

Building Spiritual Warriors

Preparing children for victory in the “world.”
Steve Alley

The “world” has become an ever-present influence in the daily life of every child. The “world” invades the children’s homes, bedrooms, and minds more effectively than ever before. Children don’t have to “seek” the world’s negative influence it comes to them through their electronic connections and media. Parents work hard at “filtering” the influences, but it is almost impossible to shield the innocence from being “bruised” at an early age.

God has always “championed” children! Jesus elevated their innocence and purity as examples for the adults of His day. God’s Word clearly warns against “stumbling” them. The Church may be the last stronghold of moral strength in today’s decaying world. Parents need our help! We, in children’s ministry need to do all we can to train and “outfit” the children to become victorious “spiritual warriors” in this world, rather than “casualties” of life!

What Is A “Spiritual Warrior”?

A “spiritual warrior” is someone who engages in a battle to overcome, and to win. In the true, biblical sense, a “spiritual warrior” does not destroy, but rather builds and strengthens. A “spiritual warrior” engages in the battle between the “flesh” and the “spirit” in the following “arenas”:



- **Thoughts** – Takes thoughts "captive" to please the Lord. Doesn't dwell on evil, sensual, judgmental, or selfish thoughts.
- **Words** – Speaks kind words to support and encourage others. Is ready to tell others about God's love and Jesus' sacrifice.
- **Eyes** – Is ready to "look away" from evil with God's power. Chooses to leave a website if it is not pleasing to God.
- **Hands** – Ready to help others, and to demonstrate God's love by acts of kindness and sacrifice.
- **Feet** – Ready to go wherever needed to follow Jesus through sacrificial actions or obedience to parents.

Know The Enemy

Knowing his tactics, preparing defenses

In any war, it is critical to understand the enemy. With this knowledge, it is easier to create defenses and to avoid ambushes. With God’s Holy Spirit empowering the children, they are more “protected” from the injuries of spiritual warfare; but even Christians fail due to poor choices or poor perspectives!

“Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.” (2 Corinthians 2: 10, 11)

Here is an overview of the enemy’s “tactics” and known strategies.

Who Is The Enemy?

1. A “murderer” from the beginning (John 8:44)
2. The “father of lies” (John 8:44)
3. The “accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10)

The Enemy’s Battle Against God

1. Remove any mention of God from school.
2. Remove any use of, or reference to, the Bible in school.
3. Establish the lie that quoting the Bible is offensive.
4. Make the mentioning of Jesus offensive, and the focus of a potential lawsuit.
5. Establish that biblical standards for living are intolerant, judgmental and offensive.
6. Transform the foundation for morality ethical choices from God to the majority.
7. “Personal freedoms” and “personal rights” are the new “gods.”

The Enemy’s Tactics

1. He convinces us through lies, false hopes, and empty promises **(Mental)**
2. He suggests untrue “complexities,” to confuse or deceive us and avoid the truth (Gen. 3:1-5) (What about...?) **(Mental)**
3. He changes the terminology to deceive us (abortion = “reproductive freedom”) **(Mental)**
4. He reassembles the data/truth to confuse us (the “shell game”) **(Mental)**
5. To cause division among believers (disagreements over theology, doubts about God’s power, presence, or inspiration of the Bible) (Romans 7) **(Mental)**
6. Diversion through distraction toward something that interests or bothers us instead of being focused on fulfilling the “Great Commission,” or strengthening our own relationship with God. **(Mental)**
7. Discouragement due to disappointments, life troubles, or the “apparent” absence of God. He will convince us that God has left us, and life is terrible now! **(Mental)**
8. Discouragement regarding our ability to live well enough to “please God” (which is a lie!). **(Mental)**
9. He “accuses” us with guilt and shame. He wants us to believe that we have “gone too far,” and God’s love can’t reach or forgive us. (Rev. 12:10; Rom. 8:1-4) **(Mental)**



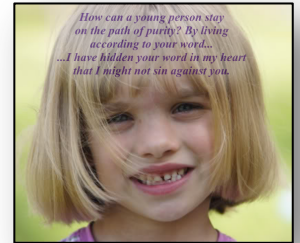
The Enemy’s Plan To Destroy Children

1. The corrosion of the family unit (the primary “training grounds” for children’s spiritual development).
2. Remove biblical spiritual influence from all public schools.
3. Discourage parents from going to church.
4. Increase ungodly content in the media.
5. Get electronic media into the hands of children at an early age.
6. Redefine “normal” to be what most people are.
7. Question and criticize biblical lifestyle standards.
8. Make amorality something that is popular.

Make It Personal

Connecting the children to Jesus, who is alive TODAY! (Not just an historical figure.)

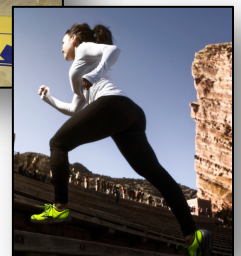
1. Bringing the scriptures “alive” to today’s challenges, needs, and situations.
 - a. Memorize scriptures yourself!
 - b. Share scriptures in regular conversations.
 - c. Ask the children to share a scripture that applies to a situation.
2. Using personal testimonies to present a personal, living Jesus.
3. Challenging, inviting, and inspiring the children to develop a personal relationship w/God.
4. Teach the children how to recognize the personal presence of Jesus today.
5. Developing relationships between the CM team and the children.
 - a. Go beyond “Hi,” or “How are you?”
 - b. Ask specific questions about home, school, pets, siblings, feelings, likes/dislikes, successes/failures, fears, toys/games, etc.
 - c. Listen to understand them
 - d. Pray with them, then remember previous prayer subjects at next encounter
 - e. Get on their “level” (physically and mentally)
 - f. Pay attention to them with your eyes
 - g. Touch (appropriately and often)
 - h. Ask for their opinions, and listen!
 - i. Compliment publicly and privately
 - j. Use “guided conversation” at all times
 - k. Be aware, and use, “teachable moments”



Training "Spiritual Warriors"

Preparing the children for spiritual battle

1. **Conditioning**
 - a. Memorizing strategic scriptures
 - b. Challenging questions
 - c. Role plays
 - d. Responding to / discussing news articles
 - e. “What if” scenarios
 - f. “What to do if” procedures
2. **Practicing**
 - a. Witnessing
 - b. Answering hard questions
 - c. Challenging role plays
3. Don’t rely on the “white rice” curriculum. Add some personal “sauce.”
4. Inspire the children to conduct on-going prayer with God throughout the day.



5. Challenge the children to memorize scripture – especially specific ones for personal strength.
6. Challenge the children to be bold, brave, and nice (“Gentle as doves, wise as serpents”)
7. Use personal testimonies to encourage and “stir up” one another.
8. Use role-plays to stir up emotions and passions about spiritual strength.
9. Create a “teach/serve/debrief” training cycle.
10. Prepare the children for specific challenges, then debrief and support afterward.

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Therefore, I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

1 Corinthians 9: 24-27