

## Prayer & Fasting pt 6 Worship as a Weapon

Intro: Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

**What If I told that one of the most powerful weapons of warfare we've been given is one of the most underutilized? And worse! The counterfeit of this weapon is one of the most used and effective weapons wielded against us!**

1. Aid you in persevering prayer
2. Strengthen you through hardship
3. Connect you with the Presence of God
4. Increase your faith
5. Change your focus and perspective
6. Reduce levels of anxiety and depression and flood your heart with PEACE
7. Can improve over wellbeing, including delicate systems like your immune system
8. And even give language to desires, and feelings that you have that you struggle to identify and put into words

**We are going to be talking about using WORSHIP AS A WEAPON of WARFARE!**

**Church-Wide Prayer: Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus

1. **Personal:** Each one, reach one – who is one person whom you can build a relationship with? Serve? Help? Encourage? Share your faith with? Pray for them by name. Pray for opportunities to connect with them
2. **Church-Wide:** Pray for every generation & person, to embrace the Great Commission and Command. MS, HS, YA, ADULTS! All! For us to Pray & GO!
3. Pray for boldness in our Christian witness
4. Pray for people to experience belonging, connection & community in our church
5. Pray for our church to stand firm on truth and grow in love for the lost
6. Israel - For the hostages and their families, who are losing hope
7. Israel - For wisdom for Israel's political and military leaders
8. Israel - For courage for believers in the nations to publicly take a stand for Israel
9. Israel - For many to turn to God in Israel and Gaza, including Hamas terrorists
10. For Southland to persevere in Asking, Seeking, Knocking in PRAYER! Luke 18:1

**Recap:** last week we looked at Standing on the Word and how that can transform our prayer lives and lives in general! NEXT WEEK I'll wrap up this series with the end of Standing on the Word – then – Dr. Sean McDowell!

**REMINDED - My story:** as an unbeliever coming to church... it was during the corporate worship that I felt confused, angry... sad... It made me cry. I hated the style. Thought it was dumb. Yet it hit a string of my heart. It brought me back to the longings I had as a young boy who wanted to give everything for the God Man Jesus who had died for him.

**SALVATION - My story:** August 27, 2004 – I was listening to “come, as you are” in the industrial park. By myself. It was there that the Lord said to me, “Stefan, I know WHO YOU ARE, I know WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, and I love you anyways.” In that moment... years of shame and guilt... washed away... I was naked and exposed before my creator... it’s like all my sin and the hurts I had done to others... he knew it ALL and still loved me!?!?!? I was FLOORED!! That happened... DURING WORSHIP.

**LOVED - My Parents:** in Philadelphia were at a pizzeria the eve before another brain surgery. The chances of death or a mistake causing permanent damage was high. They felt all alone. Away from family. The future looking daunting before them... and then a SONG came on the jukebox “Jesus loves me” by Whitney Houston. They sat and wept together. Even though they had ZERO GUARANTEES for tomorrow – they knew JESUS WAS WITH THEM TODAY and they had HOPE AND STRENGTH!!

**REPENT - My daughter Sarah:** met Jesus and had a revelation of his love for her, which led to true repentance and surrender, while worshipping to the song, “Better Wine”

**FREEDOM - Hector:** was at the lowest point in his life... his drinking was getting out of control... and when he made the decision to put down the bottle and pick up the guitar? He found FREEDOM! And I can’t even count how many times after that, he’d explain how he really “NEEDED TO GO WORSHIP”. Hard day. Temptation coming. WORSHIP! STILL WALKING IN FREEDOM TODAY!!

- **check out his testimony on our website!** [www.mysouthland.com/stories](http://www.mysouthland.com/stories)

**Paul & Silas: Acts 16:25-28** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.”

**We rightly teach that we are called to PRAY, FAST and MEDITATE on SCRIPTURE – TRUE!**

**A. We are also called to worship God!**

**Called to SING: Colossians 3:15-16** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

**QUESTION: I wonder how many Christians today think, or limit, worship to something we do at the beginning and end of a church service?**

- I wonder how many of those same people, also struggle with their relationship with God? Enduring hardship? Accessing God’s REST & PEACE in hard circumstances? Persevering in prayer?

**NOT SAYING:** singing today will immediately change that.

**I AM SAYING:** a lifestyle of worshipping God will produce the things I listed at the beginning of this message!

**I know – it is NOT intuitive!** It takes DISCIPLINE! Spiritual disciplines & like the others it's primary purpose is to **KNOW GOD & GIVE HIM GLORY.**

**Ephesians 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- **Let's use EVERY WEAPON** at our disposal! Prayer, fasting, Scripture, love, AND worship!
- To quote our **new exec pastor, Eric**, when we spoke about this, "*sadly, It's like Christians are walking out of the armory with nothing in our hands....*"

<https://walkingtogether.life/scripture-testimony-index-subject/2602/> below quotes

**Tortured for Christ by Richard Wurmbbrand** - Richard Wurmbbrand reflects on his years in prison, and how the believers would joyfully sing even though they were beaten for it.

**My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns by Ira D. Sankey** - Singing the doxology brought peace and Kingdom perspective to prisoners to the infamous Libby Prison during the American Civil War.

**Captive in Iran by Maryam Rostampour, Marziyeh Amirizadeh** - Maryam starts to lose the assurance that God was with her in prison, she asks that He shows Himself to her in "a special way". She sang hymns in her tiny cell, and the Lord flooded her soul with His peace that passes all understanding.

**I BELIEVE: there are people watching this** – that the Lord wants to SET FREE to worship! I believe he wants to use worship to answer many of their prayers to KNOW HIM – have STRENGTH – to LIVE and FINISH WELL!

**A lifestyle of worship – reverence & adoration – includes:**

1. Being thankful in all circumstances
2. Sacrifice & obedience to God – Rom 12:1 "*present your bodies as a living sacrifice..*"
  - Laying down our lives, our finances, time, etc. WORSHIP
  - When we boldly stand for our faith. Even when it is unpopular. WORSHIP
  - Someone with same-sex attraction that denies their attractions and holds fast to God's moral, right and true standard? WORSHIP
  - Standing up for the unborn and standing against MAiD, even if it costs you? WORSHIP
  - Giving up your dreams to follow the Lords leading in your life? WORSHIP
  - Using your free time to advance Christ's Kingdom over your own? WORSHIP
  - Forgiving the person who took advantage of you? WORSHIP
3. Singing – making joyful sounds with your lips! Ps 100:2 *sing joyfully to the Lord...*
  - We are CALLED TO SING PRAISES TO GOD and to do it with OTHER PEOPLE!

**B. The Power of Music as a Weapon**

Music has the ability to bypass our insecure attachments, our fears, our relational defenses, and to MEET US WHERE WE ARE AT. Not only that! It can effect change in those areas as well!

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/keep-your-brain-young-with-music#:~:text=If%20you%20want%20to%20keep,%2C%20mental%20alertness%2C%20and%20memory.>

*If you want to firm up your body, head to the gym. If you want to exercise your brain, listen to music.*

*There are few things that stimulate the brain the way music does. If you want to keep your brain engaged throughout the aging process, listening to or playing music is a great tool. It provides a total brain workout.*

*Research has shown that listening to music can reduce anxiety, blood pressure, and pain as well as improve sleep quality, mood, mental alertness, and memory.*

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5618809/> *If it is a language, music is a language of feeling. Musical rhythms are life rhythms, and music with tensions, resolutions, crescendos and diminuendos, major and minor keys, delays and silent interludes, with a temporal unfolding of events, does not present us with a logical language, but, to quote Langer again, it ‘reveals the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach’ (Langer, 1951, p. 199, original emphasis).*

In the beginning of the message – I said, “an underutilized weapon for Christians and successfully used weapon for the enemy” MUSIC – SONG – SINGING.

<https://time.com/6275519/how-music-affects-your-brain/> <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/why-is-music-good-for-the-brain-2020100721062> <https://www.ucf.edu/pegasus/your-brain-on-music/>

1. **Bypasses our fears, beliefs, walls and defenses.**
  - **Worship: allows us to experience Peace the passes understanding**
2. **Reminds us** – of our past successes and failures – for better or for worse!
  - **Worship: refocuses our attention on who God is, giving strength to face the impossible situations we are facing now!**
3. **Connects us** – to whomever, or whatever the object of the music is! The culture – the world around us! To people around us!
  - Be careful what you listen to!
  - **Worship: Connects us to the Living God and deepens our relationship with Him. We grow in KNOWING GOD.**
4. **Instructs us** – in what is important and the way that we should go
  - **God says, “come to me & find REST” world says, “do whatever makes you happy” these messages compete for our heart and minds! And instruct our emotional response and even the direction we are headed!**
  - **Worship: guides an appropriate response to God in our current situation**
5. **Fuels us** – gives us emotional energy! when worshipping our Creator? It fuels prayer, perseverance, faith, repentance, peace!
  - **Worship: gives us strength to persevere in prayer, hardship, sickness and repentance!**

**Little wonder the devil works double time in using this against us!**

**NOT SAYING:** avoid ALL things secular! You can't – we live in this world.

**I AM SAYING:** pay attention to what you feed on! Where your *“treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will be also”* music powerfully instructs and leads our hearts!

**C. Practice: Using Worship as a Weapon**

- Don't worry about your talent & performance – resist pride
- Don't worry about the person next to you – resist focusing on others (for now)
- Focus on Jesus. Let your heart, mind, and body glorify God!
- Focus on the Scriptures, the reflection questions, and sing to God your response!

**The Stand – is ALL about YES –** this is where we start with God whenever we approach him. We look first to God, humble ourselves before him, and respond with our, **“YES”**. **We give an unconditional, “yes” to God! A heart abandoned!**

**Matthew 22:37-38** *And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.*

**Galatians 2:20** *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**Counting the Cost:** Am I willing to give Jesus my full, “yes”? Will I trust him with my heart, fears, insecurities, failures, dreams and hopes? Am I willing to obey him at all cost? If it cost me everything in this world, will I still love Him and follow Him?

*SONG BEGINS: You stood before creation - eternity within Your hands - And you spoke all life into motion  
My soul now to stand  
You stood before my failure - And carried the cross for my shame - My sin weighed upon Your shoulders  
My soul now to stand*

**Way Maker – focuses on WHO GOD IS – regardless of how we FEEL –** those impossible situations you are facing: anxiety, depression, broken sexuality, addiction, lying, relationships – friends, parents, kids, spouses, financial struggles, sickness, cancer, disease... what are you facing? **God is Sovereign and above every mountain we face!**

**Philippians 2:10-11** *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

**Colossians 1:16** *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.*

**Reflect on who God is:** God is my creator. He made me. He loved me unto death. He is truth. He is life. He is my Healer. My Redeemer. My Savior. My Lord. My King. I will trust His goodness in the good times and the bad!

*SONG BEGINS: Waymaker, miracle worker - Promise keeper, light in the darkness - My God, that is who  
You are*

*Even when I don't see it, you're working! Even when I don't feel it your working! You never stop!*

**Battle Belongs** – is about our response to our YES and in light of WHO GOD IS... how will we fight? Respond to our current crisis and situation? **We will SING and we will PRAY!!**

**Psalms 34:22** *The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.*

**Psalms 20:7** *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*

**Matthew 7:7-8** *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who (continues to...) asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*

**My response to who God is:** I will live by faith and not by sight. I will fight my battles with prayer. I will sing and make a joyful sound to the Lord! I will persevere!

*SONG BEGINS: So when I fight, I'll fight on my knees - With my hands lifted high - Oh God, the battle belongs to You - And every fear I lay at Your feet - I'll sing through the night - Oh God, the battle belongs to You*

**MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!**

## **AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM and 11AM**

[Care@mysouthland.com](mailto:Care@mysouthland.com)

**SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2023/2024**

**Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship**

- 1. Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
  - **Each one, reach one – 1000 ppl that are praying, serving, encouraging, building relationships, intentionally working to disciple at least ONE PERSON**
- 2. Gen Alpha & Z** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
  - **MS Church during 11:00 AM**
- 3. Persecuted Church & Israel** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
- 4. Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
  - **500 average attendance at Prayer Summit**
- 5. Church Renewal:** Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers