

BODY OF PROOF: WEEK SEVEN

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Spiritual warfare begins with the reality that Christ is head over all the rulers and authorities, and this authority over everything makes us, His Church, completely secure. While we covered this in Week 3 “The Peace of Christ’s Headship,” it is important we start here. **“God raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”** [Ephesians 1.20-23]

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the victory was won on The Cross and Jesus has full power and authority, why has God allowed Satan to keep opposing us?
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Spiritual warfare continues with understanding God’s purpose to reveal His many-colored wisdom to these rulers and authorities through The Church. **“God’s intent is that now, through The Church, His manifold [many-colored] wisdom should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** [Ephesians 3.10-11]

God’s eternal purpose is to display His wisdom to the rulers and authorities through The Church! What is that wisdom? The wisdom of God was revealed at The Cross. [1 Corinthians 1.23-24] The Cross was the ultimate battle between The Lamb and The Dragon: a submissive humility vs an enraged power. And this is now how the wisdom of God is displayed to Satan through The Church. For by the Holy Spirit, we get to be obedient servants who accept ridicule, suffer humiliation, and embrace meekness in the face of the world system of self-interest, the idolatry of personal freedom, pride, and control.

Simply being the Body of Christ is spiritual warfare! **When we gather together, function in our gifts together, build community together, and reach out together God is demonstrating the power of His wisdom to all the satanic forces.**

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The enemy works to isolate us from each other (busyness, rejection, offense). Are there patterns in your life where the enemy has tried to isolate you?• How does God’s design for The Body reveal the wisdom of God?
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“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor 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 armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore...” [Ephesians 6.10-14]

It is important to grasp exactly what Paul means when he says that we wrestle. The word “wrestle” more directly expresses the idea of an athlete in competition, than a soldier in battle. Paul uses the soldier picture, too, but not as an image of fighting, but standing. Sometimes we get agitated when we ‘war’ against Satan. This is where the image of the wrestler is helpful. The wrestler’s motivation to engage his opponent comes from his confidence that he is more than a match for his foe. We as spiritual wrestlers have a huge advantage because we know that through Christ’s death and resurrection, we have already won!

And the way we wrestle is by standing together. Four times Paul tells us to stand in Ephesians 6. The truth we must keep in mind is that when we 'wrestle', we wrestle with and in a community of love. When we face pain and suffering in our wrestling, we can experience how our suffering can be absorbed into the reality of God's love for us, our love for God, and the power of loving each other with God's love. The Father, Son, and Spirit have eternally enjoyed "pain-absorbing love" in Their communion together. Because God is unchanging, He has carried the pain of the cross in His heart for eternity [Psalm 55.19, James 1.17], but the love The Three share is so complete and wonderful, it instantly absorbs all the pain. Just being together, weeping with those who weep, rejoicing with those who rejoice, bearing each other's burdens, praying for one another, encouraging each other, this is the standing that effectively resists the enemy!

Final Take-Home Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is always in joy and at peace because the power of Their love simultaneously absorbs all pain. Have you experienced this type of intimacy where God, and standing with others, has absorbed some of your pain and suffering? • What keeps us from sharing our pain and suffering with each other?
Prayer Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask God to show you how He wants you to stand more effectively in this season.
Share With The Lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an unbeliever shares about pain in their life, encourage them that God can actually absorb pain with His love. Ask if you can pray over them regarding that pain.