

Rules of Engagement

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

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I. Introduction

- A. Movie – Rules of Engagement (staring Samuel L. Jackson).
 - 1. A Marine soldier is accused of killing civilians in the country of Yemen. The U.S. government places him on trial for violating the rules of engagement.
- B. During combat soldiers must follow the rules of engagement. These rules tell the soldier three important things:
 - 1. Who is the enemy
 - 2. What weapons to use
 - 3. When to engage the enemy

II. Rule #1: We War Against A Spiritual Enemy (v 3)

- A. The Apostle Paul is familiar with enemies. He was –
 - 1. Stoned
 - 2. Falsely accused
 - 3. Thrown into prison
 - 4. People vowed to kill him
- B. The Apostle Paul faces a bitter struggle with the Corinthian church because false leaders have crept in.
 - 1. This is the church that Paul founded and nurtured
 - 2. This is the church he worked as a tent maker
 - 3. Now they attack him professionally and personally
 - a. You are not a real apostle
 - b. You are weak and have selfish motives
- C. The Apostle Paul focuses on a spiritual enemy
 - 1. Though we live in the flesh (*physical*) we do not war according to the flesh (*impulse of our sinful nature*).
 - 2. My coworker, supervisor, neighbor, repairman, spouse, children, or Christian friend is not my enemy.

III. Rule #2: We Use Spiritual Weapons (v 4)

- A. Our weapons are spiritual
 - 1. We cannot defeat this spiritual enemy with physical weapons such as guns, knives, curse words or fighting. These weapons only help the enemy.
- B. Our weapons are superior
 - 1. They are *mighty* and able to pull down strongholds.
 - 2. Stronghold is an argument or reasoning that exalts itself against God. For example it can be - Habits, Traditions, and Selfishness
 - 3. Strongholds were fortress and were lined up the coast. No doubt Paul's father told him stories about the Roman soldiers pulling down walls in their wars against the pirates

C. Our weapons are – Prayer, Praise, Word of God, and the Holy Spirit.

Example: earthly weapons cannot defeat Superman because he is not from earth only kryptonite can hurt him. The reason is kryptonite is from the same planet that Superman is from.

IV. Rule #3: We Subdue Every Disobedience (v 5)

A. We must be ready to cast down every argument that others may bring.

1. Argument means reasoning therefore when our reason conflicts with God's reason we must cast it down.

B. We must be ready to take captive our very own thoughts

1. Unholy thoughts become sin if left alone

C. Paul will contend with those Corinthians that have been disobedient

1. God punishes sin
2. They were not opposing Paul but God since there reasoning is in conflict with the Word of God.

V. Conclusion

Story: many years ago, a bully in the neighborhood was picking on my little sister. I went to the kid and told him to stop but he informed me that since I was nearly an adult and many years older than he I could not lay hands on him. So a few days later I introduced the bully to my cousin Clyde. He was the same age as the bully and my sister. Clyde fought the bully for my sister and she never had any more problems.

Example: John Bunyan's book Pilgrims Progress

1. Christian fights Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation
2. Like Christian I have been on my back in humiliation
 - Sickness
 - Poverty
 - Distress

Jesus fought Satan in the place of humiliation called Calvary