

Truth and Spirit Ministries

Breaking the Cycle of Depression Part III

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When a soldier in an army goes out onto the battlefield they must not only put on their armor to protect themselves from the enemy but they must also possess and use weapons of warfare to advance against them and conquer them. In Part II of this teaching I wrote about our armor from God and how it helps us defensively on the spiritual battlefield by providing divine protection and to stand our ground against evil powers. Now we need to learn about the supernatural weapons of warfare that God has given us to advance offensively against the powers of darkness, to tear down their strongholds and cause them to flee.

Our Weapons are Mighty through God

When chronic depression takes hold of us it becomes a stronghold in our minds and lives. As stated earlier, God has not left us defenseless in combating and overcoming the assaults and oppression of the enemy. He has given us weapons of warfare that we can use to demolish the stronghold of depression. These weapons are not carnal though. In fact, if we try to fight a spiritual battle with carnal weapons, we will fail. In order to be victorious we must use the mighty and *spiritual* weapons that God has given us. This is the only way we can effectively fight and win our battles. The apostle Paul referred to these weapons briefly in II Corinthians 10:3-5.

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

As believers in Christ, we cannot wage war as the world does. We've been given divine weapons from God to demolish any strongholds that have been set up in our lives. With these weapons we can destroy anything and everything that comes against the knowledge that God has given us. It's not God's will that we live under the dark clouds of repressed and uncontrolled anger, constant emotional pain, worry, fear, self-pity and hopelessness. Instead he wants us to have the fruit and power of his Spirit in our lives. He wants us to have self-control, peace, joy, hope healing and trust in him.

Working in Mutual Cooperation with God

Sometimes believers make the mistake of believing that it's up to God to do everything in their lives. We must realize though that God has told us in his word that we have our part to do as well. Although God has given us everything we need, it's up to us to use what

he's given us. We are taught in the Bible that *it's up to us* to put on the whole armor of God. It's *up to us* to use the divine weapons he has given us. It's *up to us* to bring our thoughts into captivity to Christ. We need to take every ungodly thought to him and ask him to cleanse us of them and give us his thoughts. It is possible for us to have his thoughts because we have now been given the mind of Christ. (I Corinthians 2:16) The truth is that God expects us to be active and not passive otherwise he wouldn't have given us instructions in his Word as to what we should be *doing*. Remember, faith is not just hearing the word of God but putting it into action in our lives as well. (James 1:22-25)

God wants us to yield to him and work with his Spirit in mutual cooperation. We are interdependent on each other to accomplish the will of God in our lives and in the earth. Jesus said we can do nothing without him. We must rely on his power and not our own. However our part is to yield to him so he can work through our lives. Yielding means that we *voluntarily surrender* to him so he can do his will through our lives. He sent the gift of the Holy Spirit to us to help us or *counsel* us as to what to do, not to do everything for us. (John 16:12-15) We must personally choose to follow his guidance and to give our bodies to God as living sacrifices so he can do his perfect and pleasing will in our lives. (Galatians 5:16-18; Romans 12:1-2) Sometimes we as believers are waiting on God to move while he is waiting on us to move!

Before I go on to teach about what the weapons of our warfare consist of and how we use them, I would like to reiterate something that is important. Although some things in the natural may contribute to depression, it is really an affliction or ailment of the soul (mind, will and emotions). As we learned in Part I of this teaching, depression is really a result of being oppressed by the devil. He oppresses us through *circumstances* such as sickness, disease, lack, abuse, bondage or through persecution and control through others. Many believers today try to battle depression in the natural realm but really it's a battle that needs to be fought in the *spiritual* realm.

The Weapons of Our Warfare

Weapon #1 Praise and Worship

It's interesting that when God sent Old Testament Israel into battle that he also instructed them to send out appointed people ahead of the army to praise and worship the Lord. (II Chronicles 20:1-29) Israel used their praise and worship of the Lord as a weapon against their enemies and by doing so God gave them the victory! This is a lesson for us today. We learn from this that when we praise and worship God he will show up in a mighty way on our behalf and help us to defeat our enemies! Although they fought a physical battle, we as believers in Christ today are fighting a spiritual battle and as we worship him in spirit and in truth, he also gives us the assurance that we too will be victorious.

When God delivered me from chronic depression, he taught me that I could maintain that freedom by staying clothed in the armor and by consistently using the weapons of warfare that he had given me. One of those weapons is praise and worship. When we praise and worship God, not only do our enemies scatter but he brings great changes and transformations to our lives. Each time we come into his awesome presence he changes us from glory to glory. He brings us healing, loving correction, solutions to our problems,

peace, joy and hope. In his presence our minds are transformed and we will be able to perceive and understand things so very differently. God will give us spiritual sight and insight. We will be able to see things as God sees them. Gigantic problems are reduced to tiny ones. We are able to see how nothing is too hard for our Great God and how he will bring us the victory that he has already promised us in his word! (I Corinthians 15:57)

Weapon #2 The Word of God

The Bible teaches us that the Word of God is like a sharp, two-edged sword. It's one of our mightiest weapons of warfare. The Word of God defensively protects us from the deception of Satan and also helps us to stand our ground against him. We can also use the Word of God offensively by using it as a weapon against him. Before we learn how we should be using the Word of God as a weapon, I would like to say that in order for us to wield this mighty sword; we must first internalize it into our spirits. We do this by studying his word daily. Paul taught in II Timothy 2:15 **“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”**

Each of us has the responsibility to know how to correctly handle the word of God both for own spiritual growth and also to defeat the devil. If we're ignorant of God's Word, Satan will use it to our detriment. We can only know how to correctly handle the Word then by studying it and exercising it on a regular basis. It will help us to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and exercise our senses in knowing good from evil. (II Peter 3:18; Hebrews 5:11-14) The word is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. (II Timothy 3:16) The word is not passive but living and active. It is a sharp, double-edged sword that's so powerful that it can penetrate through the soul and spirit, judge the heart, attitude, expose sin and judge righteously. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Speaking the Word

The word of God isn't something we just internalize but is something that we must also speak out of our mouths as well. In doing this we are wielding a mighty sword that will cut down deception, false teaching, help us discern good and evil and cause our enemies to flee from us as well. The Bible teaches us that there is the written word of God and the spoken word of God. The written word is called the *logos* of God. The spoken Word is called the *rhema* of God. The logos of God is divinely inspired scripture written by men. The rhema word of God is spoken by those that are carried along by the divine utterances of the Holy Spirit. (II Peter 1:21) The prophetic word has great power to foil and defeat the enemy's plans for our lives and helps us war a good warfare. (I Timothy 1:18) This is why the Word of God is also called *the sword of the Spirit*. The word is not passive but active. It will help us not only to stand our ground defensively against the devil's schemes but when we use it offensively it will cause powers of darkness to flee.

Jesus used this mighty sword against the devil and in doing so set an example for us in how to wage warfare against him. In Matthew 4:1-11 we read that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. When Satan accosted him, he tried to deceive Jesus by twisting God's word. However, Jesus wielded the sword of the Spirit against him and eventually the devil left in *defeat*. Today we can do the same thing. When

the devil tries to oppress our souls, we must also use the sword of the Spirit to cut down his deceptions and lies. We must not stop until he leaves.

Weapon #3 The Power of Prayer

A lot of believers today wouldn't consider prayer as a weapon to be used but it too is a mighty weapon of God. Prayer prepares the way for victory. It releases the power of God in the earth on our behalf and on the behalf of others. (Revelation 8:1-5) There's power in prayer to help us to overcome all things in Christ. There is power in prayer to give us divine protection over the armies of the power of darkness, to stop them and to utterly defeat them. We must never underestimate the power of prayer. By praying and acting in faith godly women and men down through the ages have had barren wombs open, been saved from destruction, received their dead raised to life, conquered kingdoms, administered justice, received divine promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched fiery flames, escaped the sword, received strength in weakness, became strong and powerful in battle, and even routed entire armies! (Hebrews 11) Brothers and sisters in Christ, if our brethren that have gone on before us could have such great victories, we can have total victory over depression!

Cast All Your Cares upon the Lord

When God was dealing with me many years ago about depression, he taught me powerful keys in the Bible concerning prayer that brought a dramatic and lasting change to my life. So many people that suffer from depression can have unresolved issues for such long periods of time that a feeling of hopelessness will settle in. They feel that they have absolutely no control over anything. Because they seemingly are receiving no breakthroughs, they lose hope of ever having one. I went through this as well but one day God showed me about *the power of prayer*. He taught me through his Word how prayer would help to bring the answers, healing and deliverance that I needed in my life at the time.

I learned that as I prayed to God, I would receive his strength and help when I needed it. I learned that if I surrendered to him those things that I believed to be out of my control that he would come to my rescue and move mightily on my behalf. He showed me how much he cared about everything in my life. He assured me that he would never let me down because he is faithful. He even showed me through the word how he had given me a Helper called the Holy Spirit to help me to pray the will of God for my life. He would help me to supernaturally pray even when I don't know what I ought to be praying! (Romans 8:26-27)

Hope and faith rose up in me and after that and I dedicated myself to bringing everything to him that was oppressing me. I took God at his word and found that he IS faithful. Although it took time to receive each breakthrough, one by one I did. God was just waiting for me to turn to him for help and trust him to do for me what I couldn't do for myself. Many times we are bearing burdens that we should be giving to the Lord. When we have a greater understanding of what he did for us through the Atonement it will literally transform our lives for the better. We will understand that we don't have to bear grief, burdens and sorrows because he bore them for us when he hung upon the Cross. Since he bore them, then why are we trying to bear them too? When we pray, we must learn to cast all of our cares upon

the Lord and leave them with him. He is able to bear all of them but we are not. (Isaiah 53:4-6; I Peter 5:7) When we cast our burdens upon him, our walk will be much easier and lighter.

Weapon #4 Fasting

It's often been taught that prayer is like gasoline and fasting is like putting fire on that gasoline. This is so true! There are times when we may not see the results of healing or deliverance that we would like through prayer alone. Should this happen it may be necessary to add fasting with prayer. By doing this we are releasing the fire of the Spirit to devour that which is coming against us. It's been my experience over the years that whenever a stronghold has been exposed that fasting is sometimes necessary to break the power of the enemy. Jesus taught this very concept to his disciples when they confessed that they couldn't cast a demon out of a boy. Jesus revealed to them that certain kinds of demons cannot be cast out without prayer *and* fasting. (Matthew 17:14-21 KJV)

There have been times in the past when the devil has attacked me or my family and the Spirit would lead me into fasting. Through prayer and fasting God moved mightily and broke the power of the enemy. In this way fasting becomes a weapon against powers of darkness. At the same time when we commit ourselves to fasting we are also humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God and this also causes the devil to flee from us. (James 4:7) In cases where we need discernment or a word from God, fasting starves our human nature and feeds Christ's nature within us. It helps us become more sensitive to the voice of the Spirit and builds us up in the faith to receive greater things from God. When prayer alone will not help you to be delivered from chronic depression, fasting may be in order to break the stronghold of the devil's oppression on your life.

Weapon #5 Exercising Authority

Every believer has been given authority by Christ. We've been given authority to rule and reign over sin in our own lives and also authority over all the power of the enemy. (Romans 6:11-14; Luke 10:19) Since we have been given this by God, he expects us to use this authority and when we do, he will lead us into victory. Our helper, the Holy Spirit will help us exercise our authority but he won't do our part and his too. We must cooperate with him and together we will have great success. When we have knowledge of our believer's authority and exercise it we will be powerful but without it we will be pitiful. When we don't walk in our God-given authority this leaves us vulnerable to the devil and his demons because he is just seeking for an opportunity to devour anyone who will let him. This is why we must be self controlled and alert and *resist* him. (I Peter 5:8-9) We can do this by submitting to God and rebuking him in the name of Jesus.

When the enemy of our souls bombards our minds with negative thoughts and hopelessness, we must not wait to exercise our authority. The sooner we rebuke him and tell him to leave the better. We must not let him hang around to keep speaking his lies and deceptions. We must bring these thoughts captive to Christ and then put him on the go immediately. We will be glad we did because we will receive peace in our minds and hearts once again. Again, Jesus is our example in all things. When Satan used Peter to come against him and try to deter him from going to the Cross, the Lord didn't waste any time in

rebuking him. He said, **“Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”** We must realize that God has a hope and future plans for our lives. We must not allow Satan to deter us from reaching our God-given destiny. Like Jesus we must tell that old serpent to get behind us and move on with our lives!

Weapon #6 Walking in the Power of the Spirit

While walking in the fruit of the Spirit will help us defensively on the spiritual battlefield, walking in the power of the Spirit will help us offensively. When we live in the fruit of the Spirit, it helps us to stand our ground against the powers of darkness by keeping the door of our lives closed so he cannot oppress us. They possess no weapons in their evil arsenal that will touch or penetrate that which is of God. When we flow in the power of the Spirit through his gifts, we are given wisdom, knowledge, faith, prophecy, healing, miraculous powers, discerning of spirits, tongues and interpretation from God. These are supernatural weapons that the powers of darkness cannot stand up against. When we walk in the power of the Spirit this will cause him to flee from us and those that we minister to as well.

Jesus is our hope in all things. He is not only our Savior but Healer and Deliverer as well. It's not his will that Satan take advantage of you. He loves you and wants to rescue you and deliver you from all evil. (II Corinthians 2:11; Matthew 6:13) The antidote for the poisonous lies of Satan is the truth of God's word. His truth will tear down the strongholds that the enemy has set up in our minds. When we receive God's truth Jesus said it will set us free. (John 8:32) Therefore in order for us to be set free the first thing that we must do is combat the lies that the enemy has told us with the word of God.

We must also be willing to hear the truth about our own lives as well. This is where our personal relationship with the Lord comes into play. When the Lord is dealing with us he will give us the pure, unvarnished truth out of love. He does this because we need to know truth in order to face up to reality, expose any areas of deception we may have and extinguish any lies that we may have come to believe over time. This in turn will help us to die to self, be crucified with Christ and allow him to live through us. (Galatians 2:19-21) How will we come to know the truth about ourselves? The Holy Spirit will speak to our spirits what Jesus wants us to know. It is God's will for his children to be free from every weight and sin, including the heavy weights of oppression and depression. He wants us to cast these off so we can run the race that he has called us to. He wants us to do that with joy and peace.