the enemy at His coming.

- d. Therefore, during the church age, God has left it to His church in partnership with Christ to enforce the victory won at the cross. The church's work of enforcement will ultimately culminate at the end of the age when the dragon is thrown to the earth, possesses the antichrist, and is defeated on the earth with Christ's return (Rev. 12-14, 19). In the meantime, the church has a mandate to not only pray for the rise of the mature corporate man as we discovered in Session 3, but also to stand against and resist through prayer and spiritual warfare the works of the devil (James 4:5-8; 1 Peter 5:8-10).

4. To accomplish this objective, an eternal purpose house of prayer is invited to incorporate *offensive* spiritual warfare into its prayer ministry for the purpose of resisting forces that oppose the corporate man from arising in fullness.

- a. Terry Bennett in his book, *Why We Fight*, makes this point,

It is very clear here that Paul is speaking of defensive armor [*speaking of Ephesians 6:10-20*], but he is also speaking of offensive weaponry when he speaks of the sword and other aggressive weapons in picture and type. The sword is a type representing the word of God, scripture, and the voice of God. Thus Paul is talking about being armed and ready for offensive battle.<sup>2</sup>

- b. Most definitely, there is a defensive or protective element to spiritual warfare, and we all would be wise to actively and regularly appropriate God's protective tools that He has given to us. However, there is also an offensive aspect to this battle of the ages to which we have been called.
- c. We know from earlier sessions that God's eternal purpose for the church age is to prepare a corporate man in full maturity who will become the eternal wife for Christ and overcoming sons for the Father. As we have stated repeatedly, there are demonic principalities who are actively at war against this happening—and the church is called as led by the Holy Spirit to resist, restrain, and at times confront these forces so that the coming forth of the corporate man is not thwarted.
- d. Now that we have stated the call to engage in spiritual warfare, let's lay a proper biblical foundation for safe, yet effective offensive spiritual warfare, beginning with the need to stay within proper delegated authority.

## II. Staying within Delegated Authority

1. In engaging in offensive spiritual warfare, we must be very careful not to go beyond our God given authority.

- a. Paul makes a very interesting statement about authority in 2 Corinthians 10. Even though he is speaking of authority to minister into the lives of people and not authority in the spirit realm over demonic principalities, he writes,

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For even if I boast somewhat further about our *authority*, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame...But we will not boast beyond our measure, but *within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned* to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you. (2 Cor 10:8, 13).

- b. As we exercise our authority in the spirit realm, we must be very careful to stay within the sphere of authority God has granted to us. We must not jump into spiritual warfare haphazardly or carelessly. This is a very serious matter and can lead to serious consequences if we do not move as led by the Holy Spirit and within the authority delegated to us in these matters.

## 2. Several common sense guidelines for confronting demonic principalities are as follows.

- a. We must be extremely cautious in directly addressing demonic principalities over a city, region, or nation from the perspective of a direct confrontation. A general rule is to direct your prayers to God, and not to directly confront demonic principalities. This session lists several principles for engaging in spiritual warfare, but for now know that it can be extremely dangerous to yourself, family, and church to directly confront demonic principalities.
- b. Whereas we don't address directly principalities over a city, region, or nation--the demonic entities that you personally have been given authority over due to the God given position you hold can be dealt with directly. For example, if the spirit of Jezebel is influencing you, your spouse, or your children, you have been given authority over the spirits affecting them because you are the authority figure over them. If you are the pastor of a church, you likewise can take authority in the same way over demonic attacks against your church. You are the authority figure over your church. Thus, even though you may not have the authority to bring down the spirit completely, you can bind and loose or otherwise deal with those entities opposing areas in which you have been granted authority.
- c. When the need to address demonic principalities over entities beyond your direct authority—such as a city, nation, a people group, or a religious group, direct your prayers to God. If you sense the Holy Spirit leading you into a confrontation with a demonic principality, limit your confrontation to one or more of the prayer strategies described in the following paragraphs.
- d. At Lifeschool, our policy is to never command a territorial demonic principality to come down over a city, region, or nation. For example, we advise that you never pray a prayer that directly addresses a spirit over a nation commanding it to come down. Why? Because you do not have the measure of authority over a city, region, or nation.
- e. We hope the preceding guidelines are helpful. They are important to keep you safe as you exercise your authority in offensive spiritual warfare. Let's now examine two ways in which we confront the enemy.

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## III. Confronting the Enemy in Two Ways

### 1. Confront through fervent prayer.

- a. The primary way we confront demonic spirits is through fervent prayer directed to God. To see this, let's look briefly at Elijah's encounter with Jezebel and Ahab. Drawing from his life and ministry, we can see how to confront through fervent prayer. Elijah was in the midst of an intense spiritual battle with Jezebel and Ahab and the demonic spirits ruling their lives. In his encounters with them he most definitely engaged in spiritual warfare in which he confronted the enemy. Even so, much of the battle was fought through prayer to God—not direct confrontation with the enemy.
- b. Elijah was a man of prayer, and the power he moved in came from a lifestyle of deep, persevering prayer. James captures the essence of Elijah's prayer life,

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit (James 5:17-18).

- c. Even following his mighty encounter with the prophets of Baal and the prophets of the Asherah, the victory had not yet been completely secured. Elijah still had to pray for the drought to be broken and rain to come. He had faith that the rain would surely come because he told Ahab to go eat and drink for there is the sound of a shower (1 Kings 18:41). He told Ahab this when there was still not a cloud in the sky. He was not praying in desperation, fear, or even hope. He prayed knowing God was going to answer with rain; however, he still had to pray and pray fervently.
- d. In fact, he put his face between his knees—that is, he took the birthing position—and prayed to birth the rain that would seal the victory of his confrontation with the false religion of Ahab and Jezebel. It is interesting that when he began to pray and no cloud was visible, he sent his servant back to the sea seven times to look for the forming of the rain clouds. On the seventh time, his servant saw the cloud forming. Seven is the number of completion. It is as though Elijah even after this powerful confrontation still had to birth the rain in prayer and had to “pray through” the issue until the work of prayer was completed.
- e. In addition, we can be assured that Elijah spent the three and half years between his initial prayer and declaration of the coming drought and the confrontation with Baal in faithful, deep, and persevering prayer. His prayers laid the foundation for the power confrontation with Baal and the Asherah. Elijah moved in great power, and his confrontational spiritual warfare was exercised upon a solid foundation of earnest prayer, not directed at the demonic principalities, but to God.
- f. Make no mistake. The most basic, the most common, and the most important way we exercise our authority over the manifestations of these evil principalities is through fervent prayer directed to God.

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## 2. Confront through engaging in spiritual warfare.

- a. As we continue to look at the life of Elijah, we know that Elijah also confronted Ahab and Jezebel and their prophets directly (1 Kings 18). It was through these confrontations that the hearts of the people were turned from false worship to the sincere worship of the one true God.
- b. As you know, in Ahab's day, there were demonic principalities driving the worship of Baal and the Asherah and there were demonic spirits influencing the actions of Ahab and Jezebel. Today, we do not confront false prophets or kings and queens, but we do and we must confront the demonic spirits behind the false religion and the evil leadership guiding the nations today.
- c. Remembering the guidelines we just laid out, we must go to war in the heavenlies to resist the principalities similar to the spirits behind the works of Jezebel, Ahab, Baal, and the Asherah so that the people can hear the true word of God; so they can see the truth; and so they can be free from all hindering strongholds.
- d. Note the following scripture,

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 divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

- e. As this passage states, we are called to resist the opposition of the enemy knowing that we have been empowered with the weapons to be victorious. Therefore, we must take action through spiritual warfare to break strongholds raised up against the true knowledge of God. By doing so, we will free people to make a decision to follow Christ rather than the many false gods and idols being raised up in these end times.
- f. As this section makes clear, an eternal purpose house of prayer will on many occasions confront the enemy in spiritual warfare. However, as we have stated in previous sections, we do not directly confront demonic principalities. Instead as led by the Holy Spirit, we draw from one or more of the following five approaches to spiritual warfare.

## IV. Approaches for Offensive Spiritual Warfare

### 1. We confront through prophetic declarations and decrees.

- a. Several times in the scriptures we read about the prophets declaring to the people or to nations, or even directly to demonic principalities. For example, note Jeremiah's declaration to the nations, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD!" (Jer. 22:29, NKJV). And again he prophesies in Jeremiah 6:18-19, "Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth."
- b. Note the words of Isaiah as he proclaims a decree against the demonic principality, the queen of heaven. He declares, "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans!" (Isa. 47:1).

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- c. When Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets spoke these words or others like them, they were speaking at the direction of the Lord and were declaring on His behalf. When they spoke the words given to them by the Lord, their words released God's power to accomplish something. Their words confronted sin in the people, demonic hindrances in the heavenlies, and even strongholds over cities and nations.
- d. Before moving on, I want to offer a caution against overusing declarations and decrees. A significant number in the body of Christ today use declarations and decrees to virtually replace praying into an issue. Rather than praying for a need to be met by God, they decree it to be so. The way declaring and decreeing is used today in some parts of the church is not biblical. Nick Uva, in a recent blog post writes these words of wisdom about declaring and decreeing,

Today, man-as-sovereign language even invades Christian praying. Despite its purported biblical basis, "decreeing and declaring" is the greatest example just now of something that in reality will only work under the anointing of God and the leading of His Spirit—not at the whim of man.<sup>3</sup>

- e. When decreeing and declaring is used apart from the Holy Spirit's leading, it essentially excludes God's participation. When God initiates a decree or declaration, it can be a very powerful tool to accomplish God's purposes. When God is not involved in it, it accomplishes nothing. Therefore, the caution is to not let declarations and decrees replace prayer, and to use decrees and declarations only as the Holy Spirit leads.
- f. The caution noted, when the eternal purpose church declares and decrees against the enemy as led by the Holy Spirit, it is a powerful tool that confronts issues in the heavenlies which hinder the fullness of God's purposes from coming forth on the earth and in peoples' lives.

## 2. Confront through praise and worship.

- a. Another way that we confront demonic opposition to the purposes of God is through praise and worship. In several Old Testament passages, God uses worship as a means of warfare. For example, when Moab and Ammon attacked Judah, Jehoshaphat sent worshipers before the army. As they praised and thanked God, the Lord fought their battle and routed the enemy (2 Chron. 20:21-25). In a more general sense, when Israel went to war, Judah, which means praise, was first to battle (Judges 1:1-2, 20:18).
- b. Another example is when David brought the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem. After he brought the ark back to Zion, he erected a tabernacle referred to as the Tabernacle of David, placed the ark there where everyone could see, and placed worshipers there to celebrate, thank, and praise the Lord before the ark (1 Chron. 16:4). As continuous worship arose to God from the Tabernacle of David, the Lord defeated Israel's longstanding enemies, such as the Philistines, Moab, Edom, Ammon, and Amalek (1 Chron. 18).
- c. An illustration from our home church will help us understand how praise and worship can be used as a tool of spiritual warfare. At our church, the majority of our times of praise and worship are for the sole purpose of exalting the Lord. The vast majority of the time there is no other objective other than to worship the Lord. However, there are times when we employ praise and worship with the purpose of binding the enemy from a particular issue that we have engaged in spiritual warfare. In

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times like these, we direct our praise and worship to God with the specific intent of defeating a specific work of the enemy. When we sense the Holy Spirit initiating us to praise Him with this intent, we often draw from an old song, “Summon Your Power, O, God”. The words to this uplifting praise song include,

Summon Your power O God, Show us Your strength as You have done before  
Summon Your power O God, Show us Your strength as You have done before  
O God, O God

The [chariots](#) of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands  
The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands

Arise O God and speak the words and all Your enemies will scatter  
The sounds of war will soon be heard a shout, Your warriors will utter<sup>4</sup>

- d. After singing this song several times through with great enthusiasm and the prayer issue at hand on our hearts, we make a declaration, release angels, blow the shofar, or whatever we sense the Holy Spirit leading us to do. The praise has taken our faith and the anointing of the Holy Spirit to an enhanced level. We have seen powerful results in praising like this. Thus, as we worship and praise the Lord, we are positioning ourselves to confront in the heavenlies those entities that would hinder the advance of the kingdom.

## 3. Confront through declaring the judgments written in the scriptures against the enemies of the kingdom.

- a. Declaring the written judgments of God is another very important way that the church can confront demonic principalities in the heavenlies. Psalm 149 describes this activity,

Let the godly ones exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, *to execute on them the judgment written*; this is an honor for all His godly ones. Praise the LORD! (Ps. 149:5-9).

- b. At our home church, this is a major way we go to war in the heavenlies; in fact, it is the predominant way, more than virtually any other way that we engage in spiritual warfare. We often employ this approach in warring against the queen of heaven. We do not attempt to pull down this world ruling demonic principality from its place in the heavenlies; instead, we declare the written judgments over the queen as it relates to a specific issue. For example, a few years ago our home state of Georgia was negotiating the passage of a law that would greatly restrict abortion. As you would imagine, there was much opposition to the bill. We prayed into the issue for a time, then we sensed we were to declare a written judgment over the queen of heaven’s opposition to this issue. We then moved to declare Isaiah 47, the written judgment against the queen of heaven. We were not trying to bring down this spirit in its entirety because we did not have the authority to do so. Instead, we declared the judgments written related specifically to this issue.
- c. As a general principle, when we are warring against the queen of heaven, we often focus our minds toward the demonic rulers and declare Isaiah 47 in its entirety. With great emotion and determination, we begin to declare against the queen of heaven, “Come down and sit in the dust, O



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virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans.” We continue verse by verse until the end of the chapter when we say repeatedly with enthusiasm, “there is none to save you.” (Isa. 47:1-15).

- d. Although not as frequently, when warring against the spirit of antichrist, we declare Isaiah 14 beginning with verse 12, “how you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn!” (Isa. 14:12)...“Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit” (Isa. 14:15). We continue until we have declared through verse 23.
- e. When we pray for Israel and also for America, we at times declare Psalm 83. We start at the beginning of the Psalm and proceed through the entire chapter, emphasizing verses like verse 13 which reads, “O my God, make them [*their enemies*] like the whirling dust; like chaff before the wind.”
- f. Again, we don’t declare written judgments to pull down a territorial spirit itself from the heavenlies, but to bind its work related to the specific issues on which we are focused.
- g. There are many other passages that can be declared. In fact, any section of scripture that declares a judgment against God’s enemies is a potential passage to declare. As we engage God’s enemies by declaring God’s written judgments against them, we enter into a confrontation that chips away at their power, especially related to the specific issues we are considering at the moment, and, thereby, begins to release God’s purposes in a greater way.

## 4. Confront in the prayer room and at the seat of the demonic rule.

- a. Prayer and spiritual warfare normally takes place in the prayer room. However, there are times when the Holy Spirit will lead a team for onsite spiritual warfare. If you will notice, God called Elijah to go to Mount Carmel, the high place of the demonic stronghold, to confront the prophets of Baal. Later, after destroying Ahab and Jezebel’s prophets, Elijah once again went to Mount Carmel to pray for the rain. Both times he went onsite to war and pray.
- b. This example illustrates an important point. At times God will call us to go onsite to pray. Especially in seasons when a confrontation between God and His enemies is needed, God will call on prayer teams to go to a specific high place or a stronghold for the purpose of spiritual warfare. Still using some or all of the prayer approaches discussed previously, God will lead us to go onsite to war at the place of demonic encroachment. When we have been called in such a way, we have found these assignments to be extremely powerful and effective accomplishing the objective God had in mind for the assignment.

## 5. Confront by releasing angels to war on behalf of God’s purposes.

- a. Psalm 103 discusses briefly one of roles of angels. It reads, “Bless the Lord, you His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word! Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, you who serve Him, doing His will” (Ps. 103:20-21). Over the years at our home church, we have regularly called on angels to war on behalf of God’s purposes. This has proven to be a powerful tool that we have come to use more and more in recent years. We only release angels to war when we sense the Holy Spirit saying to do so because angels do not act based on our will but on the will of

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the Father spoken through us. It was prophesied to us as a church in the late 1990's that we had been granted authority to release angels from our church as part of our intercessory ministry. We have been doing so since that time.

- b. Over our years as a church, God has brought prophetic seers into our church either as members or as guest ministers who have helped us interact more precisely with the angels assigned to us. This has helped us understand the function of angels in a general sense as well as helping us understand the specific angels assigned to our church. Through this we have been able to release warring angels to assist in the spiritual warfare to which we are called.
- c. I am sure there are other approaches that others use to engage in spiritual warfare. These are the approaches we have used. As we close this session, we hope this has been helpful to understand the call to engage the enemy in spiritual warfare, to illustrate some ways to do so, and finally to establish some parameters that will protect us as we war for God's purpose to be fulfilled.

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<sup>1</sup> Enmity, Online Dictionary powered by Oxford Dictionaries, Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Terry Bennett, *Why We Fight*, Terry Bennett Ministries, USA, 2015, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Nick Uva, Christian gods and wizards, Apostolic Purpose, <https://nick.uva.substack.com/p/Christian-gods-and-wizards>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.topchristianlyrics.com/2009/11/20/summon-your-power-o-god-lyrics/>