

# YOUR BATTLES BELONG TO THE LORD

Know Your Enemy and Be More  
Than a Conqueror

JOYCE MEYER



NEW YORK NASHVILLE

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FaithWords  
Hachette Book Group  
1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104  
[faithwords.com](http://faithwords.com)  
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First Edition: September 2019

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been applied for.

ISBNs: 978-1-5460-2627-3 (hardcover), 978-1-5460-3845-0 (large type),  
978-1-5460-3727-9 (international), 978-1-5460-2625-9 (ebook)

Printed in the United States of America

LSC-C

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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## INTRODUCTION

The title of this book probably provokes excitement in most people because we feel that we are fighting something most of the time. Very few people can say they have no challenges and everything in their lives is peaceful and pleasant. There are, of course, times when we can say that everything is working out perfectly, but that is never a permanent situation.

We encounter a variety of trials, challenges, and problems, which we often call our “battles” in life. These battles may be in our relationships, our finances, or our health. They may also involve the death of a loved one or uncertainty about a decision we need to make. We live fast-paced lives and rarely have a day when everything goes as perfectly as we planned.

Jesus never promised us a life without trouble or opposition. In fact, He promised just the opposite. He said that in the world we would have tribulation, distress, and suffering. If we were to stop there, we would have to be discouraged, but Jesus also said that in Him, we could have perfect peace, that we would be courageous, confident, undaunted, and filled with joy because He has overcome the world (see John 16:33).

In this one Scripture, John 16:33, we discover what to expect in life. We can expect that if we truly believe that our battles belong to the Lord and we learn how to let God fight them for us, then any time we have trouble it will always end in victory

for us. No matter how difficult our challenges are, if God is with us, we have all we need to win every battle. We should always remember that all things are possible with God (see Matt. 19:26). His strength shows itself best through our weaknesses (see 2 Cor. 12:9), and the more we lean on Him, the more we will succeed at whatever we do.

One of the people I write about in this book is Gideon. He was a frightened man who had no confidence, and God called him to fight a battle that seemed impossible to win. In the end he did win, but first, God cut the size of his army significantly so they would be massively outnumbered in the battle and have no choice but to trust Him completely. We don't win our battles because of the size of our army, because of the earthly resources at our disposal, or because of anything else that may be in our favor. We win only because our battles belong to the Lord. God gives us the victory, and to Him belong the gratitude and the praise.

When we let God fight our battles, we always win, but if we try to fight them ourselves, we always lose. However, it is important for me to establish in the beginning of this book that just because our battles belong to the Lord, it does not mean we can become passive, inactive, and lazy. It does mean that we don't take action until God shows us what to do and when to do it. Until then, we wait on Him expectantly. We take our position as His child; we stand in faith against the enemy; and we praise and worship God, fully expecting Him to instruct us, deliver us, and lead us to victory. As we learn to let God fight our battles, we can actually learn how to enjoy life while we are waiting for victory, and we can have peace in the depths of our being while storms rage on the surface of our lives through circumstances.

In this book you will learn to know your enemy. You will learn to know his nature and tactics and how to recognize and defeat

him. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote in his book *The Christian Warfare*, “What a wise teacher does is to expound the Epistles, and especially this teaching concerning the wiles of the devil. All our problems arise ultimately from that source” (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976, p. 99). I want you to know your enemy and to realize that you need not fear him. I also want you to be educated and equipped with all the information you need about his tactics, deceits, and schemes, and to learn how to recognize and defeat him.

It is obvious that two forces are at work in the world—good and evil. God is good, and the devil is evil. Since the devil cannot get to God to hurt Him, he fights against His children—those who have believed in Jesus as Savior and Lord and have been born again into His Kingdom. He hopes to hurt God through hurting us, but God has made His plan clear and it is simply this: “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

In Romans 12:21, the apostle Paul writes that we overcome evil with good. Our natural inclination would be to return evil for evil, but that is not how we win spiritual battles against the devil and his demon hosts. He hopes to anger us and provoke us to act on that anger, but Jesus teaches us to love one another. Love is the most powerful force in the world; Satan has no way to win against true love. Luke writes in Acts 10:38 that Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil because God was with Him. He overcame evil with good, and we can, too.

I believe you will learn in this book that God not only wants to fight our battles, He wants to teach us how to fight *in a way that assures victory*. Some of this may be surprising and seem that it simply cannot work, but God’s ways always work if we remain

steadfast, and follow Him into battle and all the way through to victory!

Get ready to have your mind renewed and your thinking changed as you learn the truth of God's Word concerning the battles in your life. Your fight is not against people or even with circumstances, but against the devil. Paul writes:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this [present] darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) places.

Ephesians 6:12

Your battles belong to the Lord, and the victory belongs to you! Learn to trust God to fight with you and for you, and in the midst of all your earthly struggles, you will be more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ who loves you (see Rom. 8:37).

**YOUR BATTLES  
BELONG  
TO THE LORD**

## CHAPTER 1

# Know Your Enemy

*Be sober [well balanced and self-disciplined], be alert and cautious at all times. That enemy of yours, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion [fiercely hungry], seeking someone to devour.*

1 Peter 5:8

Satan prowls around looking for someone to devour, but that person doesn't have to be you! If you get to know him and his tactics, and if you remain watchful and alert, you can avoid being deceived and trapped by him.

This humorous story is one way to look at how powerful the devil truly is:

Carl Armerding recounted his experience of watching a wildcat in a zoo.

“As I stood there,” he said, “an attendant entered the cage through a door on the opposite side. He had nothing in his hands but a broom. Carefully closing the door, he proceeded to sweep the floor of the cage.” He observed that the worker had no weapon to ward off an attack by the beast. In fact, when he got to the corner of the cage where the wildcat was lying, he poked the animal with the broom. The wildcat hissed at him and then lay down

in another corner of the enclosure. Armerding remarked to the attendant, “You certainly are a brave man.”

“No, I ain’t brave,” he replied as he continued to sweep.

“Well, then, that cat must be tame.”

“No,” came the reply, “he ain’t tame.”

“If you aren’t brave and the wildcat isn’t tame, then I can’t understand why he doesn’t attack you.”

Armerding said the man chuckled, then replied with an air of confidence, “Mister, he’s old—and he ain’t got no teeth.”

*Moody Monthly*, as quoted in  
sermonillustrations.com

I am not implying that Satan doesn’t have power. He does, and we should take that fact seriously. But let’s remember that he is not actually a roaring lion, he comes *like* a roaring lion! Jesus is

*The devil is a liar, and he can only harm people who believe him and are deceived by him.*

the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and Satan can only portray an imitation of what is real and true. The devil is a liar, and he can only harm people who believe him and are deceived by him.

Before we even begin to think about spiritual warfare and how to defeat the enemy, we should realize that we do not have to *try* to defeat the devil, because he is already a defeated foe. Jesus defeated him on the cross, and we merely apply by faith the victory that is already ours through our faith in Christ.

When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities [those supernatural forces of evil operating against us], He made

a public example of them [exhibiting them as captives in His triumphal procession], having triumphed over them through the cross.

Colossians 2:15

We know that Jesus has rescued us from darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of light, which is God's Kingdom (see Col. 1:13).

Scripture helps us realize that we are fighting from a vantage point of already having victory, rather than trying to win a victory. As Paul writes to the Romans, "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors and gain an overwhelming victory through Him who loved us [so much that He died for us]" (Rom. 8:37).

The way we see ourselves is very important. We should see ourselves as people with authority, as conquerors and victorious believers. If we allow the devil to convince us that we are weak, incapable, unable, and losers, then we will believe and demonstrate those characteristics. We should agree with God and believe what He says about us.

One of Satan's main objectives is to prevent us from knowing who we are in Christ and knowing what our privileges are as children of God. He works tirelessly to try to make us feel bad about ourselves and believe we are not acceptable to God or anyone else. As I stated above, what we believe about ourselves is very important. It is more important than what anyone else thinks.

Believing what God says about us in His Word and seeing ourselves as He sees us is one way we let Him fight our battles for us. We know before the battles even begin that we have the victory. We may have to walk through some difficulties and stand

*Satan is a defeated foe and he knows that. But if we don't know it, he will take advantage of that lack of knowledge and bluff his way into intimidating us.*

strong in faith, but we know how the story ends. Satan is a defeated foe and he knows that. But if we don't know it, he will take advantage of that lack of knowledge and bluff his way into intimidating us.

## The Devil Is a Liar

The first time Satan appears in the Bible is in Genesis 3, and the first thing he does is attempt to make Eve suspicious of God's word. The devil is a liar, but God is truth and therefore He cannot lie. When Eve listened to the devil, she began to question God's goodness, and she took Satan's bait and disobeyed God's instructions to her and Adam. God said they could eat of every tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He told them not to eat of that one or they would die (see Gen. 2:17). God's instructions were for Adam and Eve's good, but the devil made them sound as though God was depriving them of something they should have and enjoy.

Like the worker in the zoo who knew the wildcat had no teeth and was too old to harm him, we can know that Satan has no real power except the power we give him through believing his lies. To believe a lie is to be deceived, but when people are deceived, they are not aware that they are deceived. They believe that what they *think* is true and they act accordingly. One of the most difficult tasks I have encountered in ministry is to try to convince someone who is deeply deceived that they are wrong about what they believe.

Not only is the devil a liar, he is the father of lies. Jesus said to a group of people listening to Him teach, "You are of your father

the devil, and it is your will to practice the desires [which are characteristic] of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks what is natural to him, for he is a liar and the father of lies and half-truths” (John 8:44).

Let’s think for a moment about how the fact that the devil is a liar affects our lives. If we are unaware of Satan as a real threat and if we do not know his character, he can easily deceive us and we can end up believing many things that are not true. These beliefs will keep us from enjoying the life that Jesus died for us to have.

What if you lived all your life in poverty, barely getting by, and when you were ready to die someone told you that your grandparents had left you an inheritance and you had been a millionaire for the past forty years? You could have enjoyed a totally different life than you had, but you didn’t know anything about the inheritance, so you missed out on it even though it was yours all along. This is what our lives are like when we believe Satan’s lies and do not know the truth of God’s Word. The spiritual and material riches of Christ’s inheritance are amazing, but we miss out on them because we lack knowledge of them. The truth is God wants to bless us with good things, and the devil wants to steal them from us.

Stop and ask yourself what lies you might be believing right now that are preventing you from entering into the fullness of the life Jesus wants you to have.

I can share my own experience as an example, and I am confident that many people have had similar experiences. I was a born-again Christian and attended church regularly. I even became involved in activities and various ministry outreaches at the church. I attended two different churches within a particular denomination over a period of nine years, and although I did hear the devil mentioned, I had no real concept of him as my

personal enemy. I had no idea he was actively working against God, His work on the earth, and His children.

My life was like the lives of most of the Christians I knew. Although I attended church and believed in Jesus, I had no true victory. I was easily angered, negative, resentful, unforgiving, jealous, and critical. I had many other ungodly traits that were being instigated by the devil, but I did not know he was behind them or recognize him as a real enemy. Rather than seeing him as the source of my problems, I usually blamed other people and thought that if they would change, I could be happy and easier to get along with.

Blaming others for our problems is another of Satan's deceptions, and it also started in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve were caught in their sin, Eve blamed the devil and Adam blamed Eve, but God assigned responsibility and punishment to all of them. Satan was guilty of lying to Adam and Eve, but they were guilty of listening and believing what he said instead of what God had said (see Gen. 3:1–19).

As long as we blame other people for our own bad behavior and problems, we are caught in a never-ending cycle of misery. The only path to freedom is letting God show us truth, facing it, and asking Him to help us change. If we have been treated unjustly, God will vindicate us in due time.

## The Devil Is Alive and Active

Corrie ten Boom said, "The first step on the way to victory is to recognize the enemy." She was right!

In the 1970s I read a book that was popular at the time called *Satan Is Alive and Well on Planet Earth*, by Hal Lindsey. The book opened my eyes to many things, and God used it to start a revolutionary spiritual change in me. It introduced me to how active

Satan is on the earth and to what he is attempting to do. For the first time I saw him as a real enemy that had to be dealt with. I also became aware that many of my beliefs were just plain wrong, according to Scripture. The devil had deceived me, and I was totally unaware of it.

For example, I believed for years that because I had been abused sexually by my father, I would always have a second-rate life. I was convinced that my life could never be as good as it would have been had I not been abused. This thinking made me resentful and left me feeling hopeless. But as I learned the truth of God's Word, I discovered promises from God, such as the one that He would give me a double blessing for my former trouble and unjust treatment:

Instead of your [former] shame you will have a double portion; and instead of humiliation your people will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore in their land they will possess double [what they had forfeited]; everlasting joy will be theirs. For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery with a burnt offering. And I will faithfully reward them, and make an everlasting covenant with them.

Isaiah 61:7–8

I believed I was a disappointment to God and that I should have done something to get out of my situation as a child, although I had no idea what that would have been. I told my mom what my father was doing to me, and she didn't believe me. A few years later, she even caught my father abusing me, but due to fear she decided to ignore it and not deal with it at all. I asked other relatives for help, and they didn't want to get involved. So I just gave up and decided that if I couldn't get away from the situation, I

would survive it and leave home as soon as I was old enough to do so. When I did leave home, I thought I left my problem behind, but I carried it with me in my wounded soul, and sadly, suffered many more years of mental and emotional torment because I continued to believe the devil's lies.

I carried a burden of guilt and shame with me at all times, and not until I had studied God's Word for many years did the truth finally become stronger than the lies I had believed most of my life. Thankfully I learned that Jesus bore my sin, guilt, and shame, and that through my faith in Jesus, God considered me to be in right standing with Him. I was, in fact, according to Scripture, the righteousness of God in Christ (see 2 Cor. 5:21). I was a new creature in Christ; old things had passed away and all things had become brand-new (see 2 Cor. 5:17).

I learned that I had authority over Satan, and that I was called and anointed by God to serve Him and do amazing things. I also read that there are 5,467 promises from God in His Word, and I was missing out on most of them through believing Satan's lies instead of knowing the truth. Jesus said that if we know the truth, it will make us free (see John 8:32). That is what has happened to me and to millions of others, and it will happen for you also.

These examples are only a few of the lies that God's Word uncovered in my life, lies that Satan told me and I believed. I learned firsthand that the devil is indeed alive and well and active against God's people.

## Taking Back Your Mind

Watchman Nee did some phenomenal writing about how Satan attacks and uses the minds of believers to do his evil work. Through his writings, I learned that the mind is the battlefield

on which we either win or lose the war with evil. In his book *The Spiritual Man*, he wrote:

Why is the Christian's mental life so beset by evil spirits?  
This can be answered in one sentence: believers afford the  
evil spirits (or the devil) the opportunity to attack.

Why would believers give evil spirits the opportunity to attack their minds? They would do so only because they are ignorant of the devil's wiles and methods of deception, or perhaps they are ignorant of his existence entirely. The word *wily*, which is related to the word *wiles*, means "cunning, crafty, and deceitful." Wiles are often described as "clever tricks," and they are Satan's way of gaining entrance into a person's life. Satan doesn't knock on the front door of our lives announcing his arrival, telling us who he is and informing us that he has come to destroy us. He lies in wait for an opportune time and then he lies, deceives, and cunningly and craftily makes his way in, often undetected. Then he delights in hearing us blame God or other people for the trouble the devil himself is instigating.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones observed in *The Christian Warfare*, "There is nothing, I would say, which is more significant about evangelicalism in this present century than the way in which it has largely ignored this teaching concerning the devil and the principalities and powers, and the 'wiles' of the devil" (p. 98). We need to learn a great deal in this area. Not only do we need to learn it, we also need to remind ourselves often that we have an enemy who is always on the prowl, looking for someone to devour.

People who do not learn to think for themselves are headed for trouble. Do you ever think about what you have been thinking about? If you would, then you would often find the source of

your problems. Our words, emotions, and actions are the results of our thoughts. For example, it is impossible to spend the day entertaining and meditating on negative thoughts and remain happy and joyful. When our thoughts are negative and sour, our mood becomes the same. When they are positive and hopeful, our spirits lift and we live with an expectation that something good is headed our way.

*We should choose our thoughts carefully because they ultimately become the blueprint for our lives.*

The Bible tells us to resist the devil (see James 4:7), but we often unknowingly assist him through receiving as our own any and every thought he puts into our minds.

You and I can and should do our own thinking. We should choose our thoughts carefully because they ultimately become the blueprint for our lives. Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthian church:

The weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood]. Our weapons are divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying sophisticated arguments and every exalted and proud thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought and purpose captive to the obedience of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:4–5

People who desire to win their battles must understand the importance of this passage. First, it teaches us that we have weapons. Our weapons are not physical, so they must be spiritual. They cannot be seen in the natural realm, but they certainly affect this realm. The primary weapon Paul is talking about in

2 Corinthians 10:4–5 is the Word of God. With that Word, we recognize and defeat the lies and thoughts the devil whispers to our minds. Please notice that *we* must take those thoughts captive. It's not something God or anyone else can do for us. We direct our thoughts into obedience to the will of Christ. We learn to think as God wants us to think, and He wants us to think according to His Word. He wants us to be in agreement with Him and with His plan and purpose for our lives and His Kingdom.

## Renewing Your Mind

The renewal of the mind is the most important thing for the person who has accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord. The new believer must learn to think in an entirely new way. We might have had years of practice thinking in ways that are contrary to what God says, and learning to think in agreement with God's Word will take time, education, and effort. Paul writes that we are not to be conformed to this world, but to “be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes]” (Rom. 12:2). In other words, we are not to think or behave as worldly people do. Instead, we are to be transformed by renewing our minds according to God's Word so we may prove what God's will is and experience the good plan and purpose He has for each one of us.

The word *transformed* as used in Romans 12:2 means “to be changed completely according to a new inner reality.” God does this work in us. We become a new creation (see 2 Cor. 5:17), and as we learn to think and behave according to that new reality, our entire life changes. This happens gradually and depends on our gaining knowledge of God's Word, will, and ways, and on our willingness to submit our thinking and actions to it.

If we allow ourselves to be conformed to the world, we will think as they tell us to think and do what they tell us to do. But thankfully, as children of God, we have another option—to be transformed into the image of Christ and live the wonderful life He has provided for us through His death and resurrection.

The devil fights relentlessly against the good plan God has for us, and he does it through lies, deceptions, and various strategies, attempting to keep us distracted through sending trouble and difficulties our way. New believers are trying to grow in their relationship with Jesus through studying the Word of God because this is how they learn right from wrong. The Holy Spirit, Who lives in us and is our Helper in life, as well as our Teacher, sows the Word into our hearts, but Satan comes immediately and tries to steal it in many ways.

Jesus said that there are times when the seed (God's Word) is sown, but trouble and persecution come before it has time to take root. Immediately those who hear it are offended and displeased, and they fall away (see Mark 4:16–17). This often happens to people who have the mistaken idea that being a Christian means that God will make everything comfortable and wonderful for them. Teaching arises occasionally from different parts of the Body of Christ asserting that all the believer needs to do is look to Christ and He will give the victory. But Paul writes that we are to put on the full armor of God and to cast down thoughts that don't agree with God's Word (see Eph. 6:11; 2 Cor. 10:5).

We can see that God has given us responsibility in this process. He never fails to do His part, but He won't do our part for us. He wants us to actively participate with Him. We are partners with God in His work.

It's so important to understand this because standing firm in faith is especially challenging when we go through trials and

tribulations. When the enemy is attacking believers in some way that is painful or uncomfortable for them, I frequently hear them say, “I don’t understand why God let this happen. If He is good and He delivers us from our problems when we pray, then why is this happening to me?” God doesn’t become angry with us when we ask such questions, but those questions are immature and typically come from immature believers, and they usually go unanswered. God wants and expects us to grow beyond making such statements when trouble comes our way. God wants to hear us say, “I trust You, Lord, and I love You just as much in hard times as I do in good ones.”

I also find it interesting that we ask why negative things happen to us, but do not seem confused when other people are having trouble. We are quick to remind others that God is faithful and to encourage them to stay strong, yet when we are hurting, our thoughts and emotions can become unstable and cause us to say things we should not say.

The writer of Hebrews teaches that we should look away from all that will distract us from Jesus, who is the Author and Perfector of our faith (see Heb. 12:2). We look to Him, and He keeps us strong and focused on the victory that is on its way. Waiting patiently in faith for breakthrough while God is fighting with us and for us is part of what we must learn to do. God promises to help us, but the timing and the way in which He does it is up to Him.

Paul makes our part clear in Ephesians 6:13:

Therefore, put on the complete armor of God, so that you will be able to [successfully] resist and stand your ground in the evil day [of danger], and having done everything [that the crisis demands], to stand firm [in your place, fully prepared, immovable, victorious].