

Warfare

In the book of Ephesians, the apostle Paul talks about spiritual warfare and describes the armor of God that believers are charged to wear in their stand against the devil's schemes. In verse 12, we read, "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." This invisible armor includes the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet fitted with the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and sword of the Spirit. As Pastor Mark Smith in Jackson, MS, observed, God made no provision for one's backside. Why? The answer is that God has made no provision for retreat. He has given us everything we need to be strong and successful in this spiritual battle.

Likewise, in recovery, we are to understand our enemy if we are to stand ready to face his attacks. The person struggling with an eating disorder is actually not in a battle with his or her flesh (the body), but is instead fighting unseen forces. These attacks may come in the form of "fat feelings", lies and distortions about one's worth and value. All of this feels very real, and then we wage war against our own bodies. We give in to perfectionism, inferiority feelings, trying to become someone other than who we were created to be. In doing so, we lose sight of the real enemy.

We are to make no provision for relapse, either. In her second memoir *Goodbye Ed, Hello Me*, Jenni Schaefer advises readers with this: "don't have a backup plan." Just as we are to have no provision for retreat in our Christian walk, we shouldn't settle for a mediocre version of recovery. Find what it takes to stay committed to full recovery. That armor might include a treatment team, a support group, a meal plan and dietitian, a practice of journaling, a supportive relationship. The bottom line is that we are in a war and we need to do whatever it takes to stand firm.