For the Christian business owner, spiritual warfare is one of the six core topics that needs to be baked into his/her persona. In the Christian Business Reference Architecture, learning to engage in spiritual warfare is in the top (or first layer). If you need to understand why this is so important, please read the introduction to the CBRA.

MBA programs—even those offered by evangelical institutions—do not talk about spiritual warfare because most don’t see a connection between running a business and engaging in spiritual warfare. This absence of discussion shows how strong the gap is between our Christian beliefs and our principles of running a profitable business. This chapter will discuss how to deal with the spiritual realities that exist in a practical and effective way. And how will you know if you’re effective? You’ll know when you engage in battle and the outcomes are ones that only God could have orchestrated.

The scriptural basis for
spiritual warfare

There are a number of passages in the Bible that talk about spiritual warfare both directly and indirectly. Three of the most well-known and extensive are Ephesians 6.10-13, Acts 16.16-18 and 1 Peter 5.8-9.

Ephesians 6.10-13:

“10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 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. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Acts 16. 16-18:

“16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.’ 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!’ At that moment the spirit left her.”

1 Peter 5.8-9:

“8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
“Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”

Clearly, these various writers of the New Testament had no doubts about the reality of spiritual warfare. It is clear that spiritual warfare was a reality for Christ’s disciples, and this reality is ever-present with us today. It is worth noting in the Acts passage that Paul was not hasty to enter into spiritual warfare. Rather, when the opposition was interfering with the effective working of his ministry, Paul dealt with it directly and effectively.

If you are trying to run your business God’s way, you will encounter opposition from the enemy. The enemy does not want you to be successful because he does not want to see the kingdom of God flourish. Everything the enemy does is an attempt to destroy God and His kingdom and make himself the lord of this universe. On this earth, we are caught in the middle of a great war between Satan and God. If you have given your heart and life to Jesus Christ, then you have chosen to be on the side of God. This means Satan hates you because he hates God. Because you are working against him, Satan will lie and deceive and do whatever it takes to destroy you. Do not underestimate what I’m saying here.

When you start to use your business to further the kingdom of God, Satan and his demonic forces will be there to oppose you. Like the unjust flogging Paul and Silas experienced in Acts 16 after Paul exorcised the spirit from the girl, Satan will bring against you all kinds of attacks. These attacks may look like any of the following:

- Reputation deterioration
- Cash flow problems
- Competitors spreading lies and rumors about you to your customer base
- Compliance and regulatory authorities coming after you
for no particular reason
- Tax problems that are blatantly false
- Relationship disruptions between you and your employees
- Lawsuits by employees
- Partner problems
- Marital problems
- Problems with your children
- Problems within your church relationships.

Satan engages in battle so that he can decrease your effectiveness in furthering the kingdom of God through your business. I will argue in the next section of this Christian Business Reference Architecture that these attacks are one of the reasons you need to have the call of God on your life in order to run a business His way. The opposition you will face, at times, will be significant. You will need the bedrock belief that you are called by God to run your business at this time in your life in order to persevere through the trials. Without a visceral call of God on your life, more than likely, you will bail on your business and Satan will have achieved his purposes in removing another Christian from the greatest mission field this world has ever seen: the business marketplace.

How do we engage in spiritual warfare?

In this section I will outline the four core principles upon which I depend.

Principle #1: God is absolutely sovereign

God is absolutely, 100%, completely sovereign over the affairs of this world in the past, in the present and in the future.
There is nothing that happens without his approval.

Now, this brings up some thorny theological issues, not all of which I can address here. The most difficult is God’s sovereignty over evil and why He allows evil and suffering to continue. The short answer is that for this dispensation, God is allowing evil to continue so that He can gather more into His Kingdom. Moreover, while He remains sovereign, He also allows us to have real choices that really do change the course of history. To learn more about this tension between God’s sovereignty and (what many call) our free will, I commend to you the section in Wayne Grudem’s Systematic Theology on the Doctrine of Concurrence.

The Scriptures often show God using evil as well as good for his own purposes. While this is a troubling theology for many in the evangelical community, it is also undeniable that a clear exegesis of the Scriptures will conclude that God can and does use evil for his purposes.

How this relates to spiritual warfare is good for us to learn: because God is sovereign over both good and evil and because he can use good or evil for his purposes, then an attack by the enemy can easily be turned into something good for you and I by God. There are literally dozens of passages that show God using evil for his purposes. Probably the clearest example is the entire book of Job, where God kept putting limits on Satan and yet gave Satan approval to commit terrible acts of murder and mayhem against Job and his family. But because God is absolutely sovereign, Satan had to stay within the boundaries that were set by God. In the end, God used the evil that was committed against Job for Job’s good and for His own glory. Evil is still evil, and the evil that was perpetrated against Joe and his family was not minimized in the story. His children really did die and that really was evil. But God brought out of that evil a greater good for Job while maintaining his sovereignty over Satan. One wonders if Satan is still mulling over that entire episode in trying to figure
out why Job didn’t curse God and die.

When we ask God to engage in battle for us, we can be confident that his sovereignty and power will enable Him overcome any evil that is coming against us. While there might be natural explanations for the evil that is coming against us in business, there is usually an aspect of the enemy working within that circumstance to destroy us. Satan would like nothing more than to see your marriage and your family completely destroyed by the bankruptcy of your business. He would love to see you have an affair with an employee in your company so that he could turn that employee against you in a legal matter to destroy you and your company. He would love to have an employee in your business embezzle. In all of these situations—and others—God can protect you. But you will need to do your part, too.

**Principle #2: Your righteousness matters**

Time and again in the Scriptures, we see that God is a shield to those who trust in Him and live righteous lives. The Proverbs and Psalms are replete with the notion that as we persevere with God, He will persevere with us. It is no small matter to live righteously before God. If we choose to live in sin, then I believe God is released from his obligation to protect us from the evil that the enemy wants to use to destroy our lives. But if we live in righteousness before God, trusting him and learning to love him more each day, God has promised to be our shield and our protector.

There is no substitute for the daily confession of sin, letting God examine our lives, and allowing the Lord to do a transformative work within us that we could never do within ourselves. No amount of education or achievement can substitute for the simple but hard work of repenting from sin and asking God to transform us. If you choose to live in sin, then you are giving the enemy a foothold into your life from which he can work to destroy you. You will bring on yourself
curses, confusion and rebuke (Deuteronomy 28) through your sinful actions (see chapter 2). If you want to be under God’s blessings, have clarity of thought and be free of his rebukes, then you need to live in righteousness before him.

Again, there is no substitute for living a righteous life. This is why, in our model, in order to run your business God’s way, you’ll need to be free from the bondage of sin.

**Principle #3: No drama**

I’ve known people who have described their engagement in spiritual warfare as physically exhausting and emotionally draining. They describe experiences in which they spent hours praying loudly over a person, naming the demons, finding out the demons’ ranks and going through other various spiritual gymnastics in order to cast out demons. Hollywood movies perpetuate the belief that dealing with forces of evil requires incredible effort. Personally, I’ve never engaged in anything like that. Instead, I have found that a quiet persistence before the Lord is very effective in spiritual warfare. Your efforts need not be loud or boisterous. While it might at times be spiritually or physically draining, engaging in spiritual warfare does not require dramatic effort.

**Principle #4: Recognize the limits of your authority**

It’s important that you understand that our spiritual authority in the heavenly realms mirrors our earthly authority. For example, I have authority over my business that God has entrusted to me, but I don’t have authority over your business because God has not entrusted that business to me. So, I can directly command demonic forces away from my business but I cannot do that for your business.

When I am praying for my business, I regularly ask God for two
things: protection and victory. When I pray for protection, I ask God to protect myself, my family and my business. So I’ll pray something like this, “Lord, I ask that you would protect us from <insert danger here> and that you would defeat Satan and any demonic forces who are working to destroy us in any way.” And then I’ll usually use the privilege of my position in Jesus Christ to directly command the demonic forces away from that which God has entrusted to me. When I pray for victory, I’ll ask God to bring about an outcome that can only be brought about by Him. If I succeed, I want it to be a success that brings Him glory.

In [insert date here] I was facing a particularly difficult legal battle that could have destroyed me and my family. I recognized the battle for what it was: a spiritual attack on my person and my family intended to destroy my potential in the kingdom of God. Night after night, before I would go to sleep, I prayed, “In the name of Jesus I command every demonic force to stop your activities in the legal effort against me and to cease every activity to destroy me. Father, I ask that you would do battle on my behalf and defeat the enemy in the lives of those he is using to destroy me.” Through this prayer, I took authority over the demonic forces who were working against me personally because I have authority over my own person and work.

Recognizing the limits of our authority also involves taking responsibility of those elements that we do have authority over. Shrinking from our responsibility will mean that Satan and his demonic forces will have victory, and we will be much less effective in furthering the kingdom of God as we run our businesses.

Summary

The enemy does not want you or me to fulfill the four core purposes that God has given to us for business. He wants to
see us fail. He wants to destroy us. He wants to render us impotent in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. He does not care one whit whether our business efforts to further God’s kingdom are happening within a church, a para-church, a nonprofit or a for-profit enterprise. All he cares about is tempting us to sin, entrapping us in that sin and rendering us ineffective and unproductive in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Once you understand that spiritual warfare is one of the six core topics to understand to run your business God’s way, implement the four principles for engaging in spiritual warfare into your daily life: acknowledge God’s sovereignty, live a righteous life, avoid dramatics, and recognize the limits of your authority.