

*Called
to Conquer*

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Preparing for Spiritual Victory

DOROTHY DAVIS

REGULAR BAPTIST PRESS
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Dedication

To my sister-soldier Doris.

CALLED TO CONQUER: PREPARING FOR SPIRITUAL VICTORY

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Preface

WAR! THE word went buzzing around the city of Washington, DC on a lovely summer day in the year 1861. The citizens of the capital were filled with curiosity. What would a war be like?

Dressed in their fashionable clothes and toting their picnic hampers, they excitedly climbed into their fancy carriages and ventured forth to a place called Bull Run. But before long, two fierce armies clashed with a vengeance, and soon the ground was covered with the wounded and dying. The genteel folk fled back to Washington with a new understanding: there was a real war going on and it was no picnic!

Perhaps you have never realized that every day when your feet hit the floor, you are entering a battle zone. Not only are there enemies *around* you, but there is also a conflict *within* you! The Christian life is a holy war, a *real* war, and it's no picnic! The fight is spiritual; the weapons are supernatural. As women of God, we have been called to conquer. It's time to face the battle!

How to Use This Study

Each lesson in this study is divided into five sections. Follow these suggestions as you prepare each lesson.

I. Recruit Evaluation

This section will prepare your heart to study God's Word. The answers are personal; they will not be discussed in class.

II. Basic Training

The questions in this section concentrate on the text of God's Word and will help you understand what God's Word says.

III. Deployment

As you answer the questions in this section, you will see how the truths of God's Word apply to your life.

IV. Debriefing

This section is for personal use—not group discussion. It is designed to help you put God's truth into practice in your own life.

V. Battlefield Report

These final words will help seal firmly in your mind what you have learned from the Scriptures.

Objective: Holiness

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15, 16).

IN ANY battle of armies, there is always an objective—some goal to be achieved or territory to be attained. The spiritual conflict we face is no different. Our enemy, Satan, has an objective, and so do we. We must understand the causes of the war we’re in and why we are expected to fight it. As always, God makes all these things clear to us in His Word, the Bible.

I. Recruit Evaluation

1. In what ways are you a “holy” woman? Explain.

2. In what ways are you not holy?

II. Basic Training

In order to comprehend our enemy's aim, we must go back to the site of mankind's first spiritual conflict. After God created the heavens, the earth, and its creatures, He created a man and a woman, who were totally good and living in a perfect world (Genesis 1:31). But Satan, already at war with God, was out to change that!

1. Read Genesis 3:1–6 and answer the following questions.

(a) Who was the serpent? (See Revelation 12:9.)

(b) What instructions had God given Adam about eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16, 17)?

(c) What statements did Satan make to cause Eve to eat the fruit (Genesis 3:4, 5)?

2. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by doing what God had told them not to do. As soon as they disobeyed, drastic changes occurred in their relationship to God, in their perfect environment, and in themselves.

(a) How does God describe the change in Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:22?

(b) How is this different from 1:31?

3. According to Romans 5:12, what happened when Adam disobeyed God?

4. Read Genesis 3:7–19. List five ways in which the good and peaceful world of Adam and Eve became a place of sorrow and conflict for them.

5. What predictions and promise did God make for His enemy Satan in Genesis 3:15?

In a single moment, peace and Paradise were lost! War had begun! Disharmony would now be the norm: separation between God and mankind, personal and interpersonal stress and conflict, struggle with a sin-cursed earth. Satan had plotted a sneak attack on our first parents, and his objective had been achieved.

But had God been taken by surprise? No, consider the promise of Genesis 3:15. The Almighty One had already known that there would be sin and stress and struggle, and He already had a battle plan in place for this spiritual war.

6. When Adam and Eve disobeyed the Lord, sin entered the human race and has affected every human being born since. Look up these verses and indicate the consequences sin has had on us.

Psalm 14:2, 3

Isaiah 59:2 (see also Ezra 9:15)

James 1:15 (see also Romans 6:23)

Romans 1:18 (see also Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:6)

7. What is required by God in order for us to fellowship with Him?
Romans 5:17–19 (see also Matthew 5:20)

1 Thessalonians 4:7 (see also Hebrews 12:14)

If righteousness and holiness are required to be accepted by God, and if sin prevents our ability to fellowship with Him, how then can we ever hope to have the kind of relationship that Adam and Eve had with Him before sin entered into their lives? Did Satan ruin that opportunity forever? No, God had a plan. Recall that God had said sin would require death. During Old Testament times, God mercifully allowed a person to offer the life of an animal in place of his or her own. The animal sacrificed its “life

blood” and died the death the person should have died for sin. The animal became the person’s substitute, and God then accepted the sinner as forgiven and “holy.” Of course, animals had to be sacrificed continually to keep “covering over” the sins of the people. It wasn’t a perfect solution to the sin problem.

At just the right time in human history, God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, down to the world to live. Although He was God, Jesus Christ took on a human body and lived a sinless life. But God allowed mortal men to put His Son to death on a cross so that He could die for our sins. He became our substitute and shed His life blood to take God’s judgment of our sin (Hebrews 9:11–14; 10:1–14).

8. What was God’s intended purpose for His Son’s death according to these verses?

Romans 5:6–10

Galatians 1:3, 4

1 Peter 2:24; 3:18

9. In Hebrews 2:10 Christ is called the Captain of our salvation (deliverance). He is the promised “seed” of the woman in Genesis 3:15! By His perfect life, atoning death, and victorious resurrection, He guaranteed Satan’s ultimate defeat. How has our Captain crippled the enemy?

Hebrews 2:14, 15

1 John 3:8

Satan's objective in the Garden of Eden had been to introduce evil and sin to humankind and rob them of an eternal relationship with God, their Creator. In fact, Satan knew that the result of man's sin would be eternal separation from God in Hell, a literal place of eternal punishment prepared for Satan and his rebel army (Matthew 25:41, 46).

10. Christ's sacrificial death enables us to spend eternity with God.
How can we avail ourselves of God's offer of eternal life in Heaven?

John 3:16–18

John 11:25–27

Romans 10:9–13

11. When we receive Jesus Christ as Savior, when we put our faith and trust in His death for our sins, how does God then see us?

Romans 4:5

1 Corinthians 6:9–11

2 Corinthians 5:21

At the moment a woman receives Jesus Christ into her life, some remarkable things occur in God's sight. She is no longer His enemy but His child (John 1:12). She is no more under judgment but declared "not

guilty.” She is reconciled to a holy God and fully acceptable to Him. In fact, God now sees her “in Christ,” and as He looks upon her, He sees all the righteousness and holiness of His perfect Son (Romans 3:21–25; Ephesians 1:4–7).

“But wait,” you may say. “If God sees me as being holy, then why don’t I live that way? Why do I still do things that are wrong?” God has graciously granted us a “position” of holiness before Him, but in “practice” we are still very much unholy. We still have a struggle with sin in our human bodies. (We’ll discuss this in lesson 5.)

So what are the causes of the war? Although he is a doomed enemy, Satan’s main objective (until he’s cast into Hell) is to keep people from being saved from their sin. However, if by God’s grace and power a woman receives Christ, the enemy’s objective then becomes to thwart her progress as a believer, to keep her unholy in practice by being disobedient to God and His Word.

12. But what is *God’s* objective? He wants us to become more and more like His Son (2 Corinthians 3:18). According to 1 Peter 1:14–16, what quality does God want us to develop in our everyday living? Why does He want this?

III. Deployment

1. The presence of sin can be detected in very real ways. Explain how you see the effects of sin in each of the following areas.

Your relationship to God

Your own heart

Your relationships with others

The world

When Adam and Eve chose to sin, God could have discarded His plan for the whole human race, but He didn't. Instead, He sent His own beloved Son to live among us and suffer an agonizing death on a cross for our sins.

2. When you ponder this, what does it convey to you about God's love for you? His hatred of sin?

3. Many today deny the reality of Hell and refuse to believe that a loving God would send people to such a place. How does a proper understanding of God's holiness and justice point to the reality of Hell?

4. Having studied this lesson, what answers would you now give to the questions posed in section I?

(a) In what ways are you a "holy" woman? Explain.

(b) In what ways are you not holy?

IV. Debriefing

Consider the following questions, based on your study of this lesson.

- Have you been forgiven by God for your sins and reconciled to Him? If so, on what basis has this occurred?
- If you answered no, how will you take care of the sin problem that separates you and God?
- Do you understand the enemy's objective in your life? Can you state it?
- What is God's objective for you now that you belong to Him?

V. Battlefield Report

The war is on! Satan's objective is our disobedience to God. The Father's objective is the holiness of His children, their likeness to His righteous Son. The problem is sin, and the conflict is continual. Are *you* ready to do battle?