

Flourishing in Seasons of Battle.

God is on the Throne and He Wins!

For more than a year I have been camped in the book of Revelation, as I have the privilege (or challenge) to try to teach this often challenging and confusing book of the Bible at Adult Bible study at my corps (church). I know, most of us hear the name "Revelation" and we might panic. There are a lot of things in the book that aren't quite clear and we aren't quite sure what they mean. We know the book of Revelation is about how God's redemptive story ends, but we often get focused on the details of what all the symbols mean, who is the Antichrist, when will this happen, is it literal or figurative just to name a few questions that arise.

The purpose of the book is in the title. To reveal is to make known or show something usually secret or hidden. Revelation 1:1a says ***The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place...***In this book, God reveals Himself and how His story of redemption finally ends.

Revelation talks about the spiritual battle that has been waging since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, and we do get to see how the story will end. The devil, the deceptive serpent, the dragon (as he is described in chapter 12) will one day be destroyed forever. Although there are some confusing and sometimes scary images (and there are things with several interpretations and lots of debate) and there are some things that are very clear.

In Revelation 4, the apostle John who was writing the revelation the Lord gave to him, sees an open door and a voice speaks to him to come up. John says, ***"At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was at throne in heaven with someone sitting on it"*** (Revelation 4:2). He goes on to describe the brilliance of what He sees—sparkling jewels. Although John never says who is on the throne, it is very clear that the One on the throne is God the Father, Creator of the Universe. He is sovereign and in complete control.

None of the commentaries I read had any other suggestion to who was on the throne, except for God! That's all that matters! All the other questions I have about the book of Revelation, don't matter. Why? Because God is on the throne! Do I know what all the symbols represent? Nope! But I know God is on the throne! Do I know when things will take place? No! But I know God is on the throne! I don't need to know the how, the why or the when, all I need to know is the WHO—the One who is sits on the throne. Corrie ten Boom wrote, ***"There is no panic in Heaven! God has no problems, only plans!"***

As the spiritual battle continues to rage from now until God's story ends, I can be confident that God is, and has been, and will always be on the throne. He is working, and things are following His timetable, His plans, and even the devil must submit to His authority.



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Flourishing in Relationships: Conversation Starters

Spend some time with friends, using these questions to guide your conversations.

- ◆ September is back to school month. What was your favorite memory about going back to school?
- ◆ Who was your favorite teacher? What made that teacher so special?
- ◆ The season is changing. Fall is in the air. What is your favorite thing about autumn?
- ◆ When have you been in a season of spiritual battle? What did it feel like?
- ◆ What helped you get through the season of spiritual battle?
- ◆ What advice would you give for someone who is currently in a spiritual battle?
- ◆ Do you have a favorite song to listen to during season of battle, songs that inspire and encourage you?
- ◆ What's your favorite "power" verse from the Bible that helps you feel strong or victorious during times of battle?

"You have to expect spiritual warfare whenever you stand up for righteousness or call attention to basic values. It's just a matter of light battling the darkness. But the light wins every time. You can't throw enough darkness on light to put it out."

Thomas Kinkade

Additional Resources

Check out our website for more resources to help you flourish in the seasons of spiritual battle: <https://usw-womensministries.org/>

Bible Study: *The Battlefield of our Mind*, a study on the Helmet of Salvation.

Devotional: *Putting on the Belt of Truth*

Craft Idea: *Lamp Shade* by Major Gaylene Yardley (Video).

Flourishing Story: Lisa Garcia, employee of the Territorial Risk Management Department, shares how she flourished over the battle of addiction.

Praying On the Armor of God

Every moment we face a spiritual war with an enemy who's real and he wants nothing more than to defeat us and discourage us. His main aim is to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10a). In Ephesians 6:10-18, Paul writes about a spiritual armor. Here is a prayer to help you to put on the armor of God. Perhaps pray this each morning as you dress.

Dear God, today we put on the full armor to guard our lives against attack. We put on the belt of truth to protect against lies and deception. We put on the breastplate of righteousness to protect our hearts from the temptations we battle. We put the gospel of peace on our feet, so we're ready to take your light wherever you send us this day. We choose to walk in the peace and freedom of your Spirit and not be overcome with fear and anxious thoughts. We take up your shield of faith that will extinguish all the darts and threats hurled our way by the enemy. We believe in your power to protect us and choose to trust in you. We put on the helmet of salvation, which covers our minds and thoughts, reminding us we are children of the day, forgiven, set free, saved by the grace of Christ Jesus. We take up the sword of the Spirit, your very Word, the one offensive weapon given us for battle, which has the power to demolish strongholds, alive, active, and sharper than any double-edged sword.

We ask for your help in remembering to put on your full armor every day, for you give us all that we need to stand firm in this world. Forgive us God for the times we've been unprepared, too busy to care, or trying to fight and wrestle in our own strength. Thank you that we never fight alone. Amen

Prayer by Debbie McDaniel (crosswalk.com)



There's a spiritual war going on. Revelation tells us about how God wins!

Flourishing in the Word

Spiritual warfare is real. We are in a battle. We have an enemy of our souls that wants to discourage and defeat us. But we have victory through Jesus Christ, and He is the ultimate victor. This month we are going to read the book of Revelation, and get a glimpse of how God's story is going to end.

September 1	Revelation 1:1-20	September 16	Rev 13:1-18
September 2	Rev 2:1-11	September 17	Rev 14:1-13
September 3	Rev 2:12-29	September 18	Rev 14:14-20
September 4	Rev 3:1-22	September 19	Rev 15:1-8
September 5	Rev 4:1-11	September 20	Rev 16:1-9
September 6	Rev 5:1-14	September 21	Rev 16:10-21
September 7	Rev 6:1-17	September 22	Rev 17:1-18
September 8	Rev 7:1-17	September 23	Rev 18:1-8
September 9	Rev 8:1-13	September 24	Rev 18:9-24
September 10	Rev 9:1-12	September 25	Rev 19:1-10
September 11	Rev 9:13-21	September 26	Rev 19:11-21
September 12	Rev 10:1-11	September 27	Rev 20:1-15
September 13	Rev 11:1-10	September 28	Rev 21:1-8
September 14	Rev 11:11-19	September 29	Rev 21:9-27
September 15	Rev 12:1-18	September 30	Rev 22:1-21

Flourishing Ideas from the Territory

Anchorage Korean, AK helped one of their members who was hospitalized for a month, by cleaning her house and removing snow to make it safer for her to return home.

Fairbanks, AK started a once a month Bible study on the women in the Bible.

Pueblo, CO are studying the book of John. They are going through the book verse by verse and read it as though they were present hearing and seeing what unfolds. This interactive approach helps them consider how they may have responded had they actually witnessed these events and heard Jesus' words for the first time.

Salt Lake City, UT had a program called "Palms, Psalms and Balms" and the women learned how to make their own lip balm.

Seattle Temple, WA hosted a spiritual day retreat and invited other nearby corps to attend. They used *RightNow Media*. They began with a time of praise and worship and then watched *Find Your People* by Jennie Allen, and then had a time of discussion around the tables. There were 6 sessions total.

Suisun Kroc Center, CA holds a Christian Cardio class that meet 3x a week. The group focuses on both physical and spiritual health as they exercise, have devotions, and pray with one another.

Wrangell, AK watched season 3 of *"The Chosen"*

Combating the Enemy

John 10:10 tells us the battle plan of the enemy of our souls: ***“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy...”*** We are also told that the devil is an accuser (Revelation 12:10), masquerader (2 Corinthians 11:14) a deceiver (Revelation 12:9), and a big, fat liar (John 8:44). We are not defenseless, but can combat his lies with the truth. If we know the enemy’s battle plan, we can combat it.



1. **Recognize the Lie.** All the devil can do is lie to you. Often his lies begin as thoughts in our head that begin with “if only I were _____,” or “I am not _____ enough.” Don’t believe anything the devil tries to whisper in your ear. In the garden he slithered into the garden and slipped doubts into Eve’s head by saying, ***“Did God really say...”*** (Genesis 3:1). Just remember that anything the enemy says is a lie!
2. **Reject the Lie.** If the devil says it, it doesn’t mean we have to believe it. Don’t entertain those thoughts in your head. Immediately tell yourself (do it out loud if you need to) that this is a lie. I do not accept it. I do not believe it. I reject it!
3. **Replace the Lie.** As soon as you recognize the lie from the enemy, reject his lie, and then replace it with the Truth of God’s Word! The Truth is because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, the enemy has been defeated, and we can triumph over him by Christ’s blood and by testifying about what Christ has done (Revelation 12:11).

“They triumphed over him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...”

Revelation 12:11a



Flourishing Fun in September

1. Celebrate Labor Day. Throw one last BBQ as a last hurrah to summer.
2. Decorate your home for fall.
3. Enjoy a fall flavored treat (for those of you who like it, it is Pumpkin Spice Season)!
4. Go on a nature walk and look for evidences of the Autumn season.
5. Honor grandparents you know on September 10 for National Grandparent’s Day.
6. It’s apple season. Bake an apple pie!
7. Make jam or preserves, or apple butter.
8. Pull out your clothes for cooler weather; put away your summer clothes. While you are at it, do some fall cleaning and donate any items you no longer need.
9. Read a book by a new author in honor of Read a Book Day on September 6.
10. Throw a football.