

Ten Principles of Warfare

by Shane Idleman

In this sermon, Shane Idleman teaches on the importance of spiritual warfare, defending against the enemy, and trusting God to handle difficult situations.

Duration: 57:30

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:1

Topics: "Unity in the Church", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Shane Idleman discusses the 'Ten Principles of Warfare' based on Nehemiah's efforts to rebuild Jerusalem's walls, emphasizing the importance of spiritual warfare in our lives today. He highlights how the enemy uses discouragement and taunting to weaken our resolve, urging believers to encourage themselves in the Lord and to remain united in their efforts. Idleman stresses the need for both spiritual and physical action, reminding us that while God fights our battles, we must also take a stand and work diligently. He warns against the love of money and the dangers of disunity within the church, encouraging generosity and a healthy fear of God as essential components of spiritual warfare.

Transcript

I've been in Nehemiah, as you know, and we're in chapter three, and I'm actually not going to read all of the different families and the leaders. What they did is different families would rise up and build the gates and the walls of Jerusalem, and I think we have a slide up there of the gate area. Here's what happened.

They wanted to rebuild the Jerusalem, the temple, and they wanted to rebuild the wall around it as well. So the wall was in disarray, and the building itself was in disarray. So they actually rebuilt the temple first, that was Ezra and Zerubbabel, and then Nehemiah came many years later, and you see how they started to reconstruct the wall around Jerusalem and all the gates.

If we had time, it's interesting to go through the different gates. I believe that's where they think that Jesus came in to the city as the Passover lamb, as that final Passover. It's interesting if you study the gates and what they did.

So that's what the families are doing. Different families would go build the water gate, and then there'd be another family on the horse gate, and then another family on the east gate, another family on the fountain gate. And you couldn't just go, hey Bill, what are you doing over there? I mean, some of these gates are a long ways away, so they'd have trumpets in the middle, different things, because the officials that were

there do not like the Jews, and they're going to try to stop them from rebuilding that wall, and it parallels a lot of what we go through today.

That's why the title is Ten Principles of Warfare. Actually, Ten Principles of Spiritual Warfare is what should be there, because I don't think we're doing Navy SEAL training tonight, right? We're not getting ready for warfare overall. This is spiritual warfare, believe it or not.

So chapter three is the families and the leaders, and then we go to chapter four, verse one, chapter four. So I'm going to just talk about ten principles of spiritual warfare. You know there's an enemy, correct? In case you don't know that, the Bible talks about there's an enemy of our soul that goes about to kill, to steal, and to destroy.

How does he primarily do that? Right? Here's where he's coming from. You're not going to get up and go, I can't find my car keys, and the enemy took them, right, and hit them somewhere else, and maybe I don't know about that. But we know it happens up here.

The battle's waged up here. He attacks, he assaults our mind. So that's what has to be fortified first and foremost.

But the first principle I want to share with you, many years of ministry, talking to different people, I narrowed these down to the top ten. And Sunday, I'm actually going to talk about demonology. You know what that is? The study of demons.

So it has not been a very fulfilling week. It's been a, you know, because you're studying that, you start to, the devil will start to mess with you in certain areas, and any time I'm studying on something or going to prepare to preach on it, then I usually have to experience a little bit of it. But on one hand, we don't give the demonic realm too much credit, right? I mean, we're not going to be worried about them.

God is sovereign. But we are encouraged to know about their ways. The reason is because when you're forewarned, you can be forearmed.

If we know an enemy's coming, we can take precaution. For example, they say, hey, somebody's coming here, they're upset tonight, they're going to come out through the parking lot. Okay, well, we're going to have some undercover, you know what, meet them out in the parking lot to stop that.

So that's why the Bible talks about the enemy and how he moves so we can be prepared. So chapter four. So the first principle is this, defending against the enemy.

We have to defend against the enemy, but here's how. But so it happened when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, Sanballat is not a fan of Nehemiah, he's his enemy, and he was furious and very indignant and he mocked the Jews. And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria and said, what are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifice? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish? Stones that are burned? Now, Tobiah, the Ammonite, was beside him and he said whatever they build, if even a fox goes on it, he will break down their stone wall.

Have you ever been doing something and you hear those taunting voices? What are you doing? Why are you doing that? That's not going to work. That's not going to last. That's not going to make it.

Remember I've shared before how many people told me you can't start a church on a Saturday, but I guess they didn't tell God that. You know, the discouraging voices, and that's when we started, some of you don't know, we got a building and we started having church on Saturday night and right when we started, people would say that. They'd say, you can't do that, it's not going to work, nobody does that.

Well, I don't know, there's a building and that's what we're doing, so we'll just trust in God. But it messes with your mind, doesn't it? When you hear discouraging things and discouragement and people are challenging what you're doing, challenging everything you've stood for. So keep this in mind, taunting and discouragement is always a tactic of the enemy.

Why? Because it drains enthusiasm and it kills our motivation. Those are two things you must have in spiritual battle, are they not? I need to be enthusiastic and I need to be motivated. If you take those two away from me, that's why a lot of people don't come to church.

If you think about it, true, they're not enthusiastic, they're not motivated, here I go, I guess I'll do it. I mean, that's what people do, right? We go to church, but I won't do anything for God or we won't do many things for God if the enemy comes and takes that enthusiasm away and he comes and takes that motivation away from us. So here's the key, you have to learn to encourage yourself in the Lord.

It's wonderful to get encouraged by other people, but if I just solely relied on that, I would be in trouble. So would you. We have to, the Bible says, encourage yourself in the Lord.

You get into his word, you get into worship, even when you don't feel like it. Did everybody feel like coming tonight? Oh no, I don't think so, especially Wednesday night, right? I mean, it's, oh, okay. You've got to encourage yourself in the Lord and say, regardless of how I feel, I'm going to move forward in this.

And I found that often discouragement is a testing ground. When I get discouraged and disappointed, I lack enthusiasm. Am I going to still continue? Am I still going to prevail in something? Am I still going to, okay God, no matter what you told me to do, I'm still going to do it, even though I'm discouraged.

So without discouragement, the enemy would have a hard time stopping us. So that's where he's primarily going to go after you. Have you ever been praying for a family member, say a child, and then you get very discouraged? Do you keep praying just as hard? Or what about a job opportunity? What about a career? What about doing something for God? This happens all the time.

Welcome to my world, okay? You get fired up about something to do for God, right? Oh man, this feels great. I can feel the Lord moving. This is going to be wonderful.

And then two weeks into it, you're ready to quit. Bible study is a great example. You know, you start, people start, oh, there's shame.

Twenty-five people showed up and, oh, that's wonderful. And I'm like, okay, that's great, encouraging. And make sure you stay encouraged because in three months from now, there might be five.

Well, shame, that's discouraging. But I like to prepare people as well. It might not happen, but God wants to see often, are you just as faithful with the five as the 25? A job opportunity, I've committed a job and it's going great, and then now the money's not there? Do you ever try to go to work when you're discouraged and not motivated? How does that feel? So the enemy will often use discouragement.

How? You're not going to get better. You're not going to see this through. You're not going to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Discouragement and discouragement and discouragement. That's the number one way he attacks us spiritually, is through discouragement and killing our motivation. This also happens in other areas of life.

Have you seen couples? You know what? I'm going to work on my marriage, one says. And the spouse says, okay, I'm going to work on my marriage too. We're motivated.

We're going to make this work. And then what happens? Discouragement. I knew you'd never change.

I knew this would happen again. And now they're discouraged and they're not motivated. It affects more than you think.

Discouragement and a lack of motivation. It takes the fuel away from the fire. If the Holy Spirit is a fire in your heart, a burning fire, like Jeremiah said, his word is in my heart like a burning fire, if the enemy can throw water on that fire and discourage you and stop you from doing God's work, that's the number one tactic I believe that he uses in our lives, is to discourage us.

This is why I believe a lot of people don't come to church consistently as well. They're discouraged. They're not motivated.

I mean, church is very motivating when you're motivated. Have you ever been like, I can't wait to get to church? Some people can't relate to that. I've been through seasons.

Now because of the Sunday morning, 6.30 a.m., I can tell you, as God is my witness, I'm excited to get to church. I'm actually disappointed it's only Wednesday. And then from that early morning worship, I love the 2 services after that.

I love, love, I look forward to church. I honestly do. I couldn't say that many years ago.

That's why we would come maybe every other week, right? I've talked about this before. Oh, kids have a sniffly nose. We can't go.

I don't feel too good. My back's out. We'll just stay home.

It's before Dale Earnhardt, you know, before his dad died, NASCAR and football. And, you know, I could find everything else because I wasn't motivated. So you see how much motivation plays a role in enthusiasm.

So be careful because there's where he's going to go after you more often than not. And that's why you have to strengthen yourself in the Lord. You have to believe the promises of God.

You have to know the promises of God. Promises like this, faithful in the little things and I will make you ruler over many. Be faithful in the small things.

Persevere. Persevere means do it in spite of how you feel. So there's so many times.

And when you start to strengthen yourself in the Lord, you start to feel encouraged and you get back on track. So here's Nehemiah's response to their discouragement. Sanballat and Tobias are going to harass him the whole time.

Have you ever had people harass you the whole time you're trying to do something? Whether it's at work, it's like, oh, Lord, take this person away this week. And a year later they're still at your work. And in church, it happens, right? Anybody harass or ruffle your feathers and it doesn't get fixed overnight and it's a continual dripping.

Is somebody going to fix that shower dripping? It's just a constant drip. So sometimes God doesn't take that person away or that situation away immediately. We have to go through that challenge.

So here's his response. You have to have spiritual defense as well. Spiritually speaking, here's what he did.

Hear, O our God, for we are despised. Turn their reproach on their own heads and give them as plunder to the land of captivity. Do not cover their iniquity and do not let their sin be blotted out from before you, for they have provoked you to anger before the builders.

So Nehemiah went directly to God, not Facebook. Directly to God, not going to text them. He goes directly to God.

God, you fight this battle. And there's a lot of strength in that. Here's why.

Because you're going to God and you're saying, God, you take care of this. You called me to build your wall. In my case, I'd say, you called us to plant this church.

This is your church. I truly believe that. That God did this.

And when I'm gone, when you're gone, there's other people going to be stewarding it. So Lord, you go take care of them. You take care of them.

You take care of that gossip and that back biter and that slander, that person who's causing division. Lord, you take care of them. That's why when the devil was rebuked, they said, the Lord rebuke you, Satan.

I don't know if you're in a position to rebuke the devil. I hear people do that sometimes. That's okay.

But you might want to tell God, hey, can you handle this? Can you handle this? Because then you get out of the way and God will handle it. But many times we take it into our own hands, don't we? We'll send off that mean email. We'll handle this on Facebook.

We'll handle this a different way. My sister's here tonight. I saw you back there.

She's handling our Twitter. She's doing Twitter for us now and Instagram. I said, no matter what people say, don't listen.

Don't respond. Just block them. Let God handle them.

We don't need to go answering comments and getting upset and going back at people and yell, yeah, yeah. I mean, you should hear the crud that's out there. Pages this long.

But I just say, God, you rebuke them. You handle this. Of course they're upset.

Of course they're upset. Remember if you're going in the same direction of the enemy, you're not going to run into him. That you will ruffle feathers when you're doing things for God.

You don't try to do that, but you will ruffle feathers, right? I might ruffle some feathers this weekend. Check out the Antelope Valley Press newspaper on Saturday and Sunday. I wrote an article challenging these assembly bills and asking the Antelope Valley Union High School District, is anybody going to step up and stop this here locally? I could, I, well, no, don't clap.

We don't know how it's going to, we don't have, I actually know the person who orders the curriculum for the high schools and I'm about this close to calling. Right? But I know it's not going to go in a healthy direction. So Lord, you have to handle this.

You, Lord, you take care of it. What do you want me to do? I'll be the mouthpiece, but you show me Lord, in gentleness and humility. But that will be challenged.

People will be upset at these things. But you, that's how you handle it spiritually. Because how do we, we come from old school, don't we? We used to handle things like this.

Or if you're a woman, maybe not. Maybe you're slapping people or, or, or how do we, you know how we handle, the louder you got, whoever won the battle, you'd fight, you'd argue. You can't do that in spiritual warfare.

Because no matter how loud you get, the devil doesn't care. Anytime I say, listen, this is too much, there's situations right here, it's the church I could tell you about. There's people wanting to cause some division here.

And I just say, Lord, I'm out of the way, you handle this. You handle this. I'll pull the trigger when it's time to pull the trigger.

But you handle this. You show me what to do. I'm going to get out of the way and God, you take care of this.

God's not going to say, why Shane, why are you doing that? I can't handle this one. Why are you doing that? Because he's, now there's something different if you're timid and fearful and God's telling you to do something. I'm not talking about that.

That's usually not my problem. I mean, I'm not, that's, mine's the other problem, right? You know? I have to, I have to put on the brake. Some of you need to put on the gas and confront in love.

So I just give it over to the Lord because some things are just too big. Have you ever been in a situation that there's some things going on right now and I'm like, I don't even know how to handle it. I don't know what to do exactly.

I don't have the policy book on this one. So Lord, show us. And I've noticed throughout the years, it's amazing.

I'll get the call, I'll get the text or I'll get an email and the problem has been dealt with. I'm like, hmm, wasn't that interesting. I didn't have to do anything.

You know, we've had people in the past, I know maybe you don't believe it, but the church like this, you know, you draw on a lot of different people, conservatives, charismatics, different things. And I'll pray, Lord, this person is not healthy for this church. I don't know what to do.

I'm going to, you know, I'm going to keep trying and praying with them, but at some point I'm going to have to ask them to leave, say, for example. And wouldn't you know it, they decide to leave on their own. Or a situation, marriage issues that we're going to have to confront or somebody being involved in ministry, it's happened before, and they come and there's alcohol on their breath.

And I want to, hey, I need to talk to you about this. And lo and behold, they repent and they change or they decide to leave. And God, and when you give it to Him and let Him, now, please understand, you know, as people stumble, I'm not going to get, okay, somebody, I prayed with somebody in the prayer room once recently who was drinking and they still had stuff in their purse.

I said, listen, I'll pray for you. You need to get help. We can help you.

Here's how. We'd love to help you. And that's our hardest to help.

But you have to use the spiritual discernment. You have to often get out of the way and let God do it. Because if you try to do it in your own strength, that's what the enemy's looking for.

So basically, in a nutshell, that shouldn't have been that long of a point. But Nehemiah, what we can learn from Nehemiah is he went directly to God. And he went directly to God and said, Lord, you handle this.

Now, when you tell God, listen, they're abusing your people. They're lying to your people. They're false prophets.

They're hurting your people. They're hurting the church. I can feel it during a service when there's disunity.

Did you know that? It affects the service. It affects our worship. It affects my message sometimes.

I can feel when a certain spirit is in the room that comes in with somebody and they're just sitting there. They're just upset. I'm like, you don't even know.

But I'm just praying, Lord, just rebuke that person. Rebuke whatever they brought in here. I'm not going to deal with this.

I'm going to preach. You have to let God do that. And it happens.

It happens often. I know this is an interesting subject because spiritual warfare is real. And charismatic Pentecostal churches has actually given it a bad name because people get weird about it.

But the other side is to be too conservative, you don't talk about it at all. I believe that people can come into the church with a certain type of spirit, a controlling, a manipulating spirit, a power, authority spirit. Not possessed, but they're not united with the body.

And if you're not united, I can sometimes sense that. So can you. Have you ever talked with people and you're like, there's just something not right with this person.

It's just not there. Not there. And I'm not feeling it.

And how can you be united in the things of God unless you are united through the Holy Spirit? So spiritual warfare is real. However, you don't need to be worried about it. It's not like, oh, the demons are going to overpower God and take Shane down.

No, God's already in authority. God's in control. He allows them to move.

And that's what we're going to talk about Sunday. God willing, right? Unless he changes course on that. So here's what he did though, because when you do something spiritually, you also have to do something physically often.

Here's what he did. Verse 6, so we built the wall. He didn't say, okay, we're going to stop.

These guys are harassing us. I'm just going to pray and hopefully that wall will build itself. Okay, let's see.

Tomorrow morning, nope, there's no bricks. No, the concrete didn't make itself. Did they make concrete back then, Mike? Mortar? Think so? I mean, the wall's not building itself.

So they had to go and they had to build the wall. So he said, we built the wall and the entire wall was joined together up to half of its height. So they were working like a mason would.

And they got the wall to say half its height. I don't know what the exact height of the wall of Jerusalem is around the whole city, but it was pretty tall. And they built it to half of its height.

And then he said something interesting. For the people had a mind to work. So you have to get a mind to work because God blesses work.

You need to know that. Maybe that is important for some of you to understand this evening, that God blesses hard work. God loves work.

He doesn't approve of laziness and slothfulness. In our society now with the video games and the entertainment and the media and all this stuff, we've lost how to work hard. And God blesses hard work.

So the people had a mind to work. Young adults, if you can work, work hard. Get a job and work well.

Work hard. And God will bless that. I think that's the only reason he blessed my dad, he's blessed my family, is because we knew what hard work was.

Oh my Lord, the kids have no idea today. No idea. I remember one time my dad dropped me off.

He said, okay, I'll be back at lunch. We're going to dig a septic tank by hand. A septic tank hole by hand.

You know, it's seven feet deep and, you know, and okay, what do I do? You start digging right here and throw the dirt out here on this plywood by hand. And just things like that. In Southern California Edison, we would dig their utility trenches and sometimes we'd have to go underneath a fire hydrant.

And he said, okay, start here and I'll be back after lunch. What do you mean start here? Start here, dig down a tunnel underneath a fire hydrant? It's got a kicker block on the back with concrete so you have to go around. But anyway, it was just hard work.

It made you, it's like, you appreciate things later on in life. So I think we miss that sometimes, that hard work. Tell your kids to go outside and mow weeds or hoe weeds for a while.

Let them get used to hard work. So anyway, Nehemiah spiritually and then physically, he also worked. And then the enemy became very angry, verse 8. So don't let your guard down is another principle.

And all of them conspire together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion. So here, Tobias and Sambalot harassed him. The harassment didn't work.

So here's what you have to remember. When the harassment doesn't work, the enemy doesn't usually go, oh shucks, that didn't work. He's going to increase the heat.

And if you want these sermon notes, they'll be underneath the sermon video on the website this week once we post it. But the enemy became even angrier and the devil does that. He turns up the heat sometimes.

Have you ever quit something like an addiction and then comes back a stronger addiction for something else? Or he'll start to, oh that was hard to go through and now here comes a whirlwind of problems and sometimes just life. I'm not the type of person who says the devil's behind every boulder. And I actually tell people sometimes, hey listen, you're putting too much, the devil's doing this, the demons are doing this.

No, no, sometimes it's just life. Sometimes it's just life is hard. Our flesh is not happy sometimes.

And we get angry. And it's not the devil making you angry. Something else you have to remember.

People say the devil made me do it. No. As a believer, the devil doesn't make you do anything.

He can't make you do anything. He can influence you. But the excuse, and we hear that in hyper-Pentecostal churches, the devil made me do it.

What was that Flip Wilson? Remember him, older folks? What he used to say? Yes, exactly. The devil made me do it. And it's a good way to get out of things, I guess.

But that's not true. But he will often do this. He'll start small, you'll overcome that, and here comes a larger attack, a more heavy-handed attack.

All of them conspire together. So all Tobiah and Zabala's friends were going to come against Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem and create confusion. That's another plan of the enemy.

Do you do very well in confusion? Or is it hard for us? Like, I don't know what to do. Honey, we've got to make a decision. What are we going to do here? I'm confused.

I don't know how to handle this. I'm confused. And it's very hard to fight when you're confused.

When you're getting hit, what was that? You're getting hit on this side. And the devil creates confusion. He'll do that in a church.

Something will happen, then something else will happen, then it's like we're just... Why? I think here's why. Because in confusion we often make hasty choices. We make quick, hasty, wrong choices when we're confused.

The best thing to do when we're confused is to step back, admit it to God, and say, Lord, I'm confused here. I'm just going to wait on you. You need to show me.

You need to show me what to do. Because if I know me and I know my past record, I'm going to get in trouble. So would you show me what to do? So they became very angry and upset.

Verse 9, Nevertheless, Nehemiah says, nevertheless, we decided to quit building the wall and run back home. Is that what they said? No. Nevertheless, we made our prayer to God, see? And because of them, we set a watch against them day and night.

I like Nehemiah. It's a picture of Nehemiah with a trial, you know, building a wall. He's got a trial, and in this hand he's got a sword.

He's building a wall, and he says, you come from behind, you're getting it. That's how you fight. That's how you fight the enemy.

I'm going to work, but boy, you come after me, you're getting it. But we don't have a sword now, we have the sword of the Spirit. Through fasting and prayer and worship, everything I talk about, that's the battle.

That's actually how you go to battle, is with those things. Someday you'll get it, then you'll thank me. Right? I don't just say it to say it.

That's the battle, because we think, well, yeah, but I can just get through it on my own if I just grin and bear it. I don't know how you get through life grinning and bearing it, because it doesn't work. So he put a watch up day and night.

And then verse 10, then Judah said, that was one of the families building on the wall, the strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall. Okay, they're getting, remember, they had a mind to work, now what's happening? Yep, they're getting very discouraged. Hey, there's too much, have you ever been there? This sounds so familiar.

Oh, forget it now, this is too much work. This is too much work. I can't keep building.

I can't keep building. I can't keep doing this. And this is the thing of spiritual warfare, we have to remember, sometimes it's not spiritual warfare, it's actually friendly fire.

Have you heard of, you know what friendly fire is? It's a war term, where we accidentally shoot our own, our own soldiers. You know, you have to know your coordinates, or else you're the target. The friendly fire, accidentally when you have your coordination off, when you have your coordinates off, when you have your latitude line, all these things are off, it can make the difference between getting the enemy, and taking out Americans.

It's a very, very delicate thing. Same thing in spiritual warfare. Same thing in spiritual warfare.

We have to watch this, because it's just a matter, we can start taking out each other. Friendly fire, do you know brother hurts brother, and sister hurts sister in the church, more often than unbelievers? Most of the problems that go on here are not between unbelievers, right? Shane, this unbeliever won't leave me alone. Well that does happen, but it's usually friendly fire, right? Gossip, complaining, backbiting, power struggles, jealousy, down talking others, because when you down talk others, you build yourself up, usually.

It's not good, it's not pretty. So friendly fire does happen often in the church, and it's part of spiritual warfare. The enemy will use it.

How does the enemy use it? Because I believe he can plant seeds of division. You know how those work, you ever get those thoughts, you're like, yeah, that's right. That's right, he didn't say hi to me.

I bet he doesn't like me. I bet he doesn't like me. This part is, it's kind of, it's sad, and I wish I could, I learned from it, but people sometimes, you know, they've left the church, and they say, yeah, Pastor Shane didn't say hi to me.

Wasn't on purpose. I didn't see you maybe, I don't know. You know, but we get so offended.

Who puts that thought in there? Listen, if I don't say hi to you, it's not because I'm mad at anybody. I just don't see sometimes. I want to say hi to everybody.

But see, where does that thought come from? Where they probably don't like me. They treated me. Why do they treat me like that? Why did they give me the cold shoulder? Why didn't they reach out to me? Why haven't they emailed me? That's why some of you probably get emails from me.

I'm like, how are you doing? I follow them, how are you doing? Because if the Lord put somebody on my heart, I try to email them because I want to make sure the enemy doesn't come in there and say the church doesn't care about me. Church doesn't care. But where do those thoughts sometimes come from? I think don't believers get upset at believers because right here, the enemy starts to plant thoughts.

So we have to be careful in this area as well. Even believers become discouraged. Verse 11, and our adversary said, they will neither know nor see anything till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease.

So it was when the Jews who dwelt near them came, they told us 10 times, for whatever you place, wherever you turn, they will be upon us. Can you imagine this? They're trying to build this wall, and now here it comes. We're hearing it from all over.

Wherever you turn, wherever, whatever gate you're at, whatever you turn, they're going to be upon you. You can't finish the sheep gate. You can't finish the water gate.

They're going to be all upon you. Oh my goodness, what are we going to do? See, that often happens when God calls you to do something. You know what He's called you to do.

You know what He wants you to do. You don't have to just do what I'm doing, but you know in your place of business how you can benefit others. You know it.

The enemy's going to come in, and you're going to see, you're going to get this feeling of just overwhelming. This isn't going to work. I'm being hit on too many different angles.

I'm being hit on too many different sides. I'm about to cave in. Anyone said that, or just me? I can't handle this anymore.

If I have one more thing happen, come on, let's get real Wednesday nights. Don't act like, oh, I've never heard that. I've never said that.

Lord, if one more thing happens, I'm going to fall apart. Oh, there's a lot. Okay, good.

See, it's coming for, see, He ramps it up a little bit, and sometimes God will allow things to say, no, I am your trust, and I've noticed this. Maybe you haven't, but I've noticed this. It's often not until I get to the end of the rope that I cry out to more.

More, God, more, I need you more. I fully surrender everything. It's not until I get to the end of that rope that I was holding on.

Then I finally cry out to God. So always remember, I remember that song, Brent, you sang it a while back. This is how I go to, this is how I fight my battles.

You know, this is how I fight my battles. You know, it's when I'm surrounded, I'm really surrounded by you. Although I'm surrounded, you feel like you're surrounded by the enemy.

I'm really surrounded by you. I remind myself, Lord, I'm surrounded by you. So when all of the world is falling apart, America's chaotic, California's lost its mind, you know, everything's falling apart, another thing happens.

And when that happens at church, like, it's going good for a while, and then something happens, boom, something happens in children's ministry, something happens here, something happens, it's like, Lord, I can't take anymore. Help! Help! Bring in the Navy SEALs. Lord, bring in the reinforcements.

And that is very common in spiritual warfare, because okay, I got this. And then a couple weeks later, I got this, and forget it, now I'm giving up. These people almost quit.

Can you imagine a half-built wall with half the gates hanging on, they said, we've had enough. That's what the enemy's going to often do, he's going to ramp it up, ramp up the pressure. That's why you can say like David, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

Paul said in the New Testament, I am hard-pressed on every side, but I'm not crushed. I'm perplexed, but I'm not in despair. And I am persecuted, but I am not forsaken.

And I am struck down, but I am not destroyed. That's how you have to look at spiritual warfare. You will be hard-pressed on every side.

Hard-pressed on every single side. I'll just give you an example. I'm telling you guys about, I've got a book coming out on fasting, feasting and fasting, and helping people physically.

That thing has been a nightmare. I mean, I'll be writing things for a couple hours, and it just disappears. We tried to upload it as a free e-book, and then it rejected the manuscript.

Got to go back to the editor, have her change all the fonts, have her change the spacing, and then I have to look it over again in case there's any errors. Oh boy, that's fun. Reading it for the 15th time.

And then they upload the wrong manuscript. The printer needs to see, I need to see blue-line proofs. I have to sign off on everything before it's actually printed, so they're not in trouble if there's an error.

And then I've got to read it again, and then in the transmission, things have been dropped, and things have been moved, and the footnotes aren't correct. It's like, wow. And now I've got to preach tomorrow, and I've got to prepare Wednesday.

And then back then, my daughter broke her foot on the trampoline. And then, Lord, I'm done. I'm done.

Uncle, uncle, uncle, forget it. Forget it. But you just keep persevering, and I'm probably not a good example of this, because I don't handle it all the time perfectly.

But that's what's going to happen. You're a Christian, you just understand when you're forewarned, you're forearmed, right? If you know, okay, this is what to expect. So you enjoy the calm, you enjoy the peaceful time, but you understand that when all hell is breaking loose, God's not.

When life is failing, God's not. And there's that saying, God will never give you more than you can handle. I know what they're saying, and their intentions are good, right? He's saying, be encouraged.

God will never give you more than you can't handle. But the opposite's often true. He gives us, I can't handle this.

Lord, I can't handle this without you. So he often gives us things to try to do that we can't handle, we just can't do alone. It's just amazing the amount of pressure that the world and your job and things in life, do you ever feel pressure from life that's put on you? And it's just amazing that we don't, that's why most people quit and give up.

Have you ever seen half-finished walls? Half-finished houses? You got some half-finished walls at home? Maybe? Okay. I've got some half-finished projects at home. I've tried to plant a garden many times, and those bugs and birds and everything just get everything.

I'll just go buy it at the store. But it happens in our lives. We have half-finished projects.

And then verse 13, therefore I position men behind the lower parts of the wall and at the openings, and I set the people according to their families. The principle here is God defends, God will defend you, but you still must position yourself correctly. See, Nehemiah, they didn't go, let's just go back to our houses, let's just leave here and let God handle this.

They still trusted in God, but they still worked as if it was all up to them. So they positioned themselves behind the wall, according to their families, with their swords, with their spears, and with their bows. So you have this picture of one group is working on the walls, this other group is going to protect.

You're coming after me, I'm going to protect. And that should be, whether you're parents or not, whether your kids are grown, that should be your stance. The same thing, you've got to protect your family, you've got to protect your own spiritual health.

So as you're working on doing things for God, you also have to fight the enemy and stand with your bow, with your sword, with your spear, that being the word of God, and prayer, and all the things we talk about. And then he said in verse, I think it's still 14, and I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the leaders and to the rest of the people, do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, fight for your sons, fight for your daughters, fight for your wives, and fight for your homes.

Boy, that's a great reminder for us today, isn't that what we're doing? We're actually fighting for our brethren. When I talk about the assembly bills in America, you think I'm fighting for me? I'm not real concerned because when I'm gone, I'm gone. Right? I mean, I'll get through it regardless, but I want to fight for the future generations.

I want to fight for those who are coming up next. I want to take a stance for those whose shoes, maybe they aren't even born yet. What about for our families and for our children, for our grandchildren, for those of us? That's who you're fighting for.

So when you go to spiritual battle, I don't know why every person who is a believer is not on their face or praying to God every morning, that that's a priority. Life is that difficult that that should be your main priority. Well, I don't feel like it.

Well, welcome to the club. The feelings often come later. The feelings are never the engine of the train.

They're the caboose. If you're led by feelings, you probably won't do that many things for God. Feelings do come later, though.

It's very rewarding once God fills you with the Spirit. But often you have to say, you know what, I'm tired, but I'm getting on my face this morning. Lord, I'm pleading for my family.

I'm praying for my children. I'm praying for this. You have a list out.

I'm going through this. If I fall asleep, I don't care. I fell asleep praying.

I'm going to pray, and I'm going to contend. I'm going to fight. You have to make that a priority.

So we see here that faith will be tested. Faith will be tested. Your fortitude will be challenged, but fear must not prevail.

And then the principle number seven, the power of unity in verse 15. And it happened when our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had brought their plot to nothing. Isn't that interesting? The enemies heard that their plot was brought to nothing, that God had stopped them.

All of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work. So it was from that time on that half of my servants worked at construction while the other half held spears, shields, bows, and war armor. And the leaders were behind all the house of Judah.

Those who built on the wall and those who carried burdens loaded themselves so that one hand they worked at construction, with the other hand they held the weapon. That's what I said. That's a position.

You work to rebuild, but you still have the weapon. The enemy wants you to put down the weapon. And the power of unity.

They were all of one mind. When a church comes together, they can accomplish many things. When believers are united and they come together, they can accomplish many things.

That's why the enemy wants to not only discourage and demotivate, he wants to come in and bring disunity. Any time I see that, I will tell people, hey, this disunity is not going to fly along. I'm telling you right now, something's got to change.

And I'm not leaving. Right? We're not leaving. We're not just going to leave and go find some other church.

We have to work on unity. We tell people that often, this has to change. This has to change.

We have to be united. It's that serious. And you'll see, have you ever been to a church that is just dead and informal and ran by personalities, jockeying for position? Well, it's my pew.

Right? The Johnsons over here. I hope there's no Johnsons here. Linda's here.

Okay. The McCoy's and the Hatfields. I know there's none here.

I don't think Dale McCoy. No, he doesn't go here. Okay.

But you've got those two. The churches ran like a business. You've got the Hatfields and McCoy's.

You've got, we're going to have a choir. No, we're going to have this. We're not going to paint the walls.

And it's just unity. All you have is a church without the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit is a spirit of unity.

He flows through unity, through humility, through brokenness. They'll know that you are Christians by your love for one another. When you can say, Lord, I might have been, I might have been hurt.

I get hurt by Christians too, you know? And when you can come and say, Lord, I've been hurt by that person, but I'm still going to love them. I'm still going to worship with them. God, that's powerful.

Because we all have a tendency to offend each other, don't we? Or get hurt by each other. It's the nature of the beast. It's the nature of the flesh within.

We will not always say the right thing. We will not always do the right thing. But if we desire unity that, anytime you see a healthy church, it's a united church.

I just had a book sent to me in the mail. He's, it's, this person is chronicling the revivals in China over the last 50 years or so. It's a very good read.

But in all, all cases where the church grew, I mean, it's like 100 million now Christians in China. And it's the Pung Yong, I think, province I'm reading on. It's on the far east side of that.

I probably didn't pronounce it right. But it's always when they come together united, united, united for the cause of Christ. United.

They have to tell people about Jesus. They're not going to, well, you know, are you a Calvinist? Do you believe in women should be pastors? You know, do you do the hymnals or do you do the, this, they don't even, the stuff we bicker about doesn't even, doesn't even hit them on the radar screen. I've never heard in these books, you know, well we chose these songs or the pastor wore a suit and tie.

Or, you know, what are the, the Holy, the fruit of the Holy Spirit. They don't, they don't talk about is the Holy Spirit still active today because they see the Holy Spirit moving. They don't divide over these non-essentials that we like to, right? Well, what do you believe? Well, what do you believe? And we get arguing over these things.

You don't see any of that in a united church on fire for God. Now, it doesn't mean those things aren't important but they don't take center stage. And churches should have some solid positions on these areas.

So then, they worked in one hand and a weapon in the next. In verse 19, then I said to the nobles, to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, the work is great and extensive and we are separated far from one another on the wall. Whenever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us for our God will fight for us.

So here's the image. Here's the enemy coming. Oh, that woke you up.

And they heard the trumpet and then the other families would come and they would unite. See, it goes back to unity. We need to tell each other, hey, I'm struggling tonight.

I'm depressed tonight. All hell is coming against me. I need help.

I'm blowing the trumpet. Could we get some prayer warriors around me and pray because I need to be strengthened. I need to be built up.

I need to be encouraged. So it's okay to sound the trumpet sometimes. That's why we open the prayer room.

Every Sunday it's basically saying, come sound the trumpet. Do you need help? Do you need to be rebuilt and reestablished and renewed? Does your spirituality need to be ignited again that passion? You've got to sound the trumpet sometimes. You know, it's healthy to say, I need help.

You know why? Because we often don't. Because it doesn't look very spiritual, does it? We said, hey guys, I'm struggling. I'm really depressed this week.

What's wrong with you? Don't you read your Bible? Yeah? Have you ever had a, Linda, we just talked about this. You know, there's a spirit of heaviness sometimes. Do you feel that? There's a spirit of heaviness.

I don't care how much I read the Bible, there's a spirit of heaviness. I'm just not doing good this week. With what's going on in the state, it can really, you know, seeing what our kids are going to go through.

And what about our kids' kids? Can you imagine one nation above God in 20 years? You know, so this heaviness, it weighs us. Sometimes you need to encourage yourself. And you need to tell people, hey, I'm weak in this area.

And one of the aspects, I don't know, I didn't choose it, but it shows me that God helps me with, and that's why people sometimes gravitate that are struggling with things. You know, I'll tell them, I'll say, hey, if you fall, let me know. I'll pray with you.

But we don't say, hey, people don't want to, right? They've been doing shame, so good for a year, I haven't had a drink, or I haven't had this, and they don't want to tell you. But it's healthy to say, hey, I'm struggling this week. I want to run to that liquor store.

Will you pray for me? Absolutely. I will not look down upon you at all, because I've been there. Who hasn't been, their addictions following them around in other areas, or depression, or anxiety, or what somebody else struggles with, maybe somebody else doesn't, but it's good to bring it to the light.

But we don't, because the enemy tells you, you'll be weak. We have this image of a Christian as strong, never struggles. I've never struggled.

My house looks like, leave it to Beaver. You see those kids? Mom, Dad, can I be excused from the table? You ate your broccoli. Can I be excused from the table, and I'll do my dishes right now? Go ahead, Beaver.

Go ahead, Beaver, do that. And we have this image of the Christian, if you haven't watched Leave it to Beaver, it's pretty cool. But you know that we never go through problems, we never struggle, we never

have challenges.

We never, you know, it's just perfect. But there are struggles, there are challenges that come in. And it's okay to admit those things.

Sound the trumpet. Call others to your rescue. You actually won't look weak.

You'll look weak when you fall, and you'll regret that you never cried out for help. That's when you look weak. That's when you look weak.

And then this is something, I'm just going to go quickly here. Principle eight, the love of money is the root of all evil. We know that, be careful, because spiritual warfare often uses monetary type of compensation.

Here's what happens. In the next chapter, I'm not going to read all the verse because it's a lot, but Nehemiah had to deal with dishonesty. These nobles were building the wall, but then they were charging people the usury.

What that is, is interest. Hey, we're losing our farms, we're losing our cattle because we're building these walls. And the nobles, the good guys, said, hey, I'll lend you money to keep your farm, but pay me 10% interest.

Ah, it's an opportunity. Christians should be very careful when they look for financial opportunities. I've learned that in ministry, watching people.

It's not about making a buck, it's about helping people. If God brings it, wonderful. Have you heard of those things? Send in your \$100 seed gift today on Resurrection Day and God will resurrect your financial health.

Send me \$100 and you'll receive \$1,000. These guys are charlatans. Or they're looking for anything.

How can I make some money here? How can I make some money in this situation? One thing, too, I've noticed a lot of churches, the bigger churches. You have to be careful because some people go there because there's connections. Real estate agents will find the biggest churches.

Stockbrokers, insurance representatives. Anybody in sales will go where, because they teach you in sales, if you listen to Zig Ziglar and all the sales guys, Tony Robbins and those guys. It's numbers, numbers, numbers.

Go to where the numbers are. You've got to have a database. You've got to have a database.

They'll go looking, marketing businesses. They'll go to where the people are. But it's a Christian thing.

So be careful because this is the downfall of many people. When they look at believers on how they can make money. The same thing happened here in Nehemiah.

Nehemiah said, after Siraeus thought I rebuked the nobles and the rulers and said to them, each of you, you're exacting usury from your brother. It means you're taking money from them in interest. It'd be like, you know, if we see a family in need and say, hey, I'll make your house payment.

Okay, \$1,500. Pay us back 20% interest. What would the, I mean, that's just, what would the family, okay, well, thank you.

Okay. Anybody else need help? 20% interest. And if you don't pay it by next month, your note will become due and we'll foreclose on you.

Boy, you're a real Christian, aren't you? I mean, but see, but the money gets in there. You have to be careful because the love of money, not money, the love of it is the root of all kinds of evil. That's one reason I'm making these books free because I don't want these strings attached where this and that.

And you never make a lot of money on books anyway, unless you're very well known in different things. But I want to try to detach these things. They'll say, oh, that's so wonderful.

No, I know myself. I know my heart, right? Because God, I told God many years ago, if you call me to do this, you open doors. I don't want to open doors.

I just got a, there's a speaking engagement I've got in July. It's at a big mega church out of the area. And they asked, how much do you charge? And I said, I don't charge anything.

I'll pay you to speak to your people. Right? I honestly, I would, I would send them that, but don't, don't clap because it's still in here. Right? The, the, the, the, the nature is so that's, you have to have precautions, but I actually would pay them to go give the message.

Wouldn't you? Well, I mean, I rent the college to go give the message. You know, you use, that's what money is. We should be stewards of that to give the message.

And then God pours out abundantly. I can't even tell you how much he's just poured out. When you, when you, when you remove this and I had to go through this because I came from a sales and marketing background and you come with that background, you take it into Christianity, it doesn't work.

And so same thing with all of us. If we, if there's numbers attached to you, how much can I make off the church? How can I make off Christians is not a good mindset. We need to repent of that.

That's happened right here. These people rebuilding the wall, they're good people, but they were starting to take advantage of the people. It happens with contractors.

They see, Oh, here's all these people I can get money from. And now sometimes it's not bad necessarily because we have to, if you're not paid, you don't pay your bills, but it's where's the heart at? Where's the heart at? Am I trusting in God or am I going to take this and, and, and allow the money to control me? If we are looking for ways to capitalize on others, it opens doors for the enemy. Let God bring the resources versus slick marketing campaigns and ulterior motives.

And then we learn the next principle, principle nine, generosity quenches the love of money. So if you have a problem in this area, generosity will cure that. Just give back, just give back.

It's amazing. God, what he does. I remember I spoke in Hume Lake.

I told him the same thing. I said, I'll just go up there and speak. And then after I was leaving this, you know, we want to bless you.

Here's, you know, it's just like, wow, it's amazing what God will do. And I, you don't be, then it removes all ulterior motives as well. You go with the right intent, the right heart, because I truly believe that.

I don't, I don't want to preach the gospel and then have a string attached to it. It doesn't, to me, it just doesn't feel right. I'm going to go and speak my heart's right.

And whatever God does, he does. There's places I'm going to speak and a pregnancy resource council in Washington, maybe a men's conference in Wisconsin. I told them that I'll make it if I can get there.

They just cover the plane ticket and the room. I'll go because I feel it's God's plan in my heart. I'll go there.

So there's no string attached to it because then you just go in freedom and you're not upset, right? Oh, this cost me or I didn't make it. It's going with the right heart, the right motives. And again, this has taken me 18 years to learn.

So I'm giving it to you in 20 minutes. Okay. Make sure you remove that little, that little love of money and doing things for that reason, because it will, it is an open door.

And that's why many people get upset sometimes. Because when you remove the money aspect of it, what are you going to get upset about? Because you usually get upset because I didn't make that much. I got taken for a ride.

This didn't happen correctly. If you go with the right motives, then you just give it to God. Now people will take advantage.

That has happened to me before too. But allow God to, to work in this area. So again, generosity quenches the love of money.

Give back like Nehemiah taught. And then principle 10, I love the final one. You must fear God.

Chapter 5, verse 15, even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so because of the fear of God. So Nehemiah could have been governor, but he said, no, I fear God. I'm not going to bore this, this, this rulership over the people.

I fear God. And I will continue to work on this wall. And I will not buy land.

And I did not demand the governor's provisions because the bondage was heavy on his people. It's interesting. You'll see some of the richest ministries, pastors in the world are in Africa, in some of the most impoverished areas.

They've got, there's a, there's a book just released, uh, playing with holy fire that talks, it gives illustrations of all these. They're taking advantage. That's, and that's where the, you, you, you can't take from the people to live this glamorous life.

There's no fear of God in that. That would, that would, that would, that would just drive me crazy because there's no fear of God in that place. So to fight the enemy on his terms with spiritual warfare, you must fear God.

You must fear God. You must get that fear back into your, that's what's happening in California. That's what hap, that's what's happening in the United States, is it not? We've lost the fear of God because when you have the fear of God, the Supreme court's going to make different decisions.

Can you imagine going in and making decisions on marriage, not fearing God? Well, what is, what's Europe doing? Let's see what they're doing. That's actually what we're doing now, right? It's cool, I guess, to grab what from other countries and, and make our laws. That's what they do.

What is France doing? What is Europe doing? What do we need to be doing? They don't fear God. The legislations, legislators in this country do not fear God because when it fears God, you, it changes the way you live when you fear God. So I didn't mean to go in almost an hour, but that's, that's Nehemiah, three chapters worth on spiritual warfare.

I would encourage you to come on Sunday because I'm going to talk a little bit deeper, more about demonology. It's a study of demons. Where did they come from? Have you ever heard of the Nephilim, the giants, the demons, right? All these things.

So I'm going to talk about that Sunday, God willing. But my encouragement tonight is this. I know many heads were shaking.

So whatever area God was speaking to you in, deal with that tonight. Do you need to be encouraged? Are you going through hell? Is life falling apart? Then trust again in Him. Put your trust completely in Him.

Has the love of money gripped your heart? Repent tonight. Repent tonight because that's not a good path to be going down. Are you divided? Is there disunity in you? Are you being critical and negative and gossiping and hurting others? Then repent of that tonight and restore things.

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