

SPIRITUAL WARFARE:

— CHRIST ABOVE EVERY POWER —



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UGANDA EDITION

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INTRODUCTION – Seeing Clearly in Every Culture

This study was first requested by Christian ministers in Uganda.

In many parts of Africa, the spiritual world is not questioned.

It is assumed.

People speak openly about:

- God as Creator.
- Angels and evil spirits.
- Blessings and curses.
- Spiritual causes behind visible events.

The unseen realm feels close.

It feels active.

It feels real.

Because of this, passages like Ephesians 6 are read naturally.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood...”

There is little debate about whether unseen forces exist.

The challenge is not awareness.

The challenge is balance.

In other parts of the world, especially in the West, the situation is different.

The unseen world is often ignored.

Modern education emphasizes science and psychology.

Material comfort is common.

Technology solves many visible problems.

As a result, spiritual reality can feel distant.

Abstract.

Unnecessary.

But this does not mean spiritual opposition is absent.

It means it is less recognized.

In some places, the enemy magnifies fear.

In other places, he magnifies comfort.

In one setting, believers may over-attribute events to spirits.

In another, believers may under-attribute everything.

Both are forms of blindness.

Both are forms of deception.

The same unseen opposition operates in every culture.

But it adapts.

Where fear dominates, deception may appear dramatic.

Where comfort dominates, deception may appear reasonable.

Subtle.

Acceptable.

In the West, spiritual deception often works through:

- Pride.
- Self-sufficiency.
- Entertainment.

- Distraction.
- Material security.
- Confidence in human systems.

Comfort becomes the primary pressure.

Faith becomes secondary.

In other settings, spiritual deception may work through:

- Fear of misfortune.
- Suspicion of unseen attack.
- Blended belief systems.
- Ritual dependence.

Fear becomes the primary pressure.

In both cases, trust shifts.

And whenever trust shifts away from Christ, spiritual clarity weakens.

This study was written to bring balance.

It does not deny spiritual reality.

It does not exaggerate it.

It seeks to anchor believers in three truths:

Christ reigns.

The Cross is decisive.

The enemy is limited.

The goal of this study is not to increase fear.

It is not to create dramatic confrontation.

It is to produce steady believers.

Believers who:

- Understand the unseen world.
- Recognize cultural blind spots.
- Take responsibility for the flesh.
- Reject divided loyalty.
- Live in calm authority.

Although this material was requested by ministers in Uganda, it is not limited to Uganda.

It applies in Africa.

It applies in Europe.

It applies in America.

It applies wherever believers live.

Because spiritual warfare is not regional.

It is human.

And Christ is Lord everywhere.

May this study produce clarity where there is confusion.

Peace where there is fear.

Alertness where there is comfort.

And exclusive devotion to Christ in every culture.

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE — How to Use This Study

This study is designed to be taught slowly.

Do not rush it.

Each lesson builds on the previous one.

If the foundation is weak, later lessons will feel unstable.

Begin with prayer.

Read the Scripture passages aloud.

Encourage participants to read the full chapters referenced.

This study is not built on personal stories.

It is built on Scripture.

Keep Scripture central.

Teach Calmly

The goal of this material is not to create fear.

It is not to create dramatic confrontation.

It is to create stability.

Teach in a steady tone.

Avoid sensational language.

Avoid repeating unverified spiritual stories.

Clarity produces peace.

Exaggeration produces anxiety.

Encourage Questions

Allow participants to ask honest questions.

Do not shame people for past beliefs.

Many practices grow from fear or inherited tradition.

Correct gently.

Anchor answers in Scripture.

If you do not know an answer, say so.

Return to the text together.

Guard Against Extremes

Some may want to turn every hardship into spiritual attack.

Others may want to dismiss spiritual reality entirely.

This study calls for balance.

Return often to these foundations:

Christ reigns.

The Cross is decisive.

The enemy is limited.

Believers are responsible.

Loyalty must be undivided.

Address Syncretism with Patience

When discussing divided loyalty or blended practices:

Be respectful.

Cultural habits are often deep.

Do not attack culture.

Call for exclusive trust in Christ.

Let Scripture speak.

Conviction grows best in humility.

Emphasize Growth, Not Blame

This material may expose:

- Fear.
- Misunderstanding.
- Divided trust.
- Personal responsibility.

Do not use it to accuse.

Use it to guide.

Spiritual maturity takes time.

Encourage repentance.

Encourage obedience.

Encourage steady faith.

End Every Lesson in Peace

Spiritual warfare training should leave believers calmer, not more anxious.

If participants feel more afraid than when they began, slow down.

Return to sovereignty.

Return to the Cross.

Return to Christ's authority.

The goal is not intensity.

The goal is stability.

Suggested Format

Each lesson may be taught in one session.

Allow time for:

- Reading Scripture aloud.
- Quiet reflection.
- Discussion.
- Prayer.

Twelve lessons may be completed over twelve weeks.

Or divided into two six-week sessions.

Do not shorten the foundation lessons.

They support everything else.

Final Reminder to Leaders

You are not called to dramatize the unseen realm.

You are called to teach truth clearly.

Spiritual warfare is real.

But Christ is above every power.

Teach that with confidence.

Live that with humility.

LESSON 1 — Before the Battle — The Throne Above All

Opening Thought

In many places in the world, people believe strongly in the unseen world.

They believe:

- There are spirits.
- There are good and evil forces.
- Events may have spiritual causes.

The Bible does teach that there is an unseen world.

But before we talk about spiritual battles, we must talk about something greater.

We must talk about who rules.

Spiritual warfare begins with God's throne.

Not with fear.

Not with demons.

With Christ.

SECTION 1 — Christ Rules Over the Unseen

Read **Colossians 1:15–18** slowly:

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”

Notice what Paul says.

All things were created by Christ.

That includes:

- Things we can see
- Things we cannot see
- Rulers
- Authorities
- Powers

These include spiritual beings.

They were created by Him.

They were created for Him.

They are not equal to Him.

They are not stronger than Him.

They are not outside His control.

Before there was rebellion, Christ was King.

Before there was spiritual conflict, Christ ruled.

Spiritual warfare is not a fight between equals.

There is one throne.

Read the Whole Chapter

Now read all of Colossians chapter 1.

Look for these main ideas:

1. Paul thanks God for the believers (verses 3–8).
2. He prays for their growth and wisdom (verses 9–12).
3. He says they were rescued from darkness (verse 13).
4. He explains who Christ is (verses 15–18).
5. He explains what Christ did on the cross (verses 19–23).

Pay special attention to verse 13:

“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”

Delivered.

Transferred.

That means believers have changed kingdoms.

Darkness has a domain.

But Christ has a kingdom.

And His kingdom is greater.

What the Bible Teaches About the Spiritual World

The Bible teaches that:

- Angels exist (Hebrews 1:14).
- Some angels rebelled (2 Peter 2:4).

- There is spiritual conflict (Daniel 10).
- Satan lies and deceives (John 8:44).

But the Bible also teaches:

- All spiritual beings were created (Colossians 1:16).
- They are not everywhere at once.
- They do not know everything.
- They must answer to God (Job 1–2).
- Jesus has all authority (Matthew 28:18).

The spiritual world is real.

But it is not out of control.

God rules over it.

This must be our starting point.

If we forget this, fear grows.

If we remember this, peace grows.

Cultural Reflection

In many African settings, when something bad happens, people may first think:

“Is this spiritual?”

This shows they believe the unseen world is real.

In many Western settings, people may first think:

“This is only medical or psychological.”

This shows they may ignore the unseen world.

Both can be unbalanced.

The Bible does not deny spiritual reality.

But it also does not teach that every problem comes from a spirit.

Before we decide what caused something, we must remember who rules.

Christ rules.

For Leaders Teaching Others

When you teach about spiritual warfare, start here:

Start with Christ's authority.

Start with the throne.

Ask yourself:

- Do the people I teach fear spirits more than they trust Christ?
- Do they speak more about curses than about salvation?
- Do they understand that Jesus created what they fear?

If we do not teach sovereignty first, people may live in fear.

But if we teach Christ first, they will stand firm.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean that Jesus created both visible and invisible things?
2. How does Colossians 1 change your view of spiritual warfare?
3. What does it mean to be transferred into Christ's kingdom?

4. Does your culture over-focus or under-focus on the spiritual world?
5. Why must we begin with the throne before we talk about the battle?

Encourage everyone to read Colossians 1 again before moving forward.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
You created all things, seen and unseen.
You rule above every power.
Help us to remember that You are greater than anything we fear.
Teach us to trust Your authority.
Guard us from fear and from ignorance.
Help us stand firm in You.
Amen.

LESSON 2 — The Nature of Spiritual Beings — What They Are and What They Are Not

Opening Thought

Many believers speak confidently about spirits.

Some fear them.

Some confront them.

Some ignore them.

Before we talk about spiritual warfare, we must answer a simple question:

What does the Bible actually teach about spiritual beings?

Not tradition.

Not experience.

Not stories.

Scripture.

When we understand their true nature, fear decreases and clarity grows.

SECTION 1 — Spiritual Beings Are Created

Return again to **Colossians 1:16**.

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”

Spiritual beings are not eternal.

They are not equal to God.

They are not self-existing.

They were created.

This includes:

- Angels who serve God.
- Angels who rebelled.

There is only one uncreated Being.

God alone is eternal.

Everything else is created.

This changes the entire discussion.

Created beings are limited.

SECTION 2 — Angels: Servants of God

Read **Hebrews 1:14**:

“Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”

Angels are:

- Spirits.
- Sent.
- Serving.

They do not act independently.

They are sent by God.

They serve His purposes.

Throughout Scripture we see:

- Angels guarding (Genesis 3:24).
- Angels delivering messages (Luke 1).
- Angels strengthening believers (Luke 22:43).

But angels never seek worship.

They never act outside God's authority.

They are servants.

SECTION 3 — Fallen Angels and Satan

The Bible also teaches that some angels rebelled.

Read **2 Peter 2:4**:

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment...”

Rebellion occurred.

Not all spiritual beings remained faithful.

Jesus describes Satan clearly in **John 8:44**:

“He was a murderer from the beginning... When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Notice the description.

Satan's primary weapon is deception.

Not omnipresence.

Not unlimited power.

Lies.

He twists truth.

He accuses.

He deceives.

SECTION 4 — Limits and Permission

Now read Job chapters 1 and 2.

Do not skip this.

Outline what happens:

1. Satan appears before God.
2. He cannot act without permission.
3. God sets limits.
4. Satan obeys those limits.

He is not sovereign.

He must request.

He must obey boundaries.

This is very important.

Many believers assume that Satan acts freely.

Scripture shows he operates under restriction.

This does not remove conflict.

But it establishes control.

God remains King.

SECTION 5 — What Spiritual Beings Are Not

The Bible does not teach that spiritual beings are:

- Omnipresent (everywhere at once).
- Omniscient (knowing everything).
- Equal to God.
- Able to override God's will.

Only God is everywhere.

Only God knows all things.

Only God is sovereign.

Spiritual beings are powerful compared to humans.

But they are not infinite.

Cultural Reflection

In some Christian communities, spiritual beings are sometimes spoken of as if they are everywhere at once.

As if they can control any event at any time.

As if they are constantly watching and directing every detail of life.

Scripture does not support that view.

In other communities, spiritual beings are dismissed entirely.

They are reduced to symbols or myths.

Scripture does not support that view either.

The Bible presents a real spiritual realm.

But it presents a limited one.

Governed.

Ordered.

Under authority.

For Leaders Teaching Others

When you teach about demons or angels:

Do not exaggerate.

Do not minimize.

Ask:

- Do the people I teach believe Satan is nearly equal to God?
- Do they assume every problem is spiritual?
- Or do they deny spiritual influence completely?

Balance is not compromise.

Balance is biblical clarity.

The goal is not to increase fear.

The goal is to increase discernment.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean that spiritual beings are created?
2. How does Job 1–2 show Satan's limits?
3. What is Satan's primary weapon according to John 8:44?

4. Why is it dangerous to speak of demons as if they are everywhere?
5. Why is it also dangerous to deny their existence?

Encourage everyone to read Job 1–2 fully before the next lesson.

Closing Prayer

Lord God,
You alone are eternal.
All spiritual beings were created by You.
Guard us from fear and from ignorance.
Help us understand what Your Word truly teaches.
Give us discernment as we study.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

LESSON 3 – The Cross – The Decisive Victory

Opening Thought

Many believers know that Jesus died for their sins.

Fewer understand what happened in the unseen realm when He died.

Spiritual warfare is not centered on our shouting.

It is centered on His finished work.

If we do not understand the Cross correctly, we will fight battles that have already been decided.

The Cross is not only forgiveness.

It is victory.

SECTION 1 – What Happened at the Cross?

Read **Colossians 2:13–15** slowly.

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,
by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.
He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

Notice three movements in this passage:

1. We were dead in sin.
2. Our debt was canceled.
3. Rulers and authorities were disarmed.

Do not miss that word: **disarmed**.

It does not say negotiated.

It does not say weakened.

It says disarmed.

The Cross was not quiet in the unseen realm.

It was a public victory.

SECTION 2 — What Does “Disarmed” Mean?

Rulers and authorities refer to spiritual powers.

Paul uses similar language in Colossians 1:16.

These are unseen powers.

Paul says they were disarmed.

This means:

- Their legal claim against believers was removed.
- Their accusation was canceled.
- Their power to condemn was broken.

Satan is called “the accuser” in Revelation 12:10.

If the record of debt is canceled, accusation loses its power.

The Cross removed the strongest weapon the enemy had.

Guilt.

Condemnation.

Legal claim.

SECTION 3 — Read the Whole Chapter

Now read all of Colossians chapter 2.

Look for these ideas:

1. Warning against deception (verses 4–8).
2. Fullness in Christ (verses 9–10).
3. Forgiveness and life (verses 13–14).
4. Victory over rulers and authorities (verse 15).
5. Freedom from fear-based religious rules (verses 16–23).

Notice verse 10:

“And you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.”

Head.

Above.

Over.

Christ did not defeat darkness temporarily.

He reigns over it.

SECTION 4 — The Authority of the Risen Christ

Read **Matthew 28:18**.

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’”

All authority.

Not most.

Not partial.

All.

In heaven.

And on earth.

If Christ has all authority, no spirit has independent authority.

They may resist.

They may deceive.

They may tempt.

But they do not rule.

SECTION 5 — What This Means for Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare is not trying to gain victory.

It is standing in a victory already won.

If believers do not understand this, they may live as if:

- The battle is equal.
- The outcome is uncertain.
- The enemy is nearly as powerful as Christ.

Scripture does not teach that.

The Cross was decisive.

The resurrection confirmed it.

The throne enforces it.

Cultural Reflection

In some Christian settings, believers may feel that they must constantly fight to secure victory.

Deliverance becomes frequent.

Fear becomes common.

But if the Cross disarmed rulers and authorities, then warfare must be understood differently.

In other settings, believers may rarely think about spiritual opposition at all.

The Cross is reduced to personal comfort.

But Scripture presents the Cross as cosmic victory.

We must hold both truths:

There is conflict.

But the decisive victory belongs to Christ.

For Leaders Teaching Others

When you teach about spiritual warfare, return often to the Cross.

Ask:

- Do the people I teach understand what was canceled at the Cross?
- Do they know that accusation has lost its power?
- Do they live as transferred citizens of a greater kingdom?

If believers do not understand the finished work, they will live in either fear or pride.

The Cross produces humility and confidence at the same time.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean that the “record of debt” was nailed to the Cross?
2. How does Colossians 2:15 change your understanding of spiritual warfare?
3. If Christ has all authority, what authority remains for the enemy?
4. Why is accusation such a powerful weapon?
5. How should the finished work of Christ change the way we pray?

Encourage everyone to read Colossians 2 carefully before the next lesson.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
Thank You for the Cross.
Thank You for canceling our debt.
Thank You for disarming every power that stood against us.
Teach us to live in the victory You have already won.
Guard us from fear.
Keep our eyes on Your finished work.
Amen.

LESSON 4 — Stand Firm — Understanding Ephesians 6

Opening Thought

When many believers hear “spiritual warfare,” they imagine intense confrontation.

But Paul’s instruction in Ephesians is calm and steady.

His repeated command is simple:

Stand firm.

Before we interpret the armor, we must notice the tone of the passage.

It is not panic.

It is preparation.

SECTION 1 — The Main Command

Read Ephesians 6:10–13 in your Bible.

Notice how often Paul uses the word “stand.”

He tells believers:

- Be strong in the Lord.
- Put on the full armor of God.
- Stand against schemes.
- Stand firm in difficult days.

The focus is not aggressive pursuit.

It is stability.

Paul does not say:

“Go searching for spirits.”

He says:

“Stand in what God has provided.”

SECTION 2 — What Is the Real Struggle?

Paul explains that our struggle is not against human beings.

The conflict is deeper than personalities or politics.

It involves unseen opposition.

But even here, notice something important.

Paul does not describe detailed strategies of evil forces.

He does not teach believers to map spiritual territories.

He simply reminds them that the struggle is not merely human.

The solution is not fear.

The solution is armor.

SECTION 3 — The Armor Itself

Read Ephesians 6:14–17 slowly.

List the pieces Paul mentions:

- Belt of truth
- Breastplate of righteousness
- Shoes of the gospel of peace

- Shield of faith
- Helmet of salvation
- Sword of the Spirit (the Word of God)

Notice what these are.

They are not rituals.

They are not objects.

They are spiritual realities:

Truth.

Righteousness.

Faith.

Salvation.

The Word.

Most of the armor is defensive.

It protects.

Only one item is described as a weapon — the Word of God.

And even that is used as Jesus used it in Matthew 4:

By speaking truth.

No shouting.

No ceremony.

Just Scripture.

SECTION 4 — The Nature of the Enemy's Strategy

Paul says believers stand against “schemes.”

The enemy's work is often described as deception.

Lies.

Accusation.

Temptation.

Confusion.

This matches what Jesus said in John 8:44.

The primary weapon is not visible force.

It is falsehood.

If truth is central, lies lose power.

SECTION 5 — Cultural Reflection

In some Christian communities, spiritual warfare is described in dramatic language.

It may focus heavily on confrontation.

But Ephesians 6 does not focus on dramatic action.

It focuses on steady faithfulness.

In other communities, this passage is rarely taught seriously.

The armor becomes symbolic language with no real application.

Both extremes miss the heart of Paul's message.

The message is this:

Remain steady in Christ.

SECTION 6 — For Leaders Teaching Others

When teaching Ephesians 6, ask:

- Do people understand that truth is armor?
- Do they see righteousness as protection?
- Do they understand faith as a shield?

Or do they focus mainly on dramatic spiritual encounters?

Armor is worn daily.

Not only during crisis.

The Christian life itself is warfare.

But it is steady warfare.

Calm.

Faithful.

Grounded.

Discussion Questions

1. How many times does Paul tell believers to “stand”?
2. What does it mean to be strong “in the Lord” instead of in yourself?
3. Why is truth listed first?
4. Why is the Word of God the only offensive weapon?
5. How would daily holiness change the way we think about warfare?

Encourage everyone to read Ephesians 6:10–18 carefully before the next lesson.

Closing Prayer

Lord,
Teach us to stand firm.
Clothe us in truth and righteousness.
Strengthen our faith.
Help us trust Your Word more than our fear.
Keep us steady in You.
Amen.

LESSON 5 – Permission and Limits – What the Enemy Cannot Do

Opening Thought

Many believers assume that spiritual opposition acts freely.

They may believe that unseen forces can move without restraint.

But Scripture paints a different picture.

The Bible shows conflict.

But it also shows boundaries.

Before we fear spiritual power, we must understand its limits.

SECTION 1 – The Example of Job

Read Job chapters 1 and 2 slowly.

Do not rush.

Notice the order of events.

Outline what happens:

1. Job is described as upright and faithful.
2. Satan appears before God.
3. Satan cannot act without speaking to God.
4. God sets limits.
5. Satan acts only within those limits.

This pattern is important.

Satan does not move independently.

He appears before God.

He receives boundaries.

He obeys those boundaries.

The text never suggests that God lost control.

Even in suffering, the throne remains secure.

SECTION 2 — Jesus and Permission

Now read Luke 22:31–32.

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,
but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Notice three truths:

1. Satan “demanded” or “asked.”
2. He did not act without request.
3. Jesus interceded.

Peter was shaken.

But he was not destroyed.

Jesus prayed.

And Peter was restored.

This shows both conflict and protection.

SECTION 3 — The Limits of Authority

Earlier we read Matthew 28:18:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

If Christ has all authority, then no other being has independent authority.

Spiritual opposition may tempt.

It may accuse.

It may attempt to discourage.

But it cannot override Christ’s rule.

It cannot remove a believer from Christ’s hand.

Read John 10:28–29 in your Bible.

Jesus says no one can snatch His sheep from His hand.

That includes unseen opposition.

SECTION 4 — What This Means for Believers

This does not mean believers never suffer.

Job suffered.

Peter was shaken.

Paul spoke of hardship often.

But suffering does not mean abandonment.

Conflict does not mean loss of control.

The enemy is not sovereign.

God is sovereign.

If believers forget this, fear grows.

If believers remember this, trust grows.

SECTION 5 — Cultural Reflection

In some Christian settings, people may assume that spiritual harm can happen suddenly and without restraint.

They may believe that protection depends mainly on constant defensive action.

But Scripture shows that God sets boundaries.

In other settings, people may assume that spiritual opposition is imaginary.

They may ignore passages like Job or Luke 22.

Scripture does not support denial.

But it also does not support panic.

It teaches sovereignty.

SECTION 6 — For Leaders Teaching Others

When teaching about spiritual opposition, emphasize:

- God remains in control.
- The enemy must operate within limits.
- Christ intercedes for believers.

Ask:

- Are the people I teach living in fear of sudden spiritual disaster?
- Do they understand that Jesus prays for His people?

- Do they know that suffering is not always punishment?

Strong teaching on sovereignty produces stability.

Weak teaching produces fear.

Discussion Questions

1. What do Job chapters 1–2 teach about limits?
2. Why is it important that Satan had to ask permission in Luke 22?
3. How does Christ's authority affect our security?
4. Does suffering always mean spiritual defeat?
5. How should sovereignty shape the way we pray?

Encourage everyone to read Job 1–2 and Luke 22 again before the next lesson.

Closing Prayer

Lord God,
You rule over all things.
Even in suffering, You remain in control.
Help us trust Your sovereignty.
Guard us from fear.
Strengthen our faith in Your protection.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

LESSON 6 – Not Every Problem Is a Demon

Opening Thought

In some Christian settings, when something goes wrong, the first question is:

“Is this a spirit?”

When someone becomes sick:

“Is this an attack?”

When finances struggle:

“Is this a curse?”

Scripture teaches that spiritual opposition is real.

But Scripture also teaches that not every hardship comes from a demon.

If we fail to learn this distinction, fear increases and wisdom decreases.

SECTION 1 – The Example of John 9

Read John chapter 9 carefully.

A man is born blind.

The disciples ask Jesus:

“Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

Notice their assumption.

They assume direct spiritual or moral cause.

Jesus answers:

“It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

Jesus corrects their thinking.

Not every suffering is punishment.

Not every condition is caused by direct sin.

This chapter teaches humility.

We must be careful when assigning spiritual causes.

SECTION 2 — Paul's Thorn

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7–10.

Paul speaks of a “thorn in the flesh.”

He says it was a messenger of Satan.

Yet notice what happens:

- Paul prays for removal.
- God does not remove it.
- God says, “My grace is sufficient for you.”

This passage shows two important truths:

1. Spiritual opposition can exist.
2. God may allow difficulty for growth.

But Paul does not panic.

He does not build a system around the thorn.

He trusts God's purpose.

SECTION 3 — Living in a Fallen World

The Bible teaches that creation itself is affected by sin.

Read Romans 8:20–22 in your Bible.

Creation groans.

The world is broken.

Bodies become weak.

Storms happen.

Illness exists.

Not every natural hardship requires a spiritual explanation.

Sometimes we are simply living in a fallen world.

Wisdom includes:

- Prayer
- Medical care
- Counsel
- Patience

Faith does not reject wisdom.

SECTION 4 — The Danger of Over-Attributing

If every problem is labeled spiritual attack:

- Fear increases.
- Responsibility decreases.
- Discernment weakens.

Believers may become dependent on constant intervention.

They may overlook:

- Personal choices.
- Practical solutions.
- Growth through endurance.

This does not mean spiritual opposition is unreal.

It means we must be careful.

SECTION 5 — The Danger of Under-Attributing

In other settings, hardship is explained only through science or psychology.

Spiritual influence is ignored completely.

Scripture does not support that extreme either.

The Bible clearly shows that spiritual opposition exists.

But it never teaches that every difficulty is caused by it.

Balance is biblical.

SECTION 6 — For Leaders Teaching Others

When someone faces hardship, ask gentle questions:

- Is there clear sin involved?
- Is this simply suffering in a broken world?
- Is this an opportunity for growth?
- Have practical steps been taken?

Do not rush to spiritual conclusions.

Do not dismiss spiritual reality.

Discernment requires patience.

Strong teaching produces stable believers.

Fear-based teaching produces unstable believers.

Discussion Questions

1. What did Jesus correct in John 9?
2. What did Paul learn from his thorn?
3. Why is it dangerous to label every hardship as spiritual attack?
4. Why is it also dangerous to ignore spiritual opposition completely?
5. How can leaders teach discernment without creating fear?

Encourage everyone to read John 9 and 2 Corinthians 12 again before the next lesson.

Closing Prayer

Lord,
Give us wisdom.
Help us see clearly.
Guard us from fear and from denial.
Teach us patience in suffering.
Help us trust You in every situation.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

LESSON 7 — The Flesh — The Battle Within

Opening Thought

When believers think about spiritual warfare, many look outward.

They think of unseen forces.

They think of external attack.

But the New Testament also speaks of another battlefield.

It speaks of the flesh.

If we ignore this teaching, we may blame the enemy for what is happening inside us.

Spiritual maturity requires honesty.

Not every struggle comes from outside.

Sometimes the battle is within.

SECTION 1 — Read James 1:14–15

Read this slowly:

“But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”

Notice the order.

Temptation.

Desire.

Sin.

Growth.

Death.

James does not mention demons here.

He mentions desire.

Temptation may come from outside.

But sin requires agreement inside.

This is important.

Influence may knock.

But the door opens from within.

SECTION 2 — Paul's Struggle in Romans 7

Read Romans chapter 7 carefully.

Notice Paul's honesty.

He says:

“I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”

He describes:

- Inner conflict.
- Desire for good.
- Weakness of the flesh.

He does not blame spirits for every struggle.

He describes the reality of the human condition.

The flesh refers to our fallen nature.

It is the part of us that still desires independence from God.

This battle is real.

But it is not the same as demonic control.

SECTION 3 — The Works of the Flesh

Read Galatians 5:16–21.

Paul lists actions that come from the flesh:

- Sexual immorality.
- Jealousy.
- Anger.
- Envy.
- Pride.
- Division.

Notice something important.

These behaviors can destroy families and churches.

But Paul does not say they are always caused by demons.

He says they come from the flesh.

If we blame the enemy for what Scripture calls flesh, we avoid responsibility.

Growth requires ownership.

SECTION 4 — The Role of Personal Responsibility

The Bible teaches that believers are called to:

- Crucify the flesh (Galatians 5:24).

- Walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16).
- Put sin to death (Colossians 3:5).

These commands assume choice.

They assume responsibility.

They assume cooperation with the Spirit.

This does not remove spiritual opposition.

But it reminds us that not all struggle is external attack.

Sometimes the most serious battle is self-rule.

SECTION 5 — Cultural Reflection

In some Christian communities, repeated sin may be described primarily as spiritual bondage.

But Scripture often describes repeated sin as unchecked desire.

In other communities, personal sin may be excused as weakness or personality.

Scripture does not excuse it.

Both extremes avoid honest repentance.

Balanced teaching says:

Spiritual opposition exists.

But the flesh must be addressed.

Holiness is protection.

SECTION 6 — For Leaders Teaching Others

When someone struggles with repeated sin, ask:

- Is there unconfessed desire?
- Is there a pattern of disobedience?
- Is there accountability?
- Is there repentance?

Do not immediately assume external spiritual cause.

And do not shame the person.

Teach:

Freedom grows through truth and obedience.

The Spirit empowers change.

Believers are not helpless.

They are called to grow.

Discussion Questions

1. What does James 1 teach about temptation?
2. How does Romans 7 describe inner struggle?
3. Why is it dangerous to blame all sin on the enemy?
4. What does it mean to “crucify the flesh”?
5. How can leaders teach responsibility without condemnation?

Encourage everyone to read Romans 7 and Galatians 5 before the next lesson.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

Search our hearts.

Show us where our own desires lead us away from You.

Help us take responsibility for our choices.

Strengthen us by Your Spirit.

Teach us to walk in holiness.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

LESSON 8 — Fear and Deception — How Lies Gain Power

Opening Thought

Spiritual opposition does not usually begin with force.

It begins with a lie.

When lies are believed, fear grows.

When fear grows, decisions change.

When decisions change, influence increases.

If we understand how deception works, we will understand how fear loses power.

SECTION 1 — The Nature of the Enemy's Work

Read John 8:44.

Jesus describes the devil as a liar.

He says lying is part of his character.

Notice what Jesus does not say.

He does not describe the enemy first as powerful.

He describes him as deceptive.

Lies are the primary weapon.

Lies about God.

Lies about identity.

Lies about danger.

Lies about control.

If lies are believed, fear becomes strong.

SECTION 2 — Fear and Bondage

Read Hebrews 2:14–15.

The passage teaches that through death, Christ destroyed the one who had the power of death.

It also says people were held in slavery by fear of death.

Notice that word: fear.

Fear can enslave.

Fear can control decisions.

Fear can make people seek protection in the wrong places.

Fear does not always come from visible attack.

It often comes from believing something that is not fully true.

SECTION 3 — The Spirit Given to Believers

Read 2 Timothy 1:7.

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

Fear does not come from God.

Power.

Love.

Self-control.

These come from God.

When fear dominates, it is a signal to return to truth.

SECTION 4 — How Fear Gains Ground

Fear grows when:

- Scripture is not understood.
- Suffering is misinterpreted.
- God's sovereignty is forgotten.
- Stories are repeated without testing.
- Leaders speak dramatically without clarity.

Fear can also grow in quiet ways:

- Anxiety about the future.
- Suspicion of hidden forces.
- Constant anticipation of attack.

Fear magnifies the enemy beyond his limits.

Truth restores perspective.

SECTION 5 — Cultural Reflection

In some Christian communities, fear may center on curses, spirits, or unseen attack.

Protection rituals may feel necessary.

Constant defensive posture may feel normal.

In other communities, fear may focus on security, money, reputation, or loss of comfort.

Both are fear.

Both can distort faith.

Fear can drive syncretism.

Fear can drive denial.

Only truth produces peace.

SECTION 6 — For Leaders Teaching Others

When teaching about spiritual warfare, ask:

- Are people motivated by fear or faith?
- Are they more aware of the enemy than of Christ?
- Are stories increasing anxiety?
- Is Scripture calming hearts?

Strong leadership reduces fear.

Not by denying spiritual reality.

But by teaching truth clearly.

Fear loses strength where truth is strong.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus describe the devil primarily as a liar?
2. How does fear create bondage?
3. What does 2 Timothy 1:7 teach about the Spirit of God?
4. How can dramatic spiritual language increase fear?

5. How can leaders teach in a way that produces peace instead of panic?

Encourage everyone to read Hebrews 2 and 2 Timothy 1 again before the next lesson.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

Guard our hearts from fear.

Expose lies with Your truth.

Fill us with power, love, and self-control.

Help us trust You more than what we do not understand.

Keep our eyes on Christ.

Amen.

LESSON 9 – Agreement and Access – How Influence Grows

Opening Thought

The New Testament does not present believers as helpless victims of unseen forces.

Those who belong to Christ have been transferred into His kingdom.

They are not owned by darkness.

Yet Scripture also warns believers not to “give opportunity” to the enemy.

This lesson is important.

Influence does not grow without agreement.

The door does not open from the outside alone.

It opens when we consent.

SECTION 1 – “Give No Opportunity”

Read Ephesians 4:27 in your Bible.

It says:

“Give no opportunity to the devil.”

Opportunity means space.

Room.

Access.

Paul writes this to believers.

This means believers can either:

Close the door.

Or leave it open.

The command assumes responsibility.

SECTION 2 — Temptation and Agreement

Return to James 1:14–15.

“Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin.”

Temptation may come from outside.

But sin requires agreement inside.

If desire is entertained, it grows.

If sin is repeated, patterns form.

Influence deepens where lies are believed.

This is not possession.

It is participation.

SECTION 3 — Submission and Resistance

Read James 4:7 again:

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Notice the order.

Submit.

Resist.

If believers submit to God, resistance becomes effective.

The enemy flees.

This does not describe helpless control.

It describes conditional influence.

Where submission is absent, resistance weakens.

SECTION 4 — What Agreement Looks Like

Agreement does not always look dramatic.

It can look like:

- Unforgiveness that is protected.
- Bitterness that is rehearsed.
- Sin that is justified.
- Fear that is fed.
- Pride that refuses correction.
- Trust placed in something other than Christ.

Agreement can also happen when believers blend trust.

When they look to Christ — but also to other spiritual systems for protection.

Divided loyalty creates confusion.

And confusion gives room for fear.

SECTION 5 — A Necessary Guardrail

Suffering does not automatically mean consent.

Job suffered.

Peter was shaken.

Paul endured hardship.

We must never tell someone:

“You suffer because you allowed it.”

That is not what Scripture teaches.

But we must also teach clearly:

Repeated agreement with lies creates bondage.

Freedom grows where truth is embraced.

SECTION 6 — Cultural Reflection

In some Christian settings, people may seek protection through blended practices.

They may trust Christ — but also fear former spiritual systems.

They may use Christian language — but still rely on ritual security.

In other settings, agreement may look different.

It may look like trusting money, status, or comfort more than Christ.

Both are forms of divided trust.

Syncretism is not only cultural.

It is human.

Whenever trust is divided, access increases.

SECTION 7 — For Leaders Teaching Others

When teaching this lesson, be gentle but clear.

Ask:

- Is there unconfessed sin?
- Is there bitterness that is being protected?
- Is there fear that is being fed?
- Is trust divided?

Do not shame.

Do not accuse.

But do not soften truth.

Believers are not powerless.

They are responsible.

They are called to repentance and faith.

Where truth is embraced, influence weakens.

Discussion Questions

1. What does “give no opportunity” mean?
2. How does temptation become sin?
3. Why does submission come before resistance?
4. What are examples of divided trust?
5. How can leaders teach responsibility without condemnation?

Encourage everyone to read Ephesians 4 and James 1 again before the next lesson.

Closing Prayer

Lord,
Search our hearts.
Show us where we have agreed with lies.
Teach us to submit fully to You.
Guard us from divided trust.
Strengthen us to walk in truth.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

LESSON 10 — Divided Loyalty — When Belief Systems Blend

Opening Thought

Throughout history, God’s people have struggled with divided loyalty.

They believed in the true God.

But they also kept parts of former systems.

They mixed worship.

They blended trust.

This is not new.

It happened in Israel.

It happened in the early church.

It happens today.

Spiritual warfare is not only about resisting attack.

It is also about guarding exclusive devotion.

SECTION 1 — God’s Clear Warning

Read Deuteronomy 18:9–14.

God tells Israel not to learn the practices of the surrounding nations.

He lists forbidden practices.

Then He says:

“These nations... listen to fortune-tellers and diviners. But as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do this.”

Notice the distinction.

God does not say the practices are imaginary.

He says they are not permitted.

The issue is loyalty.

Trust must not be divided.

SECTION 2 — Israel's Pattern

Read 1 Kings 18.

Elijah confronts the prophets of Baal.

But before that confrontation, he asks a question:

“How long will you go limping between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.”

The people were not atheists.

They believed in the Lord.

But they also kept Baal.

That was the problem.

Divided worship weakens faith.

It invites confusion.

SECTION 3 — The Early Church Example

Read Acts 19:18–20.

New believers in Ephesus brought their scrolls and burned them publicly.

They did not keep part of their former practices “just in case.”

They removed them.

Their trust became singular.

Notice the result.

The Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Exclusive loyalty strengthened the church.

SECTION 4 — What Syncretism Is

Syncretism means blending belief systems.

It happens when people say:

“I trust Christ.”

But also rely on other sources for protection, power, or identity.

It may look like:

- Fear-driven rituals kept quietly.
- Sacred objects treated as protection.
- Dependence on spiritual specialists instead of Scripture.
- Mixing biblical faith with former spiritual fears.

It can also look like:

- Blending Christianity with materialism.
- Trusting wealth more than God.
- Mixing faith with political identity.
- Following culture more than Christ.

Syncretism is not regional.

It is human.

Whenever trust is divided, loyalty weakens.

SECTION 5 — Why Divided Loyalty Is Dangerous

Divided loyalty creates confusion.

Confusion feeds fear.

Fear opens room for lies.

Earlier we learned:

Influence grows where agreement is given.

If trust is split, confidence disappears.

James 1:8 describes a “double-minded” person as unstable.

Instability weakens discernment.

God calls His people to clarity.

SECTION 6 — A Necessary Reminder

Removing syncretism does not mean rejecting culture.

It means rejecting misplaced trust.

Culture may shape language and expression.

But protection, identity, and authority belong to Christ alone.

Exclusive loyalty produces peace.

Divided loyalty produces anxiety.

SECTION 7 — For Leaders Teaching Others

When addressing syncretism:

Be patient.

Be respectful.

Ask:

- Where is trust divided?
- What practices remain from former systems?
- Are people relying more on rituals than on Scripture?
- Are they fearful of removing old patterns?

Do not attack culture.

Point to Christ.

Call for exclusive devotion.

Truth spoken calmly produces conviction.

Discussion Questions

1. What does Deuteronomy 18 teach about forbidden practices?
2. Why was Israel's divided loyalty dangerous?
3. What did the believers in Acts 19 do with their former practices?
4. What does divided trust look like today?
5. Why does exclusive loyalty bring stability?

Encourage everyone to read 1 Kings 18 and Acts 19 carefully before the next lesson.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

You alone are God.

Search our hearts for divided trust.

Help us remove anything that competes with You.

Give us courage to walk in exclusive devotion.

Strengthen our faith in Christ alone.

Amen.

LESSON 11 — Cultural Blind Spots — Fear and Comfort

Opening Thought

Every culture sees some things clearly.

Every culture also has blind spots.

Spiritual warfare does not look the same in every place.

But it is present everywhere.

In some places, fear is the main pressure.

In other places, comfort is the main pressure.

Both can weaken faith.

Both can lead to divided trust.

SECTION 1 — Fear as a Cultural Pressure

In some Christian settings, life feels fragile.

Sickness is serious.

Poverty is real.

Death may come suddenly.

In such environments, people may look first for spiritual causes.

Fear becomes strong.

Protection becomes urgent.

Spiritual language may increase.

This does not mean faith is weak.

It means pressure is real.

But fear can distort thinking.

Fear can magnify the enemy beyond his limits.

Fear can push people toward blended practices.

If protection feels uncertain, people may hold on to old systems “just in case.”

Fear feeds syncretism.

SECTION 2 — Comfort as a Cultural Pressure

In other Christian settings, life feels stable.

Food is plentiful.

Medicine is available.

Security is assumed.

In such environments, people may ignore spiritual reality.

Comfort becomes normal.

Self-sufficiency grows.

Dependence on God decreases.

Revelation 3:17 describes this attitude:

“You say, ‘I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing,’ not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.”

Comfort can hide spiritual weakness.

It can dull alertness.

It can create pride.

Comfort feeds independence.

SECTION 3 — Different Pressures, Same Danger

Fear says:

“I must protect myself.”

Comfort says:

“I do not need protection.”

Both move away from trust in Christ.

Both reduce spiritual clarity.

Both can produce divided loyalty.

The enemy adapts to context.

In one place he magnifies danger.

In another place he minimizes it.

But his goal is the same:

Shift trust away from Christ.

SECTION 4 — What Scripture Calls For

Read 1 Peter 5:8–9 in your Bible.

Believers are told to be sober-minded and watchful.

Not terrified.

Not careless.

Watchful.

Resist him, firm in your faith.

Firm.

Not dramatic.

Not asleep.

Firm.

Spiritual maturity means recognizing pressure without being controlled by it.

SECTION 5 — Guarding Against Cultural Drift

Leaders must ask:

- What is our main pressure?
- Are we driven by fear?
- Are we dulled by comfort?
- Are we teaching balance?

Strong teaching helps believers:

- Face hardship without panic.
- Enjoy provision without pride.
- Recognize danger without exaggeration.
- Rest in Christ without laziness.

No culture is spiritually superior.

Every culture needs correction.

SECTION 6 — For Leaders Teaching Others

When teaching about warfare:

Address both pressures.

If fear is strong, emphasize sovereignty and the Cross.

If comfort is strong, emphasize vigilance and humility.

Ask:

- What blind spot do we have?
- What do we rarely question?
- Where have we grown careless?

Humility protects the church.

Honesty strengthens it.

Discussion Questions

1. How can fear distort spiritual thinking?
2. How can comfort weaken spiritual awareness?
3. What does Revelation 3 teach about self-sufficiency?
4. What does it mean to be sober-minded?
5. What is the main pressure in your culture?

Encourage everyone to read 1 Peter 5 and Revelation 3 before the final lesson.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

Guard us from fear.

Guard us from pride.

Help us see our blind spots.

Teach us to trust You in hardship and in abundance.

Keep us steady in Christ.

Amen.

LESSON 12 — Living in Calm Authority

Opening Thought

Spiritual warfare is real.

But it is not chaotic.

It is not equal.

It is not uncertain.

Christ reigns.

The Cross is finished.

The enemy is limited.

The believer is transferred.

The call now is simple:

Live in calm authority.

SECTION 1 — Submission Before Resistance

Read James 4:7 again.

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Notice the order.

Submit.

Then resist.

Submission is not weakness.

Submission places us under rightful authority.

When we submit to God:

- Pride weakens.
- Fear decreases.
- Clarity increases.

Resistance flows from submission.

Not from emotion.

Not from volume.

From obedience.

SECTION 2 — Christ Above Every Name

Read Philippians 2:9–11.

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Every knee.

Heaven.

Earth.

Under the earth.

No realm is outside His authority.

No spirit stands equal.

No power stands permanent.

The believer's confidence rests here.

SECTION 3 — What Calm Authority Looks Like

Calm authority does not look dramatic.

It looks like:

- Daily obedience.
- Honest repentance.
- Scripture-centered thinking.
- Refusal to entertain lies.
- Freedom from panic.
- Exclusive loyalty.

It looks like steady faith.

Not constant alarm.

Armor is worn daily.

Holiness is practiced daily.

Trust is renewed daily.

SECTION 4 — The Pattern of a Mature Believer

A mature believer:

- Recognizes spiritual opposition.
- Does not exaggerate it.
- Takes responsibility for the flesh.

- Rejects divided loyalty.
- Tests spiritual claims.
- Walks in peace.

They are alert.

But not anxious.

They are watchful.

But not fearful.

They are confident.

Because Christ reigns.

SECTION 5 — The Final Reminder

Earlier we learned:

Influence grows where agreement is given.

But agreement is not forced.

Believers belong to Christ.

They are not owned by darkness.

Where truth is embraced:

Lies lose strength.

Where repentance is practiced:

Access closes.

Where trust is singular:

Fear weakens.

Authority flows from identity.

And identity flows from the Cross.

SECTION 6 — For Leaders Teaching Others

When you finish this training with others, ask:

- Are we calmer than before?
- Are we more rooted in Scripture?
- Are we less fearful?
- Are we more devoted to Christ alone?

If fear has decreased and clarity has increased, the teaching has worked.

Spiritual warfare training should produce peace.

Not panic.

Steadiness.

Not spectacle.

Christ-centered faith.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does submission come before resistance?
2. What does Philippians 2 teach about Christ's authority?
3. What does calm authority look like in daily life?
4. How do truth and repentance close doors to influence?
5. Has this study increased peace or anxiety?

Encourage everyone to review Colossians 1–2 and James 4 before concluding the study.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
You are above every name.
You rule in heaven and on earth.
Teach us to live in steady trust.
Guard us from fear and from pride.
Help us walk in obedience and peace.
Keep our loyalty undivided.
We rest in Your finished work.
Amen.

EPILOGUE – Steady, Not Spectacular

This study has addressed serious matters.

Spiritual beings.

Deception.

Fear.

Divided loyalty.

Agreement and access.

These are not light topics.

But the goal of this training has never been to create intensity.

It has been to create stability.

If this study has been understood correctly, it should not produce more fear.

It should produce more peace.

Believers should now:

- Fear less.
- Think more clearly.
- Speak more carefully.
- Trust more deeply.
- Stand more firmly.

Spiritual warfare is real.

But it is not dramatic every day.

It is lived quietly in obedience.

It is fought in truth.

It is guarded through holiness.

It is strengthened through exclusive loyalty to Christ.

Some may be tempted to use this material to correct others harshly.

Do not do that.

Truth must be spoken with humility.

Others may be tempted to turn every lesson into argument.

Do not do that either.

This study was not written to win debates.

It was written to build mature believers.

Remember:

The enemy works through lies.

But lies lose power where truth is lived.

The enemy seeks agreement.

But agreement fades where repentance is practiced.

The enemy magnifies fear.

But fear weakens where Christ is trusted.

Every culture has blind spots.

Every believer must grow.

No one finishes this study above correction.

We all remain under the same Lord.

Return often to the foundation:

Christ reigns.

The Cross is finished.

The enemy is limited.

Submission comes before resistance.

Holiness is protection.

Exclusive loyalty brings peace.

Live calmly.

Teach carefully.

Remain watchful.

But do not panic.

Christ is Lord in every culture.

And His kingdom cannot be shaken.