

Victorious Spiritual Warfare

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✓ Weapons of Our Warfare

by Reuven and Mary Lou Doron

*"For thus the Lord God, the Holy
One of Israel, has said, 'In
repentance and rest you shall be
saved, in quietness and trust is
your strength,
but you were not willing.'
Isaiah 30:15*

As was the case with Israel's historic struggles with the Lord God, so it is today. The determining issues in Israel's survival and endurance are neither her external enemies nor her military capabilities to confront them. Rather it is Israel's standing with God that is the primary principle in her past and present battles. And not only for Israel, but the same principles hold true and form the foundational reality of everybody's walk with God, and how we interact with life's challenges and opportunities.



**The Bible teaches us about the weapons
our Father appointed for us
during this age of warfare and grace.**

In the Messiah we were born again into spiritual conflict with the forces of darkness and into a daily walk in a hostile world. However, we were not left without means of endurance and victory, and the Bible teaches us about the weapons our Father appointed for us during this age of warfare and grace. From the sword of the Spirit (*which is the Word of God*) to the shield of faith, the helmet of our salvation and more, the Scriptures instruct us how to defend ourselves and take the offensive against the enemy. Every believer ought to be familiar with these weapons and accustomed to using them, for this is our life in this world.

Of those weapons, three are with us every moment of every day. And while some may be called upon at times to directly confront spiritual powers in the Lord's name, all of us face the many faceted reality of evil and its ensuing conflicts. These three are the weapons of our warfare that can most consistently and reliably keep our feet on the Rock.

✓ Repentance

Of the great spiritual principles which the Lord introduced into our troubled world, repentance is second only to faith. In almost all of His public messages the Lord Yeshua made reference to the centrality and

power of repentance, and His entire ministry was introduced by John the forerunner declaring to Israel, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matthew 3:2).

To repent means "to return" in the original Hebrew. Returning back to what is right; to what we, as a human family, used to know to be true. By saying *repent*, the Lord not only commands us to comply with His plan for our lives, He actually *empowers* us to choose change. Change is possible. Changing our course is possible. But like an ocean liner in the depth of the sea, turning a huge vessel takes time, consistent pressure of the rudder, and forward motion.

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If used correctly and often,
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Repentance is a weapon. If used correctly and often, it cancels out most of the devil's pressure points. According to Scripture, Satan works exclusively through deception and condemnation. First he sows deception in our minds, leading a person, a community or a nation off the path of truth. After the lie has been lodged, believed and practiced, the enemy comes back with a heavy yoke of condemnation, distancing us from our heavenly Father through guilt, shame, and fear. Deception and condemnation therefore work in tandem, producing endless cycles of death. The only way to break the cycle is through repentance and confession.

Repent, and get the devil off your back. Repent, and stop the flood of accusations coming against you. Repent, and liberate your spirit from the heavy shackles of shame and remorse. Repent, and be free to rise as an eagle and soar with the Spirit of the Lord. You have been commanded and empowered to repent. It can be done!

In this life we recognize that change is gradual. Transformation and glorification are the final goals of a life long process. Repentance, however, is a daily miracle we can all choose while on this glorious journey back home. Why not start today?

✔ Forgiveness

Of all the commandments of the Lord, the commandment to forgive has been the most quoted and more wrestled with than all the rest. While forgiving demonstrates the very heart and drive of God's intention toward His fallen children, it is also the most difficult virtue to fulfill on a consistent basis. Why is that? Why is the greatest commandment the hardest to perform? The reasons are numerous, and we will address only the most basic of them.

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must be readily accepted into your circle of trust.**

First, we need to realize that our fallen nature is incapable of forgiveness. The "flesh," that corruptible humanity we all partake of, is instinctively more prone to harden its heart and seek vengeance than to forgive and release an offense. Recognizing, crucifying and denying that fallen nature in us can be difficult and often requires struggle. In other words, forgiveness is not always easy.

Second, many who confuse forgiveness with trust hold back forgiving an offender because they cannot trust them yet. Having been falsely taught, many believe that forgiveness means that the offending party

must be readily accepted into your circle of trust and treated as a safe friend. The fact is that nothing can be further from the truth! Yeshua Himself, the king of forgiveness, *"on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men."* (John 2:24).

Apparently, in the beautiful heart of the Son of God, forgiveness and distrust existed side by side without conflict. While He poured out His life in love's greatest expression to obtain forgiveness for all of us, He was also very realistic about the unreliable nature of His fallen brethren and knew how to draw boundaries. Forgiveness does not constitute automatic trust.

The same is true for us. To forgive means to release from debt; to give up the rights of vengeance and retribution. Paul said, *"Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"* (Romans 12:19). Yet, while forgiveness releases the offender from payback, it doesn't procure instant trust or fellowship. Trust has to be earned, and fellowship cultivated.

Those who haven't been taught the distinction between forgiveness and trust often struggle with shame and are battered with guilt. Not able to readily trust or experience deep fellowship with a forgiven offender, they doubt the reality of their forgiveness and can enter into condemnation by religious spirits and legalistic brethren who pervert the Word of the Lord. You however, if you have truly released your offender from your heart and wish them nothing but God's will, have no obligation to live under such manipulation.

Be at peace then. It is possible to truly forgive without trust. Reconciliation, like personal transformation, is gradual, and has to grow through authentic and tested relationship that builds layer upon layer. God forgave us completely and eternally through the sacrifice of His Son. Yet, though reconciled to God in Christ, we are daily growing in our fellowship with Him, drawing ever closer and reaching ever deeper into His heart. The Father shares His true treasures and secrets only with those whom He can trust. Forgiveness is instant and is by choice; trust is gradual and is supported by mounting evidence.

Having cleared these obstacles, why is forgiveness so important as a weapon of warfare? First, because it is the greatest testimony of the Lord's nature and mission to set the captives free; it is a mighty blow against the forces of evil that seek to bind and imprison souls. Second, due to the intricacy of our human nature and tendency to emulate whatever we focus on, our only ticket to true freedom is in releasing those who offend us. As Craig Hill from Ancient Paths ministry says, "Our soul is like a camera—whatever it focuses on, it creates an image of it." Whose image do you want to have imprinted on your heart?

Only through forgiveness are we able to free our souls from the troubles that touch our lives. That is the reason why the Lord's first commandment after His resurrection had to do with forgiveness. In the upper room, on the resurrection day of First Fruits, Yeshua said, *"Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.'"* (John 20:21-23). For your own sake, let go of the offense and use the weapon of forgiveness.

✔ Worship and Proclamation

The third weapon of warfare that is common to all of God's children is worship and proclamation. One doesn't have to acquire special training or qualifications to be a worshiper and to declare the truths of God. On the contrary, the gift of worship and of declaration is so intrinsic and natural to the human spirit

that the Scripture testifies that *"From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength, because of Your adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease."* (Psalm 8:2).

**Your words are declarations of faith that fall, like seeds,
into the soil of your life and into your sphere of influence.**

Worship has to do with our attitude—proclamation with our words. The first biblical sighting of the word worship, *shacha* in Hebrew, is found in Genesis 22 where father Abraham says to his servants to *"Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you."* (Genesis 22:5). Abraham's worship on that extraordinary day had nothing to do with singing or with music. It had everything to do with his sacrificial service and full obedience to God's command through the agonizing offering of His beloved son Isaac. Worship is the heart of a person—proclamation is the words.

Significance of words: Together with an attitude of worship, all ancient cultures recognized the significance of words. By words covenants were cut; decrees were set in place; blessings were pronounced, and judgments laid down. The principality of Islam understands it. It has expanded across vast territories through a consistent public proclamation of its doctrines as they are announced daily by loud speakers from minarets all over the world.

Likewise, the Gospel of our Messiah was to spread throughout the earth by words. The psalmist prophesied, saying, *"Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples."* (Psalm 96:2-3). Yeshua Himself commanded us to *"go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God."* (Luke 9:60). The expansion of His kingdom is fundamentally determined by words enforced through an attitude of worship fused with faith, devotion and passion.

Whether in our individual lives or in the life of our nation, the right words are essential. The words that come out of our mouths and proceed out of our hearts create a spiritual "climate" that affects our lives and our experience on this earth. There is a reason why Proverbs 19:21 declares with certainty that *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."* And Peter exhorts the first century disciples, saying, *"Let him who means to love life and see good days refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile."* (1 Peter 3:10).