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The Three Battlegrounds by Francis Frangipane

Chapter 6 - The Stronghold of Christ's Likeness

Victory begins with the name of Jesus on our lips. It is consummated by the nature of Jesus in our hearts.

God's Highest Purpose

Most Christians only engage in spiritual warfare with a hope of either relieving present distresses or attaining a “normal” existence. However, the purpose of all aspects of spirituality, warfare included, is to bring us into the image of Christ. Nothing, not worship nor warfare, neither love nor deliverance, is truly attainable if we miss the singular objective of our faith: Christlikeness.

While we may not want to hear this, many of our spiritual conflicts simply are not going to cease until the character of the Lord Jesus is formed in our hearts. The Father's goal in deliverance is much more than simply seeing our burdens or the devil taken off our backs. Indeed, the specific purpose toward which God steers the working of all things in our lives is our conformity “to the image of His Son.” The Father's purpose in our salvation was that Jesus would become “the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). In other words, the way to realize God's ultimate victory is to reach toward His ultimate goal, which is complete transformation into the likeness of Christ.

We must realize that it is not Satan who defeats us; it is our openness to him. To perfectly subdue the devil we must walk in the “shelter of the Most High” (Psalm 91:1). Satan is tolerated for one purpose: the warfare between the devil and God's saints thrusts us into Christlikeness, where the nature of Christ becomes our only place of rest and security. God allows warfare to facilitate His eternal plan, which is to make man in His image (see Genesis 1:26).

Once we realize that the Father's goal is to transform our lives, we will continually find that God has one answer to spiritual warfare: *appropriate the nature of His Son!* Are you troubled by demons of fear or doubt? Submit those areas to God, repenting of your unbelief, and then yield yourself to Christ's faith within you. Are you troubled with spirits of lust and shame? Present those very areas of sin to God, repenting of your old nature, drawing upon the forgiveness of Christ and His purity of heart.

The Goal is Christlikeness, Not Warfare

There are occasions when your battle against the devil is actually a digression from the higher purpose God has for you. Intercessors and warfare leaders take note: there is a demon whose purpose is to lure one's mind into hell. If we were to name this spirit, we would call it "Wrong Focus." You may be fighting this very spirit if you are continually seeing evil spirits in people or in the material world around you. The ultimate goal of this demon is to produce mental illness in saints who move in deliverance. Listen very carefully: we are not called to focus on the battle or the devil, except when that battle hinders our immediate transformation into Christ's likeness. *Our calling is to focus on Jesus.* The work of the devil, however, is to draw our eyes from Jesus. Satan's first weapon always involved luring our eyes from Christ. Turn toward Jesus and almost immediately the battle vanishes.

We must learn that, on a personal level, it is better to develop godly virtues than to spend our day praying against the devil. Indeed, it is the joy of the Lord that casts out spirits of depression. It is our living faith which destroys spirits of unbelief; it is aggressive love which casts out fear.

As we continually yield ourselves to Christ, surrendering ourselves by faith to His nature and His words, we literally build the impenetrable stronghold of His presence around us. The way into the fortress of the Almighty is simple. Victory begins with the name of Jesus on our lips. It is consummated by the nature of Jesus in our hearts.