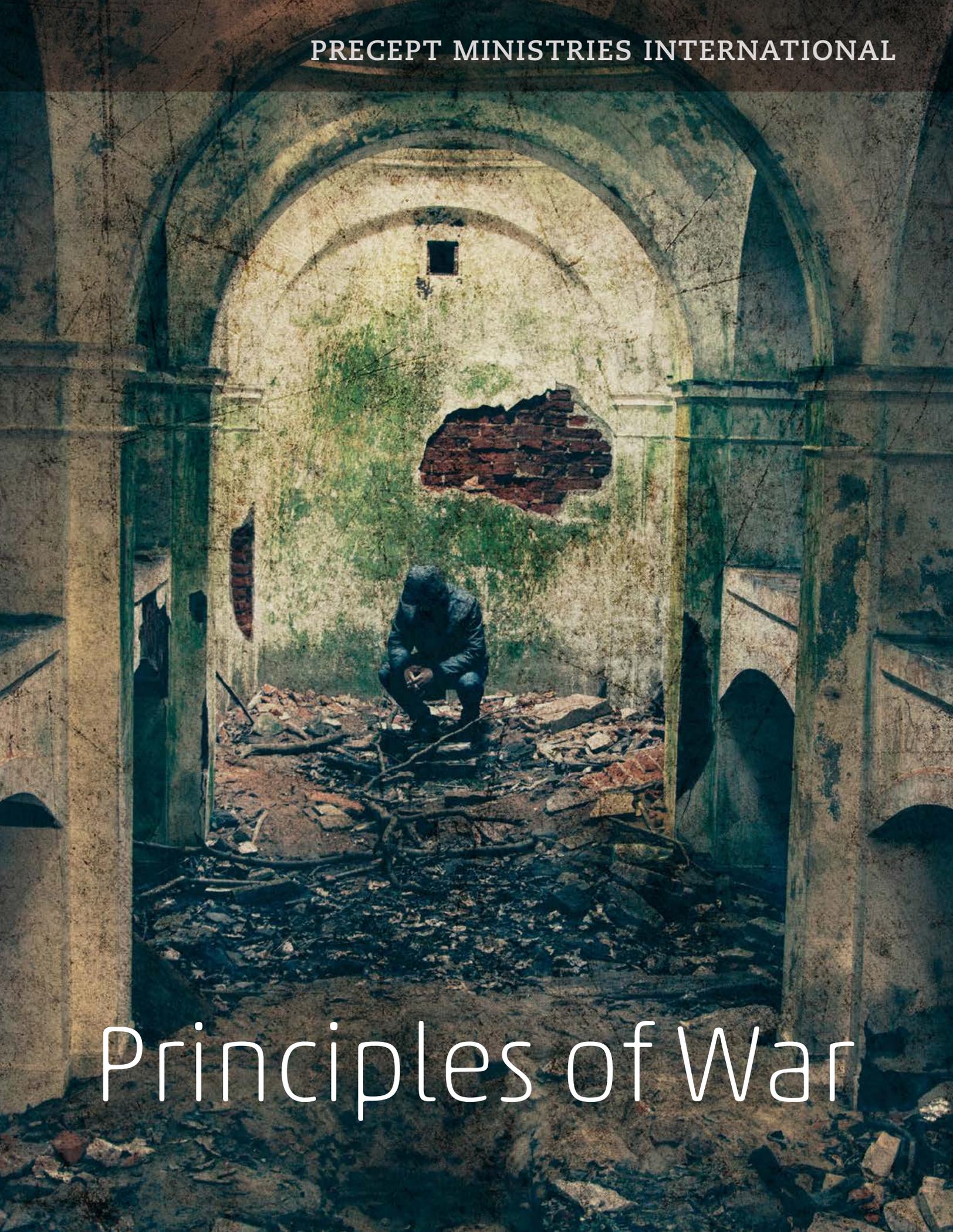


PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

A photograph of a person crouching in the center of a severely damaged, arched structure. The walls are crumbling, with a large hole in the brickwork. The floor is covered in rubble and debris. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights, creating a somber and desolate atmosphere.

Principles of War

Principles of War

You know that as a believer you are in a war.

There is no getting around it; you are a soldier of the cross, a dangerous light in a dark world. You are a warrior of truth on a battle ground of lies.

Some of you are well aware of the conflict and you know what to do, and what not to do. But many of us could use some help understanding some basic principles of war.

From the beginning of history, tribes, cities, and countries have strategized how to protect themselves from enemies. The practice of war has changed over the centuries but many principles have not.

Perhaps the most famous treatise on the subject is *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, written around 500 BC. His theories have been influential for over three thousand years. In his work, Sun Tzu places a lot of emphasis on the use of deception to achieve victory. It is interesting that we as Christians would shy away from being deceptive because it is contrary to who we are, whereas the devil is deceptive by his very nature (John 8:44).

For a more modern approach, the US Army Field Manual (FM-3) lists nine principles of war. Most governments have adopted their own set of principles to govern how they respond to a war or conflict. There is no one set agreed on by everyone.

We wanted to look at some principles of war, many taken from the US Army, and talk about how those principles might apply our struggle against our enemy, Satan, and also how he might use those same principles in his war against us.

Is there anything for us believers to gain in a discussion on principles of war? Yes, we believe there is. First, we are in a war! We are in war for truth in a world of lies, a war for light in a world of darkness. We are in a war for the souls, hearts, and minds of men and women.

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With that said, we have two disclaimers. First, just as no one set of principles is agreed on by everyone in the secular world, so there is no one agreed upon set in the spiritual realm. Use what helps you, ignore what you think does not apply.

Second, in the spiritual world the war has already been won. At the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the fate of the enemy was sealed. The victory has been decreed, the enemy is defeated, although the struggle continues.

Objective of War

The ultimate military purpose of war is the destruction of the enemy's ability and will to fight. In spiritual warfare this is also the objective of Satan. If given the opportunity he would overwhelm you to the point of exhaustion so that you would have neither the ability nor the will to stand firm, to resist him.

However, the Lord protects us and keeps us. Satan must have permission to hassle or attack the child of God and with permission comes strict limits on what he is allowed to do (Job 1:12, Job 2:6).

Principles

Know Your Enemy

Know your enemy. We say this with caution because some people have focused so much time and energy on the study of Satan that they missed knowing the sovereignty of God. In other words if we spend much time studying Satan we risk making him our obsession and in the end giving him too much credit. We think Satan would love nothing more than to have us study him and neglect our pursuit of the knowledge of God.

When we say "know your enemy", we mean that we do not war against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12). All of these terms describe the dark demonic world.

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This means that a person you are in a conflict with is NOT the enemy. We are to love our human “enemies”, we pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44).

When conflict or problems arise, be sure you know who your real enemy is. For example:

in the political world, the government, the president, the politicians are not your enemy!

in marriage, your spouse is not your enemy.

at work, your boss or your co-worker is not your enemy.

Your enemy is Satan himself and his deceptive ways. Once you know your enemy, his weapons, his tactics, you need to apply principles of war against him, to your advantage. For example, if the enemy’s weapons are lies and deception, what will counter these? How do you apply sound principles of war to your advantage?

Satan may:

Concentrate combat power

In military terms this means to concentrate overwhelming combat power at a decisive place and time to achieve the goal. Determine the weakest point in the enemy’s defense and overwhelm him with massive combat power at that point.

In the spiritual realm Satan operates in the same manner. He knows your weakness and would love to overwhelm you at your point of vulnerability. He will attack when you are weak, he will “kick a man when he is down.”

How do we respond? One counter is to concentrate superior power.

Pray. Lord, “do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matt. 6:13).

Watch for others who are in trouble and come alongside them.

Principles of War

Know yourself. Know your weaknesses and protect yourself by strengthening your mind through the study of the Word of God.

In the culture wars of society this concept tells us to “pick your fight carefully” and then concentrate all of your energy and abilities toward that one objective. Not every opportunity to make a change in the world yields the same results, so pick the battle that matters. Think for example of the civil rights movement of the 1960’s. Battles were chosen, the troops were massed, the enemy was overwhelmed, and one evil was ultimately defeated.

Define your Objective

Keep your objective clearly defined, and always in sight. What do you need or want to accomplish? For example, in marriage your goal would be to glorify God in your relationship. Then in every conflict ask yourself “How can we resolve this so that God is glorified?”

Is making disciples your objective? Then you have to ask yourself. “How is that best accomplished?” The answer to that question becomes your objective.

Keep your eyes on your objective; focus on that goal.

Take the Offensive

Seize, retain, and exploit the initiative. In other words, take the offensive. In the Christian community we talk a lot about defense. We are always defending ourselves against some evil which is coming against us, our family, or the church. We are known more for what we are against (our defensive position), than what we are for. Defense is important, but defense alone will never win the war. You must take the offensive.

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said “...I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it”. Too often the church acts like the gates of Hades are offensive weapons. We tend to hunker down inside our Christian world and hope that the Lord is going to protect us against the gates of Hades when they attack.

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But gates are defensive, not offensive. The gates don't attack, they keep the attackers out. Jesus' statement implies that we, the church, will take the offensive and attack! The gates of Hades are no match for the army of God.

Instead of hiding in your Christian community, hit the streets and take the offensive against the darkness. Confront hate with love, attack the darkness with the light, and challenge the lie by speaking the truth.

Instead of simply condemning the currently popular societal sin, pointing out how evil it is, take the offensive. Share the gospel. Love the unlovely. Tell the truth, that Jesus came to save sinners.

Security

Be aware that the enemy will attempt to attack you when you are not ready, when and where you least expect him, in your most vulnerable moment. The principle of Security is to deny your enemy the element of surprise. Stand firm, be on the alert, the enemy is watching for an opening (1 Peter 5:8). . .

Surprise

Attack the enemy when he least expects or is least prepared. How do we use surprise to our advantage? The world is always surprised when we share the truth in love. They are caught off guard when we love our enemies and pray for (not against) those who persecute us. The world is caught by complete surprise when we, as Christians, forgive instead of retaliate.

Unity of command

For the Christian this may be the single most important thing to consider in war.

In military terms this means for every objective, there should be unity of effort under one responsible commander. For believers this is a reminder that we have a commander, the Lord of Hosts is His name. He has all authority, and therefore He is the one who makes the decisions. Our responsibility is to follow His orders. He is the commander.

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It's easy to see that if you have more than one commander making decisions, confusion and contradiction can ensue. Unity of Command assures all work toward the same objective with the same plan.

Now the enemy would love to convince us that we don't need to hear from God on an issue, we can handle the situation, we can make this work. You know what I am saying because you have heard the same thing.

Satan would love to disrupt the command structure. Be careful. Only the Lord of Hosts understands the war, the strategy, the battle, and the battle plans. Stay under authority. Read the Word, hear from God, and follow orders.

In Closing

The way principles are described may change, strategies may change, and tactics may change. But there is only one enemy to focus on, one commander to be united under, and one objective. There is a lot more we could say about war, our enemy, and the fact that God has allowed us in this conflict perhaps so we could learn the art of war.

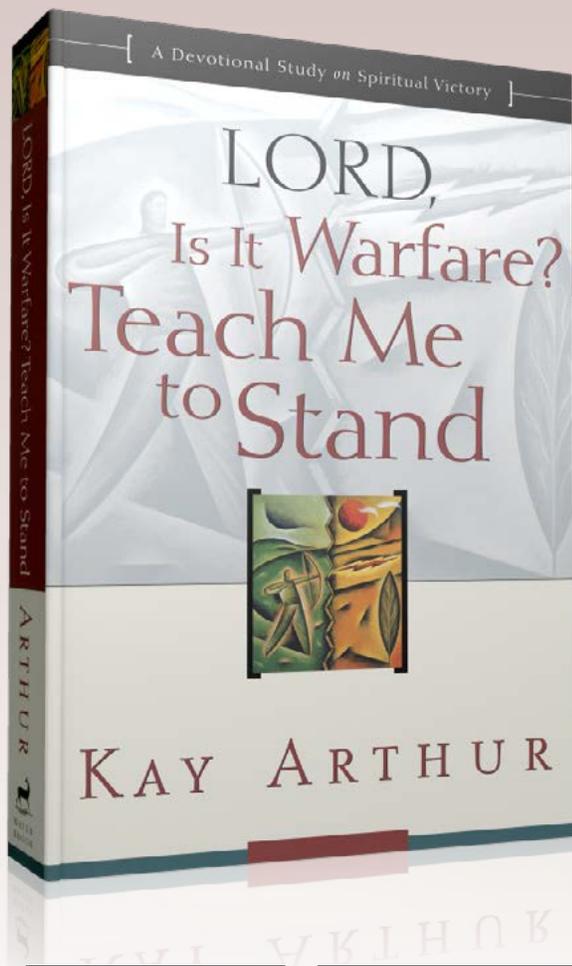
What could possibly be the reason for leaving us in a war zone? Why would God leave us in a fight? Simply to show Himself mighty. Instead of worrying and fretting over the battle you face, stand firm and watch for the hand of God to move in the situation.

Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today... —Exodus 14:13

We have the Lord of Hosts as our commander. The war has been won. We are only in the conflict so we can learn the art of war and see the hand of God at work. Take courage, beloved.

Lord, Is It Warfare? Teach Me to Stand

by Kay Arthur



The “LORD” Series by Kay Arthur is an insightful, warm-hearted Bible study series designed to meet you where you are—and to help you discover God’s answers to your deepest needs.

Once you become a Christian, you enter a war zone. The problem is, you may not even realize it. But that’s about to change. **Lord, Is It Warfare?** will equip you to recognize and understand the spiritual warfare that is inevitable for those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ. You’ll learn all the battle tactics and devices of your adversary, Satan. And you’ll discover Scriptural ways to overcome the enemy by turning to Christ, who loves you and offers you all the strength, wisdom, and power you need for victory.

Let Kay Arthur guide you through the Scriptures every day in this comprehensive inductive study. Your time with God in His Word will minister to you and help you stand strong in the face of spiritual conflict. And these are truths you can share easily with others, individually or in small groups.

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