

## Ways to Pray in the Midst of War Engaging in Spiritual Warfare

**Thesis:** We are a people who get equipped to pray in the midst of war. So, we learn how to move in spiritual warfare in praying for the nations, including times of war or active military engagement.

**Text:** 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-18; Psalm 149.

Intro:

Once a month, I help facilitate a prayer meeting for the Ministers Prayer Network USA. On Thursday, March 4, 2026, my friend, Godfrey Gad, who is the Vice President of the MPN USA Board, gave us the context for why we pray in the midst of conflict between nations.

Godfrey wrote: **A Call to Prayer for the America and the Nations**

As you know, tensions between the United States and Iran have escalated into conflict. This moment comes during the season of **Purim**, when the Jewish people commemorate their deliverance from a planned annihilation plotted by Haman, a descendant of King Agag, whom King Saul spared contrary to God's instruction.

Just as Haman once sought to destroy the Jewish people, modern leaders have also threatened the destruction of Israel. Yet, as the story of Esther reminds us, God is able to overturn the plans of those who seek destruction. What was intended for evil can ultimately be turned for good. In this sense, this season of Purim carries deep spiritual significance.

As events continue to unfold, let us come together in prayer for **America and Israel [and other nations]**. Let us pray for the protection of our troops and for wisdom and restraint so that civilian casualties may be minimized. We should also remember in prayer the **innocent people of Iran [and other neighboring nations]**, including our brothers and sisters in Christ who live there.

Let us pray for **President Trump and the military leaders** who must make difficult strategic decisions during this time. **As armies on earth fight with physical weapons, we too must engage with spiritual weapons, which are not carnal, but which are mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds.**

## Remember the reality and context of spiritual warfare:

### 1. The reality of spiritual warfare:

- a. In teaching his disciples how to pray, the Lord Jesus acknowledged the reality of the enemy and warfare: *lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13)*.
- b. Spiritual warfare was a part of the world view of Jesus.

### 2. The context of spiritual warfare:

- a. Let's look at the Lord's Prayer as a model for the way we are to pray and show up in this world.

#### i. Worship:

1. *Matthew 6:9 (NIV84) "This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...."*
2. We worship the Lord and declare him holy.
3. May the Lord be recognized as holy in the earth.
4. **The principle of displacement.**

#### ii. Welcome:

1. *Matthew 6:10 (NIV84) "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*
2. "Your kingdom come" means that my kingdom and every other kingdom must go.

#### iii. Warfare:

1. *Matthew 6:13 (NIV84) "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."*
2. Deliver us from the evil one and from evil.
3. Help us listen to the right voice during the test (temptation).

- b. Note: **behind the Lord's Prayer, is the assumption of pursuing intimacy with God.**

### 3. Intercession is an invitation to partner with God.

#### a. Why intercede?

- i. Because God hears our prayers and answers us with awesome deeds (read Psalm 65).

#### b. God has chosen to work through the prayers of his people.

- i. Steve Meeks: "God has willed the working of his Spirit to follow the prayers of his people." Think about that!

#### c. Without intercession, judgment comes.

- i. *Ezekiel 22:30-31 (NIV84)30 "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found*

*none. 31 So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD."*

- ii. *Isaiah 64:4-7 Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.... 7 No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins.*
- d. **Prayer is not primarily about changing God's mind or getting him to do something for us.** Prayer is about connecting with God, cooperating with God, and giving God room to change us (2 Corinthians 3:18).
- e. In its simplest definition, **prayer is taking with and listening to God.**

### **Arenas or levels of spiritual warfare:**

1. **Strategic level** (heavenlies, territorial spirits, etc.).
  - a. The strategical arena has to do with our ultimate objective: to defeat the enemy and to destroy his works. This is God's overall plan to crush Satan's rebellion, redeem lost humanity, and to restore wholeness to that which was broken (Revelation 20:10, 21:3-4, 22:3; Romans 8:21). This portion of the battle is waged through intercession (Matthew 6:9-10) and worship (Revelation 5:8-14).
  - b. It involves worship, welcome, and warfare. This is often described as dealing with territorial spirits.
  - c. Caveat: It is not reasonable to assume that everyone is called, commissioned, anointed, or gifted to deal directly with territorial spirits. We have a pastoral concern. Some people do have unique calling and gifting to deal with territorial spirits. **All believers can deal with the enemy at any level, insofar as they are given that assignment by the Lord. But in general, we fight at the strategic level through worship and welcome.** Warfare is the by-product, what God does when he shows up.
2. **Ground Level** (tactical, hand-to-hand).
  - a. The tactical arena has to do with specific battles necessary to achieve victory. This portion of the war is fought in hand-to-hand combat with attack and counterattack. It is the battle for freedom from sin, deliverance from demons, healing the sick, renewing our minds, proclaiming the gospel, winning the lost, etc. (See Matthew 9:35 - 10:10; Luke 10:1-12, 17-24.)
  - b. This part of the conflict is waged through prayer, spiritual disciplines, exercising spiritual authority, cultivating the fruit of the Spirit, walking in

the Spirit, and obeying the Word of God (Galatians 5:16-25; Romans 12:1-2).

3. **Support level** (logistical issues, resources).
  - a. The logistical arena has to do with supplying the needs of the army which is fighting the battle. This part of the conflict is seen in the need for laborers in the harvest, financial resources, physical necessities, and organizational health.
  - b. This portion of the war is waged through prayer, sacrificial giving, faithful service, Spirit-directed planning and organizing, and godly leadership (Matthew 6:19-24, 9:37-38; Romans 12:6-8).

**Here is how I am praying in this season:**

1. **1 Timothy 2:1–4 (NIV84)** *1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone— 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*
  - a. **Pray for the leaders of nations** to exercise wisdom and restraint, and to engage in nation building.
    - i. Today, we lift up leaders nationally and internationally, that you, Lord, would give wisdom, grace, and mercy in this time of conflict and war.
    - ii. We especially lift up those suffering in Iran and other nations through despotic regimes that abuse people. Lord Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on those suffering injustice and life-threatening situations.
    - iii. We pray for grace and protection for people living throughout the Middle East and near the conflict zone.
  - b. **Pray for God to thwart the plans of the enemy to steal, kill, and destroy.**
    - i. The fastest way for Satan to take people to hell wholesale is by war or plague.
  - c. **Pray for the nation of Iran.**
    - i. We pray for a government to arise in Iran that will protect, serve, and bless people nationally and internationally.
    - ii. We pray for the Lord to protect the innocent people of Iran and other neighboring nations, including our brothers and sisters in Christ who live there.
  - d. **We appeal to you, O God, for mercy in this time of conflict.**
    - i. Lord Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us.

2. **2 Corinthians 4:3–6** (NIV84) *3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."
  - a. Pray that God would shatter the blinders off of people.
  - b. Pray that people would see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God.
  - c. Pray that there would be revelation preaching and testimonies of Jesus Christ as Lord.
  - d. Pray that God would make his light shine in our hearts so that people would have the revelation of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*
3. **Ephesians 6:10–18** (NIV84) *10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.
  - a. **We are commanded to be strong in the Lord and to operate in his power** (Ephesians 6:10).
  - b. **Four times in this passage, we are encouraged and commanded to stand:**
    - i. To take our stand against the devil's schemes (Ephesians 6:11).
    - ii. To stand our ground in the day of the work of evil (Ephesians 6:13).
    - iii. To stand and remain standing even after we have done everything (Ephesians 6:13).
    - iv. To stand firm in the character and nature of Jesus (the armor of God) (Ephesians 6:14-17).*

- c. **We pray in the spirit on sorts of occasions and in all kinds of ways** (Ephesians 6:18).
  - i. Such prayers require us to remain alert and diligent.
- 4. **2 Corinthians 10:3–6 (NIV84)** *3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 6 And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.*
  - a. We live in this world, but we do not wage war like the world does.
  - b. We use weapons that are not of this world.
  - c. We use weapons that are divinely powerful.
    - i. These weapons demolish strongholds.
    - ii. These weapons destroy arguments lifted up against the true experiential knowledge of God.
    - iii. These weapons demolish every pretention that sets itself up against knowing God.
  - d. We take captive every thought so that our thinking, believing, and actions align in obedience with Christ, our King.
  - e. We embrace a lifestyle of getting in action around what the Lord says and around his leadership in our lives. This obedience, alignment, and action empower the punishment and restriction of disobedience.

**Here are some other prayer points:**

1. Pray for the protection of the land of Israel, the salvation of the Jewish people, the peace of Jerusalem.
2. Pray for the protection of Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians, Iranians, and others impacted by fighting and government action in the Middle East.
3. Pray for the protection of our troops, President Trump, and other leaders.
  - a. May God give wisdom and restraint so that civilian casualties may be minimized.
4. Pray for the innocent people of Iran and other nations in the Middle East, including our brothers and sisters in Christ who live there.

## **Spiritual Warfare: It Includes Bold Declaration, Overcoming Power, and Authority to Bind and Loose**

**Bold declaration:** A part of warfare is fulfilled in worship and in speaking out the written judgments of God through bold declaration and command (Psalm 149). We have the privilege to declare the promises, purposes, plans, destiny, desires, and decrees of the Lord.

*Psalm 149:1 Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints. 2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. 3 Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp. 4 For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation. 5 Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.*

*6 May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, 7 to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, 8 to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, 9 to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the LORD.*

### **1. We start at the place of focusing on the Lord.**

- a. We praise the Lord, worship the Lord, sing to the Lord, and embody expressive worship to the Lord.
- b. We acknowledge and declare that God is our creator and king.
- c. We rejoice in the Lord.
- d. We declare that the Lord delights in his children. He is not angry or against us; rather, God is for us.
- e. We declare that the Lord rewards the humble with rescue, deliverance, redemption, and saving grace.
- f. We rejoice in the honor of knowing our God and making him know from the place of intimacy.

### **2. Warfare takes place in the context of and from the foundation of intimate worship and knowledge of the Lord our maker, king, and savior.**

- a. Worship both honors God and strikes a blow to the enemy; the enemy is displaced by our worship of the Living God. As we worship and make bold declarations, the Lord strikes many blows against the enemy.
- b. **It is our honor, joy, and glory to declare and carry out the written declarations and judgments of our God against the enemy.**

**Overcoming power: In Luke 9 - 10, we see that Jesus gives to his disciples authority and power over all the power of the enemy.**

*And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. 2 And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing (Luke 9:1-2).*

*Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. 2 And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go..." (Luke 10:1-3).*

*The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." 18 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. 20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

*21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. 22 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." 23 Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it" (Luke 10:17-24).*

1. **Jesus gives his followers power and authority to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel of the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:1-2).**
  - a. Power: dunamis; ability to act or produce an effect; ability
  - b. Authority: right; authorization; backed up by governmental structure
  - c. Proclaim what it is like when God rules and reigns. Jesus is king and there is a coming kingdom.
  - d. Demonstrate what it is like when God rules and reigns. Manifested in healing, deliverance, and other activities of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:18-19, et.al.).
2. **Jesus calls us and authorizes us to use his power and authority in his Father's harvest fields (Luke 10:1-3).**

- a. Our authority is delegated for the plans and purposes of God.
  - b. We are an answer to the prayers of Jesus and saints throughout history.
  - c. We are transformed so that we can join Jesus on his mission in this world.
3. **There will be impact** when we move in the power and authority of Jesus in our assignments and spheres of influence. "Even the demons submit to us in Jesus' name."
  4. **Jesus gives us overcoming authority and power over demonic realms.** Our obedient service for Jesus displaces the enemy from lives, areas, regions, and territories as the kingdom of God advances. "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample... and to overcome all the power of the enemy."
  5. **Jesus reminds us to recalibrate our focus upon intimacy with God,** rather than getting intoxicated by demonstrations of power and authority. Never lose focus on Jesus.

**Authority to bind and loose:** Believers have the right to loose on earth what God has loosed in heaven and to bind on earth what God has bound in heaven.

*Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" 14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"*

*16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys [representing authority] of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:13-19).*

1. Again, binding and loosing are accomplished through bold proclamation and declaration, especially through the spoken word and songs of intercession. We know what to bind and loose because of our intimacy with the Living God.
2. We carry out the written judgments (declarations) of the Lord (Psalm 149:9) in the context of worship, adoration, and recognizing that the Lord takes delight in us. It is an honor that the Lord delights in us and that we get to partner with him to carry out his declarations and judgments through our priestly ministry of worship and intercession.

3. Rebuking, breaking, or cutting off the supply line of oppression or demonic influence is also permitted. For example, Jesus did that with the woman who is afflicted for 18 years by a demon (Luke 13:10-13).
4. So, we must learn how to command and declare as a part of our ministry, which Jesus modeled for us in numerous places (Luke 4:41, 10:17; Matthew 4:1-11).

**Invitation:**

1. We are a people who get equipped to pray in the midst of war. So, we learn how to move in spiritual warfare in praying for the nations, including times of war or active military engagement.
2. You and I are invited to fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12).
3. Let's stand in the gap and build up the wall in this hour as priests of the Most High God (Ezekiel 22:30).

**Ministry Time:**

1. Release a fresh anointing to pray.
2. Release protection and the favor of the Lord like a shield around us.
3. Release faith in God and his leadership in this hour to do exceedingly and abundantly beyond all that we ask, think, or imagine.
  - a. *Ephesians 3:20–21 (NIV84) 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*