

Georgia: At war for souls

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In the last few years, I have heard a lot about spiritual warfare. We have had workshops about it at our Baptist Student Ministry and Go Now Missions training events, and I have talked about it with several friends who have served in various parts of the world. I still don't completely understand what the Bible explains about our spiritual battle with things unseen, but I can definitely say the Lord is teaching me a lot about the real war for people's souls.

In December, I had the amazing opportunity to travel to Georgia and serve at a Pregnancy Crisis Center for a week. This ministry, The Living Vine, is a place where at-risk women can come and prepare for the birth of their babies while being ministered to by faithful ladies who diligently pray, serve and teach them skills for the next step in their life as moms. During my week there, I had one of those moments where I knew God was helping me pay extra attention to a lesson he is teaching me.

Every night before bed, a staff or student missionary would pray individually with each of the residents at the center. On my fourth night staying there, I got to pray with a precious girl who had a difficult childhood and made poor choices in her teenage years involving addictions. All week, we enjoyed getting to know each other and we got to swap testimonies. This particular young woman is a believer and is working hard to be a mom who raises her child in Christ.

That night, we were talking before we prayed together, and she shared with me about her anxiety in leaving The Living Vine house, since her time had come to transition to her own apartment. She told me some of what she feared the most was falling back into her old addictions. As she was describing this to me, I had a very strong moment of empathy with her. I

have temptations of my own to sin all the time, and I could feel the pull her past sin held in her life. It was a sweet moment to pray with her that night. But it was also a moment where I was aware of spiritual warfare as I never have been before.

I was so aware of my sin and of the way I easily go back to it all the time. I was aware of the possibility this sweet girl may go back to her addictions after leaving the home. The battle for our souls became very real for me that night. In those moments praying, I felt like I had never been more ill-prepared for reality in my life. Here I was getting a glimpse of a very real war, and I didn't know what to do.

Thankfully, the Lord provides swiftly because in the last few weeks that I have been home, God keeps putting Romans 8 on my mind. Verses 31 -39 are these beautiful words that remind me of the only hope we have in this fight—Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, the gospel! After that night of praying with that precious young woman, I paid close attention to how diligently The Living Vine's staff prays for their residents, and how they pray for all the women in their city that they have not reached. Spiritual warfare had a new significance for me.

In Romans 8, I saw even though the battle is very real, the victory of Jesus is much more so. So now, I pray for my struggles with sin and those of others, I share the gospel on campus during my final semester before graduation and I read the Bible to learn of the Lord's battle plan and strategy so that I can be Christ's witness wherever I go.

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