


The Sword of the Spirit  The Word of God



### **Spiritual Wrestling**

**Gen 32:24** And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

**Eph 6:12** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

There are two forms of wrestling mentioned in the Bible. One is with God and the other is with the devil and his forces. The form of wrestling undertaken in both is different from each other as chalk is to cheese. The wrestling with God is a fight one can never win; whereas, wrestling with the devil is certainly a fight one could win.

When we understand what wrestling with the devil means, the devil is removed as a threat but not to be taken lightly. In the early years of their Christianity many are often confronted by demonic forces in dreams and other ways that threaten one's happiness and life. It takes a serious turn when we find ourselves pitted against invisible forces that make life very bad for us. The truth is, the devil is a liar, thief, murderer and destroyer. He is a fallen angel that has nowhere to go except the lake of fire when his time is up. So, he uses any means (all dirty) to fight against us (both mankind and Christians) and to do his evil work against us and among us. His forms of fighting range from the very raw and violent to the very subtle. It is the subtlety of his ways that fool many people into thinking that bad things happen because of man and circumstances in life. It is often said that the battle ground is the mind and that is so true. The wrestling is not so much physical (though it can be) as it is mental and emotional.

When the attacks of the enemy are ongoing in a person's life, the attacks can be very discouraging making us feel alone and helpless. However, God wants us to rise above our circumstances in life and fight the devil on God's terms. This can be very hard for us especially when we are under attack and have to face an invisible enemy. This makes it doubly hard to understand, especially if the attacks are coming from humans who are making life miserable. That is why spiritual discernment is most necessary. It would be a wise move to ask the Holy Spirit at all times how to fight especially when we are confronted with a battle with our fellow man. This way, we can discern if it is the devil or flesh that is attacking us. There is one other matter to consider and that is; it does not have to be either the devil or our flesh but ourselves, putting ourselves in difficulty through the failures of our own flesh. We do not seem to have the ability to quickly look at our own failures and admit them and so we blame others. That was the case in the Garden of Eden. When God asked Adam why he disobeyed, he blamed Eve and when God asked Eve, she blamed the devil. The truth is; all of them were to blame individually and collectively. That is why each one received their own punishment independently of each and collectively as each creation of God.

God has chosen that we face an invisible evil force who has many weapons in his armoury which he can use against us. They range from lies, to deviousness, death, diseases, financial loss, division, every bad flesh habit, mental unsoundness and those things that are an

abomination to God. There is no limit to the devil's depravity while seeking to manufacture maximum evil he can from us. We too are evil in nature till we know Christ and are saved by Him. However, the evil nature continues in our flesh and therefore needs constant teaching, guidance and protection that only God can provide for us through the Holy Spirit. This is a mystery and fact; that God houses Himself in our flesh body. The good news is, He lives in us and therefore we are redeemed, protected and blessed.

To walk in the Spirit and avoid the lust of the flesh is an instruction to us from God. This seems to nullify the effects of the devil and makes our wrestling with him lessen. Maturity in the faith brings an even greater peace about wrestling with the devil and propels us into spiritual warfare that sometimes can be very trying. However, we do this to advance the kingdom of God. *Mat\_11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* This verse has always intrigued me because I realise that there is also a legitimacy involved in fighting the devil. I cannot hate people who are used by him or become unforgiving toward God and man for the bad things that have happened in my life or are happening in my life. I also cannot question God as to why He has left us in this state when He could have so easily settled this problem with one word.

It is in the realisation of who we are that matters begin to become clearer about God's creation and God's ways. The more we begin to identify ourselves with God, the clearer we see things. One such identification is in being called the sons of God. *Php\_2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;* Sons of God fight differently to the devil. They overcome evil with good. They forgive when wrong is done. They bless and not curse. They overcome and not complain. They suffer wrongs for their Father's name sake. They walk in freedom from temptation. Wow! What kind of wrestling is this? The quicker we understand this kind of warfare the better for us and more peace.

The militant part of our warfare is really in our ability to command, rebuke and pray the devil into submission. This is where we learn to fight violently. **The devil has no chance against a believer who understands who his God is and who he himself is. Once that is settled in the believer's mind, no matter what the devil does, the believer is in control.** Having power over all the power of the enemy is something really worth understanding as it covers the spiritual, physical, emotional and mental areas of our lives. *Luk\_10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

The wrestling with God is an entirely different matter. Many Christians have taken to trying to manipulate God with their prayers and have found themselves in deep trouble with God. They have either ended up blaming God or backsliding and in some cases leaving the faith all together. This is a very sad scenario but understandable when God sometimes seems to be so distant and cold or His ways prove difficult in the natural. I believe that faith is the separating line that determines the sheep from the goats. This is God's way of testing the individual and even the nations of this world. He did this with Israel in the wilderness. *Deu 8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.* *Deu 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.* Many Israelites died in the wilderness because they did not know how to trust God in their situation in spite of God telling them what He was doing. This is man's fallacy (error, misjudgement).

God is not a respecter of persons and so He will not always contend (wrestle) with flesh. There comes a time when He will pin you down and you will simply have to accept or reject Him. This is a very dangerous place to be if one does not understand their God. Yet, in His mercy, he is gracious and gives us a way out. There is a boldness one must have when wrestling with God which must be understood but it should not cross over into arrogance or pride. I made that mistake when wrestling with God and paid heavily for it. However, God decided to punish me rather than destroy me. I am so grateful that He is gracious and has allowed me to learn my lessons even if they had to be learnt the hard way.

Intercession is a form of wrestling with God and is acceptable in His sight because it comes from Him. *Heb\_5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;* We don't do enough of wrestling with God for the state of our families, friends, nation and Church. We need to. The Lord seems to answer desperation more than anything else. Strong crying is wrestling with God to produce a result. Jacob found himself in a wrestling match for his life because Esau his brother whom he had cheated many years prior was coming to meet him. Jacob thought his brother would kill him for that. That night in the wilderness, Jacob wrestled with God and had a supernatural experience that brought him into his destiny to become a Father of a nation. God changed Jacob's name and called him Israel and thereby kept His promise to Abraham.

We must wrestle (intercede) with God to produce a result for the Church and the nations of this world. Furthermore, we must contend with God for our own future and destinies. This is critical. We need more power and Godly solutions to save Australia and the Church. How much we can do that will be by us going into the closet and wrestling with God. There are many things God wants to give us but it seems we have to wrestle Him for it. Jesus went to the cross but did so having wrestled and settled His own issues in the Garden of Gethsemane; where He sweated blood and gave up His life in surrender to the Father's will.

My friends, can we contend like Jesus did for the souls of mankind? He took on the world's sins; whereas, all we have to do, is surrender our lives and contend no more with God for the flesh. Remember, there is always a legitimacy in our contending with God and with the devil.

**Lots of love**

**Pastor Noble**

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