

Asymmetrical Warfare

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Asymmetrical Warfare is a term used to describe war between forces of disparate capabilities, tactics, and strategy. There are inherent problems with this type of warfare. Somalia was a case of asymmetric warfare, as is Afghanistan. The war in Vietnam involved both symmetric and asymmetric war depending upon the location. In North Vietnam, the war was symmetric. In South Vietnam the war was asymmetric.

Even though philosophies (world-views) drive war, the resolution of some wars are more dependent upon the ideas that drive them than other wars. Speaking from the world's point of view, this is how it appears. In reality we know that God determines the outcome of war. However, it is profitable to look at the "whys" of the failures and successes in the wars of this world as it assists in understanding the spiritual war in which we are engaged.

The war we fight is an asymmetrical war. Even from a spiritual point of view the war is asymmetrical as God is infinitely more powerful and capable than Satan. However, the most significant difference is in the tactics and strategies of the two sides. In both the physical and spiritual realms this difference is very apparent — if one cares to look.

- God's strategy is to recover that which was lost and restore a righteous (and thus perfect) creation.
- Satan's strategy is to prove God unrighteous and thus gain victory over God.

- God's tactics are always righteous and God remains holy throughout.
- Satan's tactics always utilize deception.

On the earth the battle is primarily about two things:

- The truth of God's kingdom, especially salvation by grace through faith.
- The souls of men that are to be won by that truth.

When it is stated in the scripture "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) (2 Corinthians 10:3-4) this does not mean that the aspect of the way we live our lives is not important. Rather, it is to state that the means of defeating the influence of demonic forces in our lives, is spiritual rather than physical. But, the means of testifying to men is still physical and is just as important an aspect of this war. It is stated in James 2:17-18:

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. (James 2:17-18)

A prime example of this is a statement I could make concerning worldly warfare: "There has never been a logistics (supply) facility that has won a battle." Now on its face, this is a true statement. However, the reality is far different. By examining the role in logistics in the world's wars, one will come to an entirely different conclusion. Upon examination, one would say: "There has never been a battle won without logistics — and good logistics at that."

In other words, it is all well and fine that you pray, and that you pray a lot. However, the verse states "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

There are several things to examine in this verse. First, the prayer must be "effectual" which means that it has effects, and the desired ones at that. To be effective with God there are prerequisites. One of those is

John 14:15 where the Lord Jesus Christ stated "If ye love me, keep my commandments." If one does this, the Lord promises the following:

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

And:

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. (*John 14:21, 23-24*)

How can one be effective with God, if one does not keep God's commandments? One cannot keep the commandments of the Lord the way they want (nor the ones they want). Rather, one must keep the commandments the way the Lord specifies.

Secondly, the prayer must be "fervent." That is, having great intensity. To do that, one must be burdened, and greatly so. Else, the question could be asked "Is it really that important?"

Lastly, one must be "righteous." Now we like to fall back on pet verses that state that our flesh is not righteous. Therefore, one cannot expect to do righteous things like one should. However, the soul has been made righteous: Thus God will hear.

Is it really right to have that point of view? Not according to scripture. Yes, it is true that the flesh is not righteous, and neither can it be on this earth. Yes, the soul of the believer has been made righteous as well. It is the automatic conclusion that is drawn that is not accurate. Just as there are times that a parent will not hear an unruly child, the Lord will not hear the prayer of his child because the child refuses to do as the Lord commands.

What was it Paul stated concerning the flesh?

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (*1 Corinthians 9:27*)

This clearly indicates that the Lord's use for Paul was dependent upon his spirit ruling over his flesh. Is it any different with us? Incidentally, when the word "use" is involved, it does include God's hearing of our prayers as well. In Romans 8:11-13, Paul clarifies the subjection of the flesh.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (*Romans 8:11-13*)

And again in Romans 6:19-22:

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (*Romans 6:19-22*)

Thus, one is to conquer the flesh. Not that one would not sin, but that one rules over their flesh with all diligence.

If one has not done the above listed things; what good is prayer? Not much, as God will not hear the disobedient. What was it that is written in the book of James?

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. (*James 4:3*)

Assuredly, if one asks in the flesh, one will ask amiss. Moreover, if one has not subdued their flesh, the flesh will stifle the spirit.

Thus the element of outward appearance and righteous living does not “win” spiritual battles in the way one thinks of. Rather, like logistics is to the world’s warfare, holy living is to the spiritual war we fight. Subduing the flesh and living a separated life are just as important as prayer, though they are not “offensive” weapons. In the asymmetrical war we are engaged in, there are many things that do not appear to have a use, or may even appear as impediments when not properly examined and considered. However, without those things being properly regarded, and attended to, we lose battle after battle in this war, and will not understand why.