

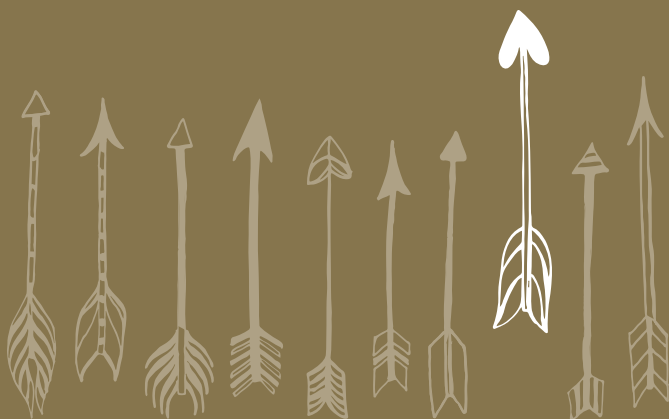


PRAYERS *for the* BATTLEFIELD

STAYING MOMSTRONG IN THE FIGHT FOR YOUR FAMILY AND FAITH

Heidi St. John

AUTHOR OF *BECOMING MOMSTRONG*



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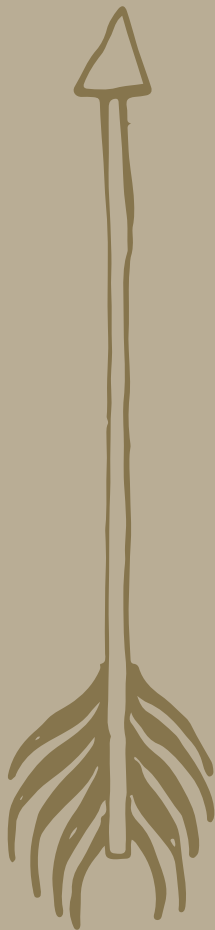
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Introduction



Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

EPHESIANS 6:10-13



I was well into motherhood when I began to realize that Ephesians 6 is more than a poetic prelude to a far-off struggle: it's a window into the unseen battle for the very soul of humankind. The spiritual battle that's being fought today has been stripped down to one core skirmish: the fight for truth. Can you feel it? When it comes to the hearts of this generation, truth is in the crosshairs.

As a young girl, I remember my grandmother taking every possible opportunity to speak God's Word to my heart. I wasn't always listening, but she spoke it anyway. Sometimes she would speak soft truths to me as I drifted off to sleep. And when she prayed, her prayers were filled with affirmations from Scripture. I remember how she prayed for wisdom, admitting that she had no wisdom apart from God. When she corrected me, her words were strong and commanding—as if she were preparing me for the battle of my life.

Because she was.

I've been raising our seven children for nearly twenty-eight years, and now I'm a grandmother too. When I look into the eyes of my grandsons, I think of the countless times when my grandmother focused her declining energy on my siblings and me. She knew what every mother and grandmother needs to know right now: our children are worth fighting for. They're worth the tears you cry over them, worth the sleepless nights, worth the prayers you send heavenward on their behalf, and worth the investment you make into teaching them the ways of the One who made them.

After all, it's His ways that lead to victory.

Your children have been entrusted to your care at a pivotal point in history. We are at a cultural crossroads, and the battle for the hearts and minds of our children is raging all around us—even in our churches.

The stakes are high; in fact, they're eternal. Make no mistake: the enemy of your soul is playing for keeps.

I wrote most of the pages of this book with tears in my eyes because I'm acutely aware of my own need to stay on the battlefield for the sake of my children and grandchildren. I know that victory won't be handed to us easily, but with the Lord's help, the battle can be won.

Beloved, there will be times when you speak truth to your children and they won't listen. They may drift off to sleep while you pray over them, or they may roll their eyes at your attempts to train them in the ways of the Lord. But don't give up! My grandmother knew that no matter whether I seemed interested or not, God was at work.

God is still at work. He loves you. You belong to Him. Like Esther, you were born for such a time as this—and so were your children.

As you read *Prayers for the Battlefield*, you will see that it is divided into six sections. Each section is filled with devotions and prayers designed to meet you wherever the battle takes you. The index at the end of the book is intended to help you look up a prayer based on the struggle you're facing. Whether you find yourself in need of courage, hope, rest, or perseverance, my prayer is that you'll find life within these pages.

As you read this book, I'm praying that you will shout

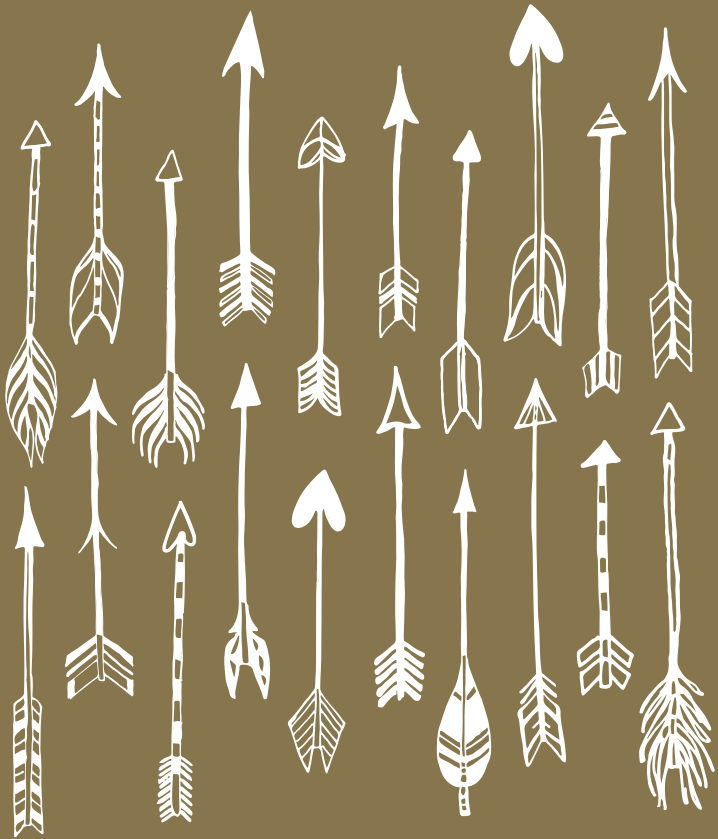
a battle cry on behalf of your children. They carry with them the promise of a new generation of warriors—warriors trained to recognize the voice of truth.

Onto the battlefield! The battle belongs to the Lord!

—Heidi St. John
FALL 2018

Section 1

ONTO *the* BATTLEFIELD





IN *the* TRENCHES



A PRAYER *for the* RELUCTANT WARRIOR

We are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

EPHESIANS 6:12



*H*ave you noticed that we tend to live in a state of reactive Christianity? When we're not experiencing some crisis in our lives, it's easy to forget about the war that Paul is warning us about in Ephesians 6. When we're feeling safe and comfortable, we can quickly forget that the war is still raging around us.

There was a time in my life when I paid little attention to the spiritual side of mothering, choosing instead to focus my energy on meeting the physical demands of our family. I lived a comfortable Christianity, like most of my friends from church. Not too hot, not too cold—just right for the culture. My motto was

“Live and let live.” I didn’t understand all this talk of a “war” that I kept hearing about in Sunday school. Surely that was overdone, right? Surely it wasn’t *that* big of a deal.

For years I read my obligatory daily devotions, checking off this task on my to-do list like “laundry” and “vacuuming.” I made sure the children went to church and stayed away from anything obviously wrong, like voodoo or Ouija boards, and I felt basically secure in my culturally correct Christianity. I didn’t take the Bible’s repeated warnings about the need to be spiritually prepared too seriously. I didn’t want to *see* the battle, much less engage in it.

Today most of us Christians don’t get onto the battlefield until the war gets out of control and someone calls for reinforcements. We are startled to attention when there’s a school shooting or a national tragedy. When that happens, we hurry up and get our prayer on, showing up to candlelight vigils and praying fervently around our dinner tables. But when the crisis dies down, we hang up our helmets and go back to the status quo.

It’s easy to put off confronting the enemy until we feel we have no choice, but our kids need us to engage consistently, with the holy intention of doing battle in the heavenly realms.

Don’t wait for a crisis to get onto the battlefield,

precious mom! A pattern of “crisis equals prayer” puts us on the defensive and leaves us unprepared for battle. It’s time. Time to get off the bench and onto the battlefield. Let’s go on the spiritual offense for the sake of our children. If God is for us, who can be against us?



THE STRUGGLE IS REAL, LORD—but I suppose You already know that.

I never imagined it could be this intense . . . I must not have been really listening when I learned it would be. Somehow I never imagined I’d find myself in a spiritual battle—at least not one with stakes as high as these. I never imagined that my own children would be in the battle. If I’m being honest, I don’t want to fight. I don’t want to be part of this battle at all.

Sometimes I can fool myself into thinking there isn’t a fight raging around me. Would You open the eyes of my heart so I can discern truth from fiction in this crazy, upside-down world? Would You help me teach my children that because the enemy of their souls is real, the war is real too? Would You help me be an example to those who look to me for guidance and protection? Help me to show them that You are the true source of guidance and protection.

I’m lazy sometimes, God . . . but I know You already know that. Please help me not to come to You only when the fighting is fierce. I want to be prepared for battle, but I confess that sometimes I struggle to put on my helmet and engage with the world around me.

Lord, I need Your wisdom and courage to stay in the fight. It's tempting to sit on the sidelines—it feels safer. *Don't let me live to be safe!* Instead, help me live to bring glory and honor to You.

Show me what I need to do to engage in the battle and not grow weary. Give me Your wisdom as my children struggle to discern who the real enemy is—and help all of us to stay true to You and Your Word. Lord, would You protect my heart from thinking my role in the battle isn't that important? Would You protect me from being complacent in my faith? Would You remind me that You are by my side?

I don't want to grow weary in doing good; I long for renewed vision to fight for what's at stake. Give me Your heart so that I will stay in the battle until the day You call me home.

Thank You for the privilege of being Your child and for fighting on my behalf. Thank You for opening my eyes to the very real battle for the heart and soul of a generation that needs You . . . starting with my own children. For their sake, I am answering Your call to engage in the battle. I'm reporting for duty, Sir!

Onto the battlefield!

Praying the Scriptures:

PSALM 1; ROMANS 8:31; GALATIANS 6:9

KNOW *your* ADVERSARY



A PRAYER *for the* MOM WHO FEELS BURDENED

If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

ROMANS 8:31



If we are going to be victorious in the battle between good and evil, we need to know our adversary. Satan's name reveals much about his character. The title Satan is used fifty-two times in the Bible. It literally means "the adversary" or "the one who opposes." He is also called the devil, a word that is used more than thirty times in the Bible and means "slanderer" or "accuser." Regardless of what name he is called, the point is clear: we have a real enemy who wants to take us down.

Satan is a lot of things, but he isn't stupid. The Bible teaches that he operates according to a plan or a scheme (see 2 Corinthians 2:10-11 and Ephesians 6:11). He sets traps for God's people, and he will try to test us (see Luke 22:31-32). He knows our weaknesses and sends

specific temptations to derail us from our Kingdom purpose. His mission is to lie to, accuse, and oppose God's people. He's quite a formidable enemy.

Satan is as stealthy today as he was in the Garden of Eden. His efforts to twist what God calls evil into good are being embraced everywhere we turn—even in the church. Sadly, we often don't notice the lies until they are deeply embedded in the fabric of our churches and families. Peter warns that there will be many false teachers in the world—and he's right (see 2 Peter 2:1).

Over the course of twenty-five years in public ministry—as well as in our personal lives—my husband, Jay, and I have often sensed the presence of the enemy. Sometimes his attacks are obvious, and other times they come in subtle ways. The enemy may try to drag us down through a heaviness of spirit—a feeling of oppression that we can't shake. Or his attack may come through a series of trials that cause us to focus on our struggles instead of on the tender voice of God.

Why is this helpful to know? Because when we know the tactics of our enemy, we can be on the lookout for him. The next time you find yourself in a situation that causes you to behave in a way that doesn't please God, stop and ask God for wisdom. Is it possible that your adversary is actively opposing you? Are you being tempted? If so, put on the armor of God (see Ephesians

6:10-20)! Victory is ultimately assured to every believer when we walk in a manner that pleases God.

Our children need to see that we trust in the power and plan of our Creator. Rather than react to the schemes of the devil in fear and timidity, we can get on our knees and expect the Lord of heaven's armies to come to our defense.

The way we respond to the devil says a lot about our faith in God. Our children are watching us. Even grown children watch to see how their parents respond to difficult times. Will we act in fear or faith?

Every day—we get to choose.



LORD, I CONFESS that sometimes I don't see the devil. I am such a sucker.

I forget that I have an adversary. I don't always recognize my enemy. Forgive me for not being more vigilant, for not keeping watch as You asked me to.

When difficult things happen, I am not prone to prayer. I am prone to worry. I sometimes forget that You are God and You are bigger than any adversary I will ever face. Thank You that Your Word says the devil will not prevail; he will be cast into the lake of fire. The enemy will not get the last word!

Help me to show my children what it looks like to be on guard against the accuser. Help me to come to You as soon as I realize I am

falling for a scheme of the devil. Father, help me be the woman, the mother, You call me to be—a woman who stands strong against evil and temptation.

Lord, protect my children from the schemes of the devil too. Protect their hearts, their eyes, and their desires. Father, Your Word tells us that there are many false teachers in the world today, and I know that the only way we will be able to recognize them is to hold them up against Scripture. Remind us to be in your Word every day. Let it be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

And one more thing, Lord. I realize that I am prone to wander from Your truth and Your teaching even when the devil isn't prodding me. I confess that I often sin not because I don't know better but because my flesh is weak. Help me to listen for Your still, small voice, and strengthen me by Your Spirit.

Praying the Scriptures:

2 CORINTHIANS 2:10-11; LUKE 22:31-32; ISAIAH 5:20; 2 PETER 2:1;
EPHESIANS 6:10-18; 1 PETER 5:8-11; 1 CORINTHIANS 16:13;
REVELATION 20:10; PSALM 119:105; 1 KINGS 19:12