In Victory in Spiritual Warfare, Dr. Tony Evans unveils a simple yet radical truth: Every struggle we face in the physical realm has its root in the spiritual realm.

Helping Christians understand the reality of spiritual warfare is a strong commitment for Dr. Evans, a Dallas Theological Seminary graduate and pastor of the Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas. His message to you is that you can tackle and overcome challenges and obstacles in your daily life with the spiritual power of God’s authority.

The key to victory in this battle is knowing how to use the armor of God. Finding strength in prayer and sufficiency in Christ, we can emerge victorious over addictions, emotional problems, marriage difficulties, and other strongholds.

Dr. Evans wants to help you experience victory in Christ and embrace the life, hope, and purpose God has for you. Victory in Spiritual Warfare is compelling, down-to-earth, and biblically anchored—just like his message in this issue of Veritas. Request your copy today!

TO RECEIVE THIS RESOURCE AS OUR THANK-YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, USE THE ENCLOSED REPLY CARD (FOR SUBSCRIBERS) OR CALL 800.DTS.WORD x3724. THANK YOU!
Dr. Tony Evans is founder and senior pastor of the Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas. He is also founder and president of The Urban Alternative, a national organization that seeks to bring about spiritual renewal in urban America through the church.

The Urban Alternative’s radio broadcast, “The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans,” can be heard over 500 stations daily throughout the United States and in more than 40 countries worldwide. Dr. Evans has also served as an associate professor in the Pastoral Ministries Department of Dallas Theological Seminary and as chaplain for the Dallas Cowboys. He is currently the chaplain for the Dallas Mavericks.

Dr. Evans received his B.A. degree from Carver Bible College and holds the Th.M. and Th.D. degrees from Dallas Theological Seminary. He is the author of more than 50 books. He and his wife, Lois, have four children and ten grandchildren.

Dr. Tony Evans says too many Christians have been duped into thinking that Satan is winning the spiritual war he wages against every believer. Part of the devil’s deception is to make us think that he gets to make the final move in this battle, that he, not the believer, is the decision-maker when it comes to a Christian’s joy, well-being, spiritual health, and all of the other factors that make life work. But as Dr. Evans says, “I come to you with good news. You, not the devil, have the last move in this war. In the power of the Holy Spirit, you can stand firm and experience the victory Jesus Christ won for you on the cross.” Here is this inspiring message, first delivered to Dr. Evans’s congregation at the Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas.
Before we can talk about achieving victory in spiritual warfare, we have to understand the nature and history of the conflict between God and Satan. The basic principle is that everything we see in the visible, natural realm is controlled by events in the supernatural, invisible realm.

**Moves and Countermoves**

We can see this throughout the Old Testament as God made the first move and Satan countered with his move. God made the first move when He created the angels. Lucifer countered that move when he rebelled against God (Isa. 14:12–15) and took one-third of the angels with him (Rev. 12:4).

God countered that move by creating man in His own image, “a little lower than the [angels]” (Ps. 8:5). Satan rebelled against that move by tempting Adam and Eve to sin and turn the earth over to his control. But God countered by providing a redemptive covering for Adam and Eve so they could return to fellowship with Him. Of course, Satan tried to counter that move by getting Cain to kill Abel in order to cut off the godly line.

That’s when God countered through the birth of Seth, so that “men began to call on the name of the LORD” again (Gen. 4:26). Satan tried to counter that move through the birth of Nimrod, who built the civilizations of Babylon and Syria and gathered the people at the Tower of Babel to build a civilization and a religion in defiance of God (Gen. 11:1–9). But God countered with a move to Ur of the Chaldeans, finding a man named Abram through whom He would establish a nation, Israel, that would obey Him.

However, Satan countered that move by getting the people trapped in slavery in Egypt so that Pharaoh would not let them go. God countered again by calling Moses to go to Pharaoh with the message, “Let my people go” (Exod. 5:1).

We could go on, but you get the idea. The entire Old Testament is move, countermove, move, countermove as Satan battled the work of God. Now don’t get the wrong idea. Spiritual warfare is not a battle between two equal forces. Satan is the creature; God is the Creator. The devil is a defeated foe; his defeat was first announced in Genesis 3:15 when God Himself said that One would come who would crush Satan.

**God’s Final Move**

That One is Jesus Christ. So God made the big move when He became man in the person of Jesus Christ. Satan tried to counter that move by tempting Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1–11). Jesus overcame that through the use of God’s Word. Then Satan made his final move at the cross, thinking he had gotten rid of Jesus. But God made the final move by raising Jesus from the dead.

And that move is now your move! No matter what’s going on in your world, Jesus’ resurrection move was God’s move, and now it’s your move for victory in spiritual warfare. What you need to do to make that victory real in your life is to take up the armor God has provided. Paul describes the armor for spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 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” (vv. 10–12).

**The Real Enemy**

There’s a key principle of spiritual warfare in verse 12 that a lot of believers don’t understand. Notice our enemies are “the spiritual forces of evil.” In other words, people are not your problem. You may think people are your problem because they’re what you see, feel, touch, and hear. But according to God’s Word, people are just the conduit for the battle going
on in the spiritual realm. The battles we have in life are not fundamentally physical in nature, but spiritual—not primarily on earth, but in the “heavenly realms.”

This means if you don’t know how to navigate the spiritual realm, you can’t fix what’s wrong in this physical realm. Spiritual warfare is the battle in the invisible, spiritual world that is responsible for the battles in the visible, physical world.

Paul uses the term “heavenly realms” uniquely in the Book of Ephesians to describe the Christian’s activities. For example, your blessings are located in the heavenly realms (1:3). Everything God is going to do for you is located in the unseen realm. Then in 1:20, Paul says that God raised Christ and seated Him in the heavenly realms. Not only are your blessings located there; Jesus, the One who is in charge, is there also. So if you want to get to Jesus, you have to go to where He is in the spiritual realm.

But that’s not all. We also as believers have been raised with Christ, and we also are seated “in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 2:6). So the solutions you need to your problems emanate from the spiritual realm where your blessings are, where Jesus is, and where you are located.

In Ephesians 3:10 we read that the wisdom of God has been made known through the church “to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.” The angels are also in this realm. That’s important because you need your angel. Every believer in Jesus Christ has at least one angel that has been assigned to him or her.

The Bible says in Hebrews 1:14 that the angels are “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.”

If you want to fix a problem that started in the spiritual realm . . . you have to fix it in the spiritual realm where it began.

So if you’re a believer, you have at least one angel who’s assigned to you, to operate on your behalf in the spiritual realm.

So let’s review. Your blessings are in the spiritual realm; Jesus is seated there; you are seated with Him; and your angelic assistance is located in the heavenly realms. But as we read in Ephesians 6:12, the forces of darkness are also located in the spiritual realm—and their job is to make hell break loose in your life.

Combating Spiritual Evil
I believe every Christian also has a demon assigned to try and make sure Satan has his way in that person’s life. The demonic realm knows our weak spots. The devil knows what has messed up our thinking and the sinful patterns we have developed. Satan’s job is to exploit those sins and weaknesses to bring us down and cause us to live in spiritual doom and gloom and defeat instead of victory.

If you are unaware of the battle being waged in the spiritual world, all you are left with is to try and deal with life in the physical world. But a physical solution can’t fix the problem if the problem originated in the spiritual realm. People spend all of their time and money and effort trying to do better in the physical when that’s not where the problem emanates from. It emanates from a location called “the heavenly realms.”

So if you want to fix a problem that started in the spiritual world that is messing you up in the physical realm, you have to fix it in the spiritual realm where it began. But the devil doesn’t want you to know that. He wants to limit you to the world of your five senses because he knows that if you function only on the basis of what you can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, you won’t make any real spiritual progress in spiritual warfare.
That’s why the Bible says we have to take our stand against the devil’s schemes. He’s a thief and a murderer who wants to rob you of the spiritual blessings God has stored up for you and to kill your joy, your witness, and your impact for Christ. That’s quite a different picture from the caricature the world has of the devil: a funny-looking little guy running around in a red jumpsuit with a pitchfork. That’s the way the devil wants people to think of him, because then they don’t take him seriously as a deceiver with schemes—strategies, tricks, and clever devices.

The essence of Satan’s scheme is to trick you into relocating the focus of your spiritual warfare. By that I mean the devil wants to get you focusing exclusively on the visible, physical realm so you don’t use the armor of God to defeat him and his forces in the realm that matters, the spiritual realm.

What happens when we do this? For one, we start seeing other people, or even ourselves, as the problem, and we start fighting them or ourselves. Or we come to believe that the answer to our need is found in some self-help program or in finding a new job or even a new spouse. But these things don’t work, so we start believing that we are helpless against the devil and his schemes.

A Secret to Victory
But here’s a secret to victory in spiritual warfare that the devil doesn’t want you to know. The only power that Satan and his demons have over you and me is the power we give them. That’s because Satan is already a defeated enemy; he was crushed at the cross and the empty tomb of Christ! The only reason Satan could take over planet Earth is because Adam and Eve gave him permission to do it. The devil and his demons need your permission to unleash the forces of hell in your life.

And once they’re given permission, demons are like roaches. They are scurrying around in our lives because we have given them permission to be there. But let me say it again: The devil operates by consent and by cooperation. Some people say, “You Christians are just too demon conscious.” No, the problem is, most of us are too demon unconscious.

I say that because our battle is against these spiritual forces. Now let me ask you a question. If the devil has already been defeated by Christ in the heavenly realm, and if we are seated with Christ in the heavenly realm, and if our real battle is in the heavenly realm, where should we look for the weapons and the power to be victorious? In the heavenly realm!

That’s exactly what Paul is saying in Ephesians 6. The armor of God is spiritual. That means we can’t fight Satan in our own strength, using our puny human ideas. We fight in His power. Therefore, your assignment is to put it on and then, please notice this, “stand your ground.” Paul calls us to stand, twice in verse 13 and again in verse 14.

Stay Where You Are!
“Stand your ground” means stay where you are. Hold your ground. It means you don’t have to run and hide from the devil or throw down your weapons and surrender to him. Standing your ground doesn’t change the fact that evil is all around you or that the battle is raging all around you. But standing your ground, clothed in the armor of God, keeps the battle from overtaking you because you are under the protective covering of God.

It’s like standing in the pouring rain with a big umbrella over you. The rain is hitting all around you and even trying to get you wet. But you’re okay as long as you stay under the protection of your umbrella. But step out from under that protection, and you’re going to get pelted.

We can’t fight Satan in our own strength. We fight in God’s power.
Let me close with an illustration. Back in the pioneer days, a father and his son were trying to outrun a fast-moving prairie fire in their wagon. But the fire caught up with them, and they were about to be consumed. The father, to the confusion of his son, turned the horse around and went to a spot that had already been burned.

He then told his son, “Jump out quickly.” They jumped out and the father said, “Now stay here and don’t move.” His son said, “But, Dad, the fire is coming at us from all directions.” The father said, “Stay here and don’t you budge!” The son said, “But, Dad, I don’t understand; there’s fire all around us.” The father just said again, “Son, I said stay here.”

Then he explained, “The spot we’re standing on has already been burned. There’s nothing left to burn, so if we stand here the fire won’t get us because it has nothing to grab hold of.”

That father and son standing safely in the middle of a raging fire is a picture of you and me in spiritual warfare. You see, Jesus has already been “burned” for us at the cross. Jesus has already been crucified, and the resurrection has already occurred. So the devil’s fire can’t harm us as long as we are standing firm in Jesus.

Stand your ground, my brothers and sisters. Stand your ground!

A Battle We Can Win
by Dr. Mark L. Bailey

I believe the message by Dr. Tony Evans in this issue of Veritas brings us a needed reminder as we seek to live for Christ day by day.

Tony, who is a pastor, author, and graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, put the challenge to us in clear terms as to the importance of wearing and using the armor of God to engage the enemy in spiritual warfare.

As Tony demonstrated, the Bible is extremely clear that our real struggle as believers is with the spiritual forces of evil that hold sway in this world and seek to derail our witness and usefulness for Christ. Every piece of armor God provides is crucial, including “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17).

At DTS, we are committed to equipping our students with the Word of God, the source of truth and the source of power for spiritual warfare. Jesus used the Scriptures to defeat Satan in the wilderness, leaving us the perfect example of how to gain victory over Satan’s lies.

Satan is the father of lies; the answer is the truth of God’s Word. We may not understand every aspect of spiritual warfare, but God has revealed Himself sufficiently that we can live in victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

So I encourage you as I challenge myself, let’s keep our vision focused on God and on carrying out His global mission. This is Dallas Theological Seminary’s deepest commitment, and your prayers and financial support make it possible to do the work of the gospel. Thank you for partnering with us to prepare leaders who know, love, and can teach the Word of God.

Mark L. Bailey, President
Dallas Theological Seminary