

SPIRIT WARS

WINNING THE
INVISIBLE BATTLE
AGAINST SIN AND THE ENEMY

KRIS VALLOTTON



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I dedicate this work to every person who is bound in a spiritual prison, longing to be free and fighting for peace. May you find rest for your souls, peace for your minds and joy for your hearts as you journey through the pages of this book.

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Foreword

My wife and I have been friends with Kris and Kathy Vallotton and their children for over 32 years. They are two of the most important people in our lives. Our children grew up together. We simply have lived life together. In fact, for a season, they lived with us until their home was built. I watched *Spirit Wars* unfold. What you hold in your hands is the farthest thing from *theory* that you could imagine. It is real, sobering and promising, taken from a life trained in the trenches. As much as I would like to promote the “happily ever after” lifestyle, I am reminded that we were born into a war—a war that has already been won.

Kris is known for his incredible prophetic ministry. And rightly so. The impact is now international. I stand amazed at the open doors and the boldness Kris has to go into impossible situations and bring change for the glory of God. He is also known for power in ministry. It really does not matter if it is healing or deliverance needed; he ministers well in both. He is also recognized all over the world as an

extremely capable preacher of the Gospel of the Kingdom. The impact of his teaching gift will be measured only in eternity. But I think both heaven and hell know his name for another reason altogether, one that only those closest to him would see. Heaven and hell both see that no matter what the circumstances are, Kris Vallotton believes God. He is truly a friend of God.

Watching this story unfold was fun at times and painful at other times. Yet I cannot help but think of the well-known passage in Romans in this regard: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18). The victories that have followed Kris, both for their family and through their ministry, have put the pain involved in its rightful place—squarely under Kris’s feet.

Kris has written many books, all of which have brought life, identity and insight to great numbers of people. But I do not think I have ever been more excited about one of his books than I am about this one. On many occasions, people have come to me needing help and insight for their unusual spiritual struggles. Those struggles often remind me of Kris’s story. I have encouraged people to get a copy of Kris’s testimony on CD, because those who listen to it are changed. But as good as the CD is, this book is much more complete. It captures the heart of the issue when it comes to spiritual conflict in a way that one CD could never touch. Plus, it can be used as a manual and read over and over again.

Even though Kris is a close friend, I would not be nearly as excited as I am about his ministry and this book if he glorified warfare and created a devil consciousness. But I have watched his life. He refuses, no matter what has happened,

to set his eyes on his enemy. They are on Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith—our faith.

It has been said that often prophets' lives are parables. They go through things that bring a message to the Body of Christ. If that is true, and I believe it is, then Kris's freedom will bring exponential increase for the glory of God because what the enemy meant for evil, God has turned around for good. The delivered is a deliverer!

It is with great excitement that I recommend this book to you, knowing that fruit will increase until Jesus gets His full reward.

Bill Johnson
Author, *When Heaven Invades Earth*
and *Face to Face with God*
Senior Pastor, Bethel Church, Redding, California

Acknowledgments

Kathy, thank you for all the hard years you stood by me when I was struggling to find my way out of spiritual bondage. Thank you for all the times you woke up in the middle of the night to pray for me. Thank you for believing in me when I was really broken. And most of all, thank you for loving me all our lives.

Introduction

I have written six books prior to this one. Whenever you submit a manuscript to publishers, one of the first questions they ask is, What qualifies you to write this book? I am sure they are hoping for some letters after your name, or an Ivy League degree. But I was inspired to write this book out of my own experience with the demonic realm. As a young Christian, I spent over three years being very demonized. I have a Ph.D. in fear, oppression and anxiety, which makes this the most difficult book I have ever written.

The struggle is not that I do not know what I am talking about; the real problem is that I do! Writing this book has required me to recall some of the worst experiences of my life. Nevertheless, I made a covenant with the Lord the day He delivered me that I would spend my life helping others find freedom. Consequently, over the past three decades I have helped literally thousands of captives and prisoners go free. But three years ago, something happened that caused me to become even more vigilant. My own daughter, and later

my son, came under a demonic attack that nearly destroyed them both and threatened to take out our entire family. In the midst of this intense battle, I decided that I would never again let someone else's daughter, son, father or mother be destroyed while I stood by and watched. My prayer and my goal is that through this book, millions of people will become equipped to make a prison break and destroy the works of the devil on their way out of the POW camp.

Ignorance Is Bliss?

Many say that ignorance is bliss, but God says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). I am astonished by how many people (including Christians) are unaware that we do not inhabit, but we cohabit, this planet. The apostle Paul began to unveil this mystery to us when he wrote, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware" (1 Corinthians 12:1). The word *gifts* here does not appear in the original Greek text. The verse actually should read, "Now concerning the spiritual, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware." Then Paul goes on to use the gifts of the Spirit as an example of how the spirit realm functions.

Although Christians typically acknowledge this unseen realm on some intellectual level, I personally do not think they really believe that the spirit world has an effect on their daily lives. Teaching some people about the spirit world feels very much like trying to convince someone in the 1800s that there really was such a thing as germs, and that these germs could make them sick or even kill them. Over the last two centuries, medical and technological discoveries advanced

our understanding of this previously unseen natural realm and saved millions of lives.

Much like the transition that took place with medical breakthroughs in the natural, a transition is now taking place in the spiritual. Society has become increasingly hungry to understand the spirit realm. Angels and demons have rapidly become the subject of many books and movies. It seems as though the invisible dimensions of life, which constantly reach through the veil of the unexplainable, fascinate the entire world. Books and movies like *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* are contemporary examples of the hunger people have to comprehend and participate in this dimension. It is imperative that we understand the effects that angels and demons can have on our personal lives, or we can become victims of the invisible world. Paul wrote, “You were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:1–2). In other words, before we knew Jesus, we were literally the puppets of demonic spirits.

Many people in First World countries have a hard time imagining that there is a “prince of the power of the air” controlling the thoughts of everyday people. The idea that the world is inhabited by invisible beings is, to them, a metaphor or even a fairy tale like Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny. People in developing nations, on the other hand, have no problem believing in a spirit realm because the effects of demons are so overt. Witch doctors, medicine men and voodoo priests dominate their cultures to the point that nearly everyone who lives in such a place has experienced the demonic realm firsthand.

Freedom Fighters

When we think about people fighting for freedom from evil spirits, we often envision a primitive warrior slithering on the ground in a mud hut in the middle of a jungle somewhere. But my own experience has convinced me that evil spirits are just as influential in First World countries as they are in developing nations like Africa—they just manifest differently. We may not have many witch doctors or voodoo priests in the United States, for instance, but people are just as demonized in “the land of the free and the home of the brave” as elsewhere. Understanding how to dispel demons and dispatch angels can make the difference between living a joy-filled life and becoming a captive of some evil scheme.

You may be thinking that I am a “demon under every rock” kind of guy. *I am not!* I must admit, though, that when I first got free from years of bondage, I absolutely went through that season. I think that as you read this book, however, you will find that I take a very balanced approach to life in its pages. I worked hard to weigh my experience, the counsel of mental and medical health professionals, and the Word of God as I wrote each chapter. As you learn more from this book about how to win the invisible battle against sin and the enemy, I hope you find freedom and joy in its pages.

Fighting for Peace

In 1975, I finally married the woman of my dreams. I had waited five long years for her.

I met Kathy when she was twelve (I was fifteen), floating on a raft in the middle of a lake. We were engaged by the time she was thirteen! Kathy's folks forbade us to marry until she finished high school, so she took extra classes and worked really hard to graduate a year early. Waiting all those years to get married was torture. To make matters worse, we lived thirty miles apart, so we only saw each other on the weekends. I would arrive on Friday and stay at Kathy's parents' house. As I left for home each Sunday, Kathy would stand in the middle of the street and cry while waving good-bye. During the week, we spent hours on the phone every day, often talking halfway through the night. Hours seemed like days and days felt like months as we longed to begin our life together.

I graduated from Sunnyvale High School in Sunnyvale, California, in 1973. The Carpenters' song "We've Only Just

Begun” was a big hit that year, and it was the theme of our senior yearbook. It also became a prophetic declaration over Kathy and me, as we both became Christians a few months before I graduated. We found God in the Jesus movement, and we both had powerful conversion experiences. We were so excited about our faith.

Our wedding day finally arrived on a warm summer day in July. With three hundred people looking on, we repeated our vows and kissed way too long while everyone cheered. Our ship was finally launched into what would prove to be the high seas of a great love affair. Unlike many marriages, our first year together was like heaven on earth. It seemed as though all we did was play, explore each other and laugh a lot. I had a job as an automotive technician managing a repair shop in the Bay Area, and Kathy was our bookkeeper. Together we made a pretty good living, and soon we were able to buy a new house. I preferred that we wait awhile to have children, but Kathy wanted to have them right away, and she kept prodding me as only a wife can do. In a weak moment she got the best of me, and soon she was pregnant with our first child.

A Time to Mourn

Then suddenly, the season changed and our tiny ship encountered a huge storm that would almost sink us. It began with Kathy’s pregnancy, which made her incredibly sick. She vomited about fifty times a day and lost weight through the eighth month of her pregnancy. She could hardly get off the couch.

While Kathy was fighting her way through pregnancy, I was carrying tons of responsibility at the shop. Managing thirteen people when I was twenty years old was extremely

challenging. I worked twelve hours a day, six days a week and rarely stopped to eat lunch. Consequently, my diet consisted mostly of candy bars, Coke and potato chips.

One night, exhausted from a long, hard week of work, I got in the bathtub to relax my tired body while Kathy lay sick on the sofa. An hour or so later, I started to get out of the tub to dry off. But as I stood up, an *intense* thought hit me: *I am going to die!*

Like everyone else in the world, bad thoughts were not foreign to me, but this was different. This thought was so strong that it caused panic to rush through my whole being like stampeding cattle! My entire body trembled, my heart pounded out of my chest and my pulse raced uncontrollably. All my strength drained from my limbs, and I struggled to get out of the tub. I fell back into the water, shouting desperately for Kathy to help me. Eight months pregnant, she labored to get up off the couch. She rushed into the bathroom where I lay helpless and scared, white as a ghost. I could barely talk, but I managed to mumble something about having a heart attack. She strained to help me out of the bathtub and onto the couch. Then she ran into the kitchen to call our family doctor, who was a customer of ours at the auto shop. He relayed a few questions to me through Kathy and concluded that I was having a *panic attack*, not a heart attack. Little did I know that this was the beginning of a three-and-a-half-year journey through hell.

Touring Hell and Calling for Heaven

That first panic attack initiated a constant state of fear in me. Going to work became really tough. It took all the strength I could muster just to get out of bed each morning. All through

the day at the shop, high levels of anxiety overwhelmed my soul like waves crashing on the seashore in a violent storm. It was everything I could do just to concentrate on my job. As difficult as the days were, nights were much worse. The panic attacks continued, turning into endless, tormenting nightmares. Horrible images filled my mind as I imagined terrible things happening to me or envisioned myself performing dreadful acts. Although I knew in my heart that these images and thoughts were illusions, they still *felt* so real. I often wondered if I were losing my mind. I could not sleep much, and I soaked the sheets with sweat every night.

A few months into my ordeal, our daughter Jaime was born. Kathy and I were so excited about our first child, but the added stress of the baby intensified my battle. Kathy was amazing through it all. Getting up several times a night to take care of the baby or to comfort me was more than most women could take, but Kathy was rarely shaken. I can only conclude that God had given her a special grace for the battle. She was a solace in the storm, a force of peace in a very troubled situation.

A year passed without any relief. Finally, Kathy and I decided to quit our jobs and move up into the mountains to find a slower pace of life. We relocated to Lewiston, California, a town of about nine hundred people way up in the Trinity Alps. Living in the wilderness was definitely slower than the traffic-packed city we had left behind. But it turned out that this only served to heighten my awareness of the rat race going on inside me.

As time passed, the fear intensified, affecting every aspect of our lives. I became claustrophobic to such an extent that I had to drive with the windows down in our car (even in

the winter) so I would not panic. Although my personality is naturally outgoing, I became reclusive and never wanted to be around people. When friends came over to visit, I had Kathy get rid of them. I could not handle crowds, which eliminated shopping, restaurants, movies or doing anything in public. Although I continued to attend church, I sat in the back and got up to go outside several times during each service in order to reduce some of my crowd anxiety.

True to form, Kathy continued to take it all in stride. Though she was young, she somehow possessed great faith that we would get through it all. Looking back, I can see how the Lord had prepared her for this battle from the time she was young. Kathy's mother had severe epilepsy and suffered forty to fifty seizures a month. With her dad gone most of the time, Kathy was the one who stayed home from school to take care of her mom. Even as a young girl, she became the stabilizing force in the family. I thank God that she brought that same dynamic into our relationship.

Terrorist Attacks and a Prison Break

We opened a small automotive repair shop in Weaverville, California, a town about twenty miles from Lewiston. Although business was good, finances were tight. We got up early most mornings, put Jaime in a car seat, and went fishing for food in the river down the street from our house. Transitioning from two fairly significant incomes in the city to living on one meager salary out in the sticks was quite a culture shock. (The *Little House on the Prairie* lifestyle is definitely overrated!)

Two more years passed with no relief. Then, just when I thought it could not get any worse, I began to experience

demonic visitations. Demons literally would come into our room at night and torment me. Lights went on and off, and pictures spontaneously fell off the wall! The phone rang every few minutes with people saying crazy things on the other end of the line. I am aware that many people do not believe in spirits, demons and angels, so this paragraph may be a little hard to swallow. But if you are reading this book and have had or are having similar experiences, I hope you believe in them now.

By the third year of this terrible storm, Kathy had had our second beautiful daughter, Shannon, but my life was becoming unbearable. The stress had caused my equilibrium to go crazy, making me nauseous all the time. Food ran right through me; I had diarrhea continually. I loved my family so much, but my inner torment was so intense that I did not want to live anymore. I was not going to kill myself; I just thought my family would be much better off if God took me home and Kathy found a “normal” husband. I cried out to God repeatedly, but He seemed distant . . . even uncaring. It seemed that the love I had known the first couple years in my walk with God had vanished, replaced by intense fear.

Then, early one cold winter morning, something startling happened. The four of us were still living in Lewiston, and as usual, I could not sleep. I got up about 3:00 A.M., wrapped a blanket around myself and went into the living room. I turned the stereo on low and lay down next to the speaker so I would not wake my family. Our radio reception was not good up in the mountains, but I thought I would try to find a late-night talk show to help get my mind off my condition.

Finally, I tuned in to some preacher. The static was so bad that I could only make out every third or fourth word of his message. Yet in the midst of the noise, I heard him say

something that would forever change my life. He quoted Paul's exhortation to Timothy: "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV). Then he went on to explain, "Fear is a spirit! Some of you are thinking you're going insane, but you're just listening to the spirit of insanity! Not all your thoughts are your own. Evil spirits talk to you by giving you their thoughts."

I was stunned! I had been taught that Christians could be mentally ill but could not be demonized. What I did not realize until that night was that I had been educated right out of my solution.

I turned off the radio and asked Jesus what I should do. Immediately I heard a Voice inside my spirit say, *You have been listening to the spirit of insanity and the spirit of fear. Tell them to leave you right now!*

Lying on my back on the living room floor, I said in a quiet but confident voice, "You spirit of fear and you spirit of insanity, get off me right now in Jesus' name!"

I could not see anything, but suddenly I felt something get up off my body. It physically felt like a lead blanket, the kind dentists use during X-rays, and it was being lifted off me. My shaking completely stopped, peace filled my soul and my mind was clear again. Joy overwhelmed my heart, and I laughed out loud for the first time in more than three years. A miracle had happened in my life, and I was eager to tell Kathy and the world about it.

Learning to Stay Free

I knew I had experienced something incredible that night, yet I did not fully understand that I had received a real deliverance.

The only deliverance ministry I had ever witnessed prior to this was something that looked similar to a person having a grand mal seizure, with Christians gathering around the poor soul and shouting at the demons to “come out!” The person often left those sessions more traumatized by the Christians than by the demons. I wanted no part of that kind of ministry. (I am certain there was healthy deliverance ministry going on in the Church, but I had not been exposed to it.)

What I experienced that night was not some kind of spiritual hype or psychosomatic occurrence. I was set free! I enjoyed complete freedom for more than a week. After three years of hell, being filled with peace was amazing. My joy returned, my appetite came back and all my physical symptoms disappeared. The demonic visitations left, and for the first time in years I slept through the night.

But soon I encountered the harsh reality that getting free and staying free were two very different things. One dark, cold night, I was driving home from work in my Jeep, winding through the forest on a narrow, unlit road that followed a wide creek. I was so excited about my newfound freedom that I shouted out loud; “I’m going to tell everyone about this—I’m going to help thousands of people get free!”

Just then a voice in my mind shouted back, *If you tell anyone about this, I’ll kill you!*

Suddenly, all my symptoms returned. I had such a bad panic attack that I could not even drive. I pulled over into the ditch alongside the road. My heart was racing, and I was hyperventilating.

Then a quiet, yet powerful Voice asked me a question: *Does the devil hate you?* (I knew instinctively it was the Holy Spirit speaking to me this time.)

“Yes!” I responded.

Then why didn't he kill you when you got saved? the Voice pressed.

“I don't know,” I replied, still trying to gain my composure.

Because he can't! He has no power over you unless you give it to him, the Voice insisted.

Peace began to seep back into my soul, and the anxiety slowly lifted over the next few minutes.

I began to shout again, “I'm free! I'm free!”

That scene repeated itself many times over the next several years as I learned little by little how to stay free and keep my peace.

Free to Live in Peace

Almost three decades have passed since that fateful night when I had lain on the floor in our little house way up in the woods and had found freedom. Over these last thirty years, I have helped thousands of people get free, find solace and learn to live in peace.

Yet two years ago, I found myself in another intense personal battle that lasted almost seven months. I learned so much more in this struggle, and it helped me to understand another side of the war against fear, anxiety, oppression and depression. I feel as if I have a Ph.D. in the subject. Every time I share my experiences in a public setting, I am flooded with people telling me their stories and begging me for help.

I have read many Christian and secular books on the subjects of depression, oppression, fear, anxiety and panic. I have found some of them helpful. But frankly, many of these

books are not only inaccurate, they are also destructive and actually lead to greater bondage.

I also have spoken to several mental health care professionals, as well as medical doctors, and found that few of them really understand the root causes of these symptoms. Part of the challenge is that most health care professionals, whether Christian or secular, view the spirit world as some kind of fairy tale perpetuated by uneducated and ignorant souls.

I have discovered as well that many Christian counselors who believe in the spirit world and minister to this dimension have very little insight into how intertwined our triune being is. We are composed of spirit, soul and body, and few counselors understand how much each dimension affects the others. These folks often think that every negative symptom in a person is rooted in the spirit. They are completely ineffective, therefore, in dealing with problems that have their origins in the other two-thirds of our being, the soul and the body.

Let me make it clear that there are Christian, Holy Spirit-filled counselors who *do* minister to each dimension of our triune being, but they seem few and far between. We certainly need more of these wise and insightful counselors who understand root causes and do not just treat symptomatic problems.

My most recent personal breakthrough finally inspired me to write a book on the subject myself. I actually started this book before my breakthrough, in the midst of the worst struggle of my life—which gives certain chapters a unique kind of battlefield perspective. This book is not meant to be the last word on mental or spiritual health. It is, however, written by someone who has firsthand experience in finding peace myself and helping multitudes of others do the same.

One of the pivotal truths I have learned through my journey is that we are *new creatures in Christ* (see 2 Corinthians 5:17), and therefore our battles in life are never with our old nature. Our flesh may be weak (see Mark 14:38), but it is no longer corrupt. The enemy works hard to convince us otherwise, so that instead of resisting him, we turn against ourselves. Self-sabotage is the common denominator in all forms of anxiety and depression, whether rooted in the body, soul or spirit. My main goal for this book is to help you gain insight into the ways we sabotage ourselves, give you wisdom for how to break free from these destructive patterns, and impart courage to you to face the real battles in life—battles you were made to win. You will learn how to live in joy, cultivate peace and protect yourself from the onslaughts of evil forces. You will find new freedom for yourself and learn new skills that will help you help others live a stress-free life.

May the Prince of Peace meet you in the pages of this book and lead you into complete wholeness—spirit, soul and body!