

Follow Practices: Engage in spiritual warfare

The scriptures teach us that we have an enemy who comes to 'steal, kill and destroy' (John 10:10) and that all who are not in Christ are subject to spiritual bondage to the evil one (1 John 3:8). The good news is that Jesus came to set us free from the power of the devil and has victory over him. As disciples of Jesus, we have two main responsibilities when it comes to spiritual warfare; keeping ourselves free and helping others get free – or knowing our identity and our authority in Christ.

PRACTICE 1 – KNOW YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST¹

Jesus said 'if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free (John 8:31-32). We can often be plagued by negative thoughts and emotions that we allow to define us and shape our sense of identity, thus robbing of us of who we really are in Christ.

Below is a list of lies about our significance, security and acceptance that we often fall into the trap of believing. Go through the list ticking the statements you most often think. Then go back and read the truth statement and corresponding scripture, declaring it over your life. If it is a mindset you really struggle with, make it a practice to speak these truths over yourself on a daily basis.

1	SIGNIFICANCE		
	Lie	Truth	Scripture
	I don't have any purpose	I am the salt of the earth and the light of the world	Matthew 5:13, 14
	I am disconnected from Jesus	I am a branch of the true vine, Jesus, a channel of His life	John 15:1, 5
	I am useless	I have been chosen and appointed by God to bear fruit	John 15:16
	I am worthless	I am a temple of God	1 Cor. 3:16
	I contribute nothing	I am God's fellow worker	2 Cor. 6:1
	I am junk	I am God's workmanship, created for good works	Eph. 2:10
	Jesus is far from me	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly places	Eph. 2:6
	I'm too sinful to approach God	I may approach God with freedom and confidence	Eph. 3:12
	I can't cope / get through this	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me	Phil. 4:13
2	SECURITY		
	Lie	Truth	Scripture
	I am guilty	I am free forever from condemnation	Romans 8:1,2
	My life is out of control	I am assured that all things work together for good	Romans 8:28
	God couldn't possibly love me because of what I've done	I cannot be separated from the love of God	Romans 8:35-39
	I am unwanted	I have been established, anointed and sealed by God	2 Cor. 1:21,22
	God has given up on me	I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected	Phil. 1:6
	I am a slave to fear	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind	2 Tim. 1:7
	God has abandoned me	I can find grace and mercy to help in time of need	Heb. 4:16
	The enemy is going to get me	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me	1 John 5:18
3	ACCEPTANCE		
	Lie	Truth	Scripture
	I am rejected	I am God's child	John 1:12
	I am tolerated by God	I am Christ's friend	John 15:15
	I am not forgiven	I have been justified	Romans 5:1

¹ Adapted from The Freedom in Christ Discipleship Course, Neil T. Anderson & Steve Goss

I am alone	I have been united with the Lord and I am one spirit with Him	1 Cor. 6:17
I am my own	I have been bought with a price. I belong to God	1 Cor. 6:19,20
I don't have a place here	I am a member of Christ's body	1 Cor. 12:27
I am tainted and dirty	I am a saint, a holy one	Eph. 1:1
I am empty	I am complete in Christ	Col. 2:20

PRACTICE 2: KNOW YOUR AUTHORITY IN CHRIST

When Jesus was training his disciples 'he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons...' (Luke 9:1). When the seventy-two returned from their training mission they came rejoicing saying 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us *in your name*.' (Luke 10:17). And when Jesus commissioned the disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, he reminded them that 'all authority in heaven and on earth has been given me. Therefore go...' (Matt. 28:18-19). Jesus sent them and us out in His authority. We can do nothing in our power, therefore we need to remind ourselves of Christ's authority as we seek to take His light into the darkness.

Reflect on the scriptures below. Think about:

- What do they say about Christ's authority?
- What do they say about ours in Him?

Pray them over your life.

Colossians 2:15

He (Christ) disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Ephesians 1:19-23

...what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Luke 10:19

Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.

Matthew 18:18-20

Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ

1 John 5:4-5

For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Ephesians 6:10-13

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.