

“Victoria’s heart for encouraging moms is apparent in every word of this book. The practical steps and insightful reflection questions included in each chapter offer moms the tangible action points they need in order to thrive as mothers. I have no doubt that this book will prove helpful to every mom who reads it, in every stage of her motherhood journey.”

STACEY MORGAN, author of *The Astronaut’s Wife*

“Every mom should have this book! Victoria Riollano does a fantastic job of addressing the underlying insecurities that mothers may face and how God can empower them to be the best version of themselves for their families. She outlines in a clear way the role and purpose that God has for mothers of all walks of life. This is a handbook of how to live victoriously by relying on the power of God in the day-to-day activities of being a wife and mother.”

KEVIN BORDEAUX, lead pastor and founder of Thrive Church,  
Richmond, VA

“In a tug-of-war world that demands mothers either bend to cultural standards or meet an impossible list of religious prerequisites, Victoria reminds us that rearing children for God’s kingdom can be beautiful but messy, bold yet scary, and that amid the humanity of motherhood’s demands, God smiles and says, ‘I made that mama a warrior. Look at her go!’”

PEYTON GARLAND, author of *Tired, Hungry, & Kinda Faithful* and  
*Not So by Myself*

“As a pastor, I talk to a lot of moms that just don’t feel like they have the knowledge and skills needed to raise their children. They struggle with confidence, past mistakes, and society’s expectations. But I’ve found that most mothers just want to make sure they raise their

children to love the Lord. *Warrior Mother* is a great book to help you with that. This book will give you the confidence you need to make the uncomfortable decisions to ensure your family will live according to the Word of God.”

JOE RIOLLANO, pastor at Enlighten Church, Stafford, VA

“Many mothers desire a guidebook, a playbook even, to help them navigate the often strange yet wonderful journey of motherhood. When I realized that such a perfect book only existed in my dreams, I did the next best thing—I turned to my trusted community of friends and family who were either a few steps or miles ahead of me and gleaned as much encouragement and wisdom from them as I could. Although every mother’s journey is different, there is something life-giving about sharing our stories with and for each other.

In *Warrior Mother*, Victoria does just that. Readers will not only be able to learn effective strategies from her motherhood story, but they will also be able see themselves in it. With faith-filled tools, Victoria reminds mothers of their God-given identity and purpose and provides examples of how to wield their weapons of warfare for the good of their families and legacies. I am excited for mothers to get this timely resource into their hands and hearts.”

QUANTRILLA ARD, PhD, author, speaker, blogger at The PhD Mamma, grief coach, and host of *It’s All Grief to Me* podcast

# WARRIOR MOTHER

Equipping Your Heart to Fight  
for Your Family's Faith

Victoria Riollano

Foreword by Quantrilla Ard, PhD



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*This book is dedicated to my children,  
Trinity, Joseph, Christian, Isaiah, David, Heavenly Joy,  
and Malachi.*

*You are my greatest accomplishment.  
It's a privilege to serve as your mother.  
You are deeply loved.*

*Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring  
a reward from him.*

*Psalm 127:3*



# Contents

<i>Foreword</i> .....	9
<i>Battlefield Earth</i> .....	13
Chapter One: Unleash the Warrior.....	17
Chapter Two: Know Your Place .....	27
Chapter Three: War Plan .....	39
Chapter Four: Oath to Love .....	52
Chapter Five: Victory Minded.....	63
Chapter Six: Squared Away .....	78
Chapter Seven: War of Deception .....	97
Chapter Eight: Strategic Prayer .....	115
Chapter Nine: Modeling the Faith .....	138
Chapter Ten: Train Them Up .....	154
Chapter Eleven: Morale Matters.....	173
Chapter Twelve: Unexpected Explosions .....	190
Chapter Thirteen: Battle Buddies.....	209
Chapter Fourteen: The Power of Regrouping.....	223
Chapter Fifteen: The Heart of Service .....	236
<i>Acknowledgments</i> .....	247
<i>Suggested Books</i> .....	249
<i>Notes</i> .....	251
<i>About the Author</i> .....	256





## Foreword

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE a mother. From the moment I cradled my son's diminutive form in my arms, a surge of holy awe mixed with sheer terror filled my swollen body. I instinctively ached to protect him from the dangers of the world—the shadowy *isms* that marked my journey to adulthood. Many nights I've prayed with and for all my children, petitioning God to keep them safe, keep them healthy, make them kind, and the list goes on and on. But I often found myself anxious about their growth and development despite my faith in God and prayers to Him, making me question whether I was *doing* motherhood correctly.

Somewhere deep inside I knew there were no perfect mothers, only mothers who consistently submitted themselves and their parenting to the Lord. Yet my struggle with maternal perfectionism was formidable, combined with other battles that presented themselves daily. As my children grew, I decided to fight effectively and with fervent tenacity. I had to become a warrior for them and for myself. There was no manual for this, and with the steady ache in my heart from the absence of my own mother, the learning curve was and still is steep. But I've seen the results of the shift in my home, and I continue to persevere.

The Christian mother faces tough challenges as she parents in a world that lauds instant gratification over patience, quick fixes over sustainable solutions, and general apathy toward spiritual things. It is easy to become frustrated and exhausted putting out so many little fires while trying to maintain some semblance of peace and structure in the home.

Rather than being a loving and caring example of God to her children, a mother can become hardened by the very responsibility given to her by her Creator. This is where the Enemy of our souls seeks to edge in and unravel the thread of family.

But no longer. Every mother needs tools in her arsenal to support her in one of the most gut-wrenchingly beautiful journeys in her life—raising her children. This book is one of them. When Victoria graciously allowed me to read through its pages, I laughed, I cried, and I found freedom in my mothering. I also felt the profound urge to find a suit of armor and keep it in my closet for a boost every now and then. But I digress.

*Warrior Mother: Equipping Your Heart to Fight for Your Family's Faith* is a precious, hard-won, battle-tested companion for Christian mothers who seek to stand in their God-given authority. To every mother who desires to intentionally close the gaps and place boundaries around and within her child's heart to overcome the Enemy's snares, this book is for you.

Victoria is uniquely positioned to share these truths with mothers from her own motherhood journey and faith in God. She speaks and writes with the heart of a warrior who has, with the help she has so thoughtfully provided in this book, found her footing. I have watched her implement these strategies in her family over the years as she has prayed and fasted and spoken truth over her children with confidence and expectancy in the God who empowers all mothers to do the same.

There will always be battles to fight, and we get to teach and model for our children how to do so valiantly. Victoria comes alongside readers, gives them practical wisdom, and highlights the spiritual and psychological aspects of their impact as mothers. She doesn't suggest that these strategies are a one-and-done fixer-upper type of to-do list but that these strategies are a lifestyle and are to be utilized consistently. *Warrior Mother* will be a blessing to every mother in whose hands it lands and to the children who will reap the benefits. I am so grateful for Victoria's transparency and love that are felt in every chapter, paragraph, and line.

## *Foreword*

Fellow mother, I stand arms locked with you as you read this book. May it be the encouragement you need in due season. May the God who governs angel armies equip you to fight well, dear mama, as you put on your armor.

From one Warrior Mother to another,  
Quantrilla Ard, PhD, author, speaker, and grief coach



# Battlefield Earth

THE DAY HAS COME . . .

Dressed in your armor, boots tied, helmet secured, you've realized the enemy has broken into the camp. The enemy is in your territory, and the battle ahead will be intense. Your boots are covered in mud. Your uniform is disheveled from the chaos, and your mind is racing: *What do I do now?* The intense sounds of gunshots rattle your bones. However, even louder than the sound of war is the *thump, thump, thump, thump* of your heart. The scene is more intense than any battle you could have ever imagined. Yet you continue to charge forward. You are determined to win this battle! Straggling behind you are your soldiers. Soldiers you've been placed in charge of.

Your troops are watching you as you fight the enemy fearlessly. You charge ahead, with your soldiers following closely and waiting your next command. You feel confident they will make it out of this battle. After all, they know the stories of past wars. You've taught them from your life as a soldier. They've been through various training for these moments. You think, *My squad should be ready for anything.*

Yet no sooner than this thought crosses your mind do things take a turn for the worse. You whirl to see your soldiers being bombarded with the shots of the enemy.

First your youngest soldier is hit. Although you tried to keep him sheltered the most, he wasn't mature enough for battle. His lack of knowledge of the outside world and the battles he'd face made him an easy target.

Then another falls. This one was known for being defiant. She'd

## *Battlefield Earth*

failed to listen in basic training and is always certain she knows what's best. You're hurt by her pain but not surprised by her defeat.

Eager to please you, another soldier runs in front of you, only to be trapped by the enemy.

Then there's the energetic soldier. Overly excited, she makes a careless mistake that costs her life.

Then your best soldier takes a hit. Little did you know, this one has been struggling with confidence. As soon as he heard the enemy, he became too timid to fight.

One by one you've lost your soldiers to the enemy. You recognize that there is no way to save them now. Your grief, regrets, and shame of mismanaging the troops renders you ineffective to revive them. In your mind you are unfit for duty and your soldiers are prisoners of war. You fall to the ground, too shaken to move.

But before you allow yourself to be completely overtaken, you make one agonizing final plea for help. "Lord, please save my children!"

You see, these soldiers are no ordinary group, and this battle is for their very souls. These soldiers are the ones you birthed in your womb or chose through adoption. The ones who look or act like you and who you have spent your blood, sweat, and tears on. These are your babies, the ones you've been entrusted with. In your defeated state, you recognize that you had been trying to fight the war in your own strength. At times you even relied on others' strength to carry you through. Though your effort was valiant and heartfelt, it was useless without God to fight the battle on your behalf. You had been trying to be a mother and warrior on your own.

And in this moment, you hear a still, small voice inside you say, "Get up—it's time for war!" The voice reminds you that you've never been the giving-up type.

You are a warrior.

You are the mother of soldiers who need you.

You are the carrier of the love and hope needed to bring life back to your fallen troops.

Warrior Mother, it's time to head into the battlefield with your

## *Battlefield Earth*

troops. In this battlefield of earth, the Enemy is pulling out all the stops to overtake your home, your children, and your very peace. I give you a warning. This is not your average parenting book. I believe the Lord is calling us to rise up and do more than just correct bad behavior. He is calling us to fight in prayer, with fasting, and with great intention.

This fight starts with self-examination and working with grit to clean up any life areas that have become a hindrance. God will move mightily in our parenting, which will impact generations to come. This choice to rise up and be warriors for Christ is one that will change the course of your life as well as your children's lives. I believe the Lord is raising up a generation of mothers who will stand for truth and fight in prayer along with action. The devil will not have the final say in our homes ever again.

Warrior Mother, enough is enough. It's time for war!

Signed courageously,  
Victoria Riollano

**Warrior** (noun):

a person who is brave, resilient,  
and actively engaged in warfare



*Chapter One*

# UNLEASH THE WARRIOR

The Lord gives the command; the women who proclaim  
good news are a great army.

PSALM 68:11 NASB

MOTHERHOOD IS NOT FOR THE faint of heart.

Time and time again, the Bible offers us stories of mothers who were willing to do the unthinkable to protect their children. These mothers were warriors in their own right. We see great heroines who took risks, thought strategically, and prayed relentlessly for the hopes of giving their children the life God had called them to.

Hagar escaped to the desert to protect Ishmael.

Jochebed placed Moses in a basket and set it in a river in hopes of saving his life.

Zipporah circumcised her child in an instant to save her family.

After years of being barren, Hannah gave her only child to the priest.

Mary lived a life on the run throughout her pregnancy and the beginning of the life of Jesus.

These stories alone remind us that the battle we face as mothers is not a new one. These women of strength, courage, poise, love, and tenacity refused to allow the Enemy to lay siege to their children. They serve as examples that whether we like it or not, the weight of motherhood is a heavy one that requires much heart.

## WARRIOR MOTHER

Here is the reality of what we are up against. We have an adversary who has been in existence long before us. His tactics are not meant to just irritate you but to destroy you and your family. The Enemy's version of warfare is guerilla, with small, unexpected attacks to your finances or relationships at any given moment. Perhaps he attacks you with psychological warfare by planting thoughts that make you feel inferior. He may use biological warfare to attack your child with sickness at every turn.

As the Word of God says, the Enemy comes “only to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10). It is his very nature to cause destruction, and we would be foolish to believe we aren't prime targets. Let's be clear—there are three forces fighting against you at all times. The first force is your flesh, which is your innate sin nature that leads you to lie, cheat, be jealous, be quick to anger, and more. You can only outrun these tendencies by living by the Spirit and aligning yourself with God's Word. The second force is the influences of this world. This would include the power of media, demonic aspects of the culture around you (like if you grow up in a family that glorifies witchcraft), things you were taught in school, and people who affect your life in negative ways. And lastly, you have Satan and his demonic forces. This is why the Bible says, “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” (Ephesians 6:12).

**Whether we like it or not, the moment we  
accepted Jesus into our lives and made a  
choice to raise children who love the Lord,  
we put ourselves right in the line of fire.**

When it comes to Satan and his minions, this enemy force does no good. The devil has no positive thoughts toward you. He has never told you the truth, and he never will. He twists Scripture, causes havoc, and rejoices in your despair. Whether we like it or not, the moment

we accepted Jesus into our lives and so made a choice to raise children who love the Lord, we put ourselves right in the line of fire.

For some this may be frightening. Yet when we recognize that the Lord is on our side and He *always* wins, we can face the Enemy fully equipped to hold our ground against every attack. A key part of war is being aware that although there are weapons created against us, we don't have to be overcome by them. In fact, we can gladly declare Isaiah 54:7 that no weapon formed against us shall prosper! "The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable."<sup>1</sup>

### Warrior Mother, This Is Where We Come In

It is our job to act as the lionesses who protect their cubs from danger no matter the cost. We are their first line of defense against the Enemy. Yet in our own strength, we would find ourselves tired and defeated. The truth is, our role goes beyond protecting our children from the Enemy. We must also train them up to know how to spot the Enemy from afar and overcome his tactics. Our children are looking to us to be the spiritual and emotional backbone they need until they become adults and beyond. They are looking to us to be a place of security and peace. They are looking to us to prepare them for the battles ahead.

We often hear statistics associated with the absence of a father in the home. Many of us can quote what we've been taught about the importance of fathers helping their children to develop a sense of self-worth. Yet much less attention is given to the importance of the mother. The well-known Negro spiritual "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" depicts this well. In the song, you can feel the anguish of the artist as she cries for the love of her mother. Being motherless is something I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy.

Research shows that the lack of a mother figure has been associated with lower self-worth, depression, and difficulties maintaining

## WARRIOR MOTHER

adult relationships.<sup>2</sup> The pain of missing such an important figure in your life is tangible and one that's not easily repaired. As a mother you must recognize that you are a vital piece of your child's foundation. Whether you are the biological mother, grandmother, spiritual mother, or foster mother, the Lord has given you a high level of authority in the lives of the children He's given you.

Just like a military squad leader, the troops in your home are looking to you for the essentials of how to move through every battle in life victoriously. For many mothers, when they consider this heavy weight of responsibility, they are instantly overwhelmed. Many are left wondering, *Am I enough?*

You may not feel like much of a warrior . . . *yet*. In fact, you may relate to the mother in the battlefield scene. You may relate to feeling like all is lost and like you can't possibly lead your troops. Your past difficult seasons in parenting may have left you feeling like no matter how hard you try, you won't measure up. You may feel like you lack the resources, training, time, or emotional support to get the job done. If you have more than one child, a child who struggles with his or her behavior, or a child who has a disability or sickness, your insecurities may be magnified. In my own life, I can say there have been moments when I thought, *I can't do this!*

Warrior Mother, the Lord wants you to know that you are enough. Before the beginning of the earth, the Lord chose you. He knew that you were the exact match for your specific child. In fact, it was no accident that He chose you to mother at this exact moment, in your exact country, in this exact moment in history. Yes, the Lord chose you to parent in a world of social media, political tensions, and influences that contradict the Word of God at every turn. Yet despite the circumstances, your past, your shortcomings, your insecurities, and your worries, God chose you. With great intentionality, He knew you would be the one to instill the needed values for your child to face the world.

You can read a thousand parenting books, go to conferences every weekend, and join mothers' groups galore, but until you accept

that you are enough, it will all be worthless. This recognition does not come overnight. It will take intentional seeking of the Lord and resting in His truth over your life. (We will tackle this in a later chapter.) Today I'm asking you to make a declaration. For some, you may not believe this phrase quite yet. I challenge you to "faith it till you make it" if needed. By the end of the book, I have no doubt things will change. Say this with me: "Thank You, Lord. I am enough for my family."

Can we take a moment to just breathe in this phrase? You may need to say it repeatedly as you dive into this book. Do it! I believe every time you say this phrase, you will be empowered to keep going. God has a purpose for your children, and you are made of just the right stuff to help them accomplish it. How then do we go from mother to warrior? How do we go from barely making it through sleepless nights to being of great strength and courage? How do we become mothers empowered by the Holy Spirit against every attack of the Enemy?

My goal is for you to feel empowered to do all of the above. But before we dive in, I want to take a moment to acknowledge that I happen to be a mother of seven. I happen to have a master's degree in child and adolescent psychology. I happen to be a licensed minister and have been in ministry for two decades. Yet I *still* find myself feeling flustered with day-to-day parenting issues like bedtimes, chores, bullying, or balancing career and family. I still must cry out to the Lord and ask Him for help, a lot.

Here's the truth—I entered motherhood bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. At the age of twenty-two, I had worked in childcare for six years and was the lead teacher in an infant room at a prestigious Montessori-styled school. So I went into my first pregnancy an "expert" in developmental milestones and how to help children flourish socially and emotionally. In many ways, I thought having a baby would be the easiest thing I would ever do.

The hospital ride home from having my first child brought me back to reality. In the back seat of the car, none of the education,

## WARRIOR MOTHER

experience, or fantasies mattered. My mind was flooded with the weight of responsibility of taking care of this six-pound, seven-ounce human. Every doctor's appointment, how she viewed the world, what she participated in would rest in my hands. This was on top of making sure I kept this child alive! Needless to say, within five minutes of sitting beside this little one in the back seat, I let out the ugliest cry I have ever cried to date. I realized quickly that in my own strength, I could never parent my daughter. In that moment, I felt so helpless and completely in over my head. I would be lying if I said this was the only time I've felt this kind of agony of not knowing how to be the best mom.

Each year, the Lord reminded me of what I shared with you earlier—I am enough. He would guide me through every step of parenting. If only I was willing to listen and submit to Him, I would experience victory in every battle. Seven kids in, God has yet to disappoint! I am a firm believer that if He can deliver me from nights of tears, depression, and incessant worry over my children, He can do it for anyone.

I am convinced that we've been handed the responsibility of mothering not to break us but for God's glory to show through us. The battles we face are not and will not ever be too big for our God! Whether you are dealing with terrible twos, a child with a serious illness, or a teenager who has walked away from God, He can meet you and your child right where you are. He can fight on your behalf and teach you how to rise up and be the warrior you've been called to be for your children!

In order to move forward into what is required for moms to win in the spiritual and natural battles of life, we must first acknowledge three realities of war. These three aspects will be the foundation of the book and will empower you to be the champion needed for your child.

### A Warrior Is Actively Involved in Warfare

A warrior would never stumble into a fight. In fact, a warrior would approach each battle with insight, strategy, wisdom, counsel, and a keen awareness of the enemy's tactics. We see this clearly in the story

of David and Goliath. Although many may focus on the ending victory, few remember what David said to Saul *before* his battle with the giant Goliath.

Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine. (1 Samuel 17:34–37)

In other words, David was active in warfare years before he ever met Goliath. He was skilled in the everyday fights that came along with his role as a shepherd. This gave him the gumption to take on what seemed to be an impossible task as he faced Goliath. Before he ever heard of the battle, he was fully aware that he had what it took to win—God on his side, and preparation!

I love what David prayed in Psalm 144:1 (NASB): “Blessed be the LORD, my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle.” If we want to stand up for our children against the Enemy, we need the Lord to teach us how to fight. In fact, you will never find a soldier who didn't complete some form of training. From boot camp to proper ways to use a weapon, to how to fight combatively, a soldier trains for war on purpose. I know this well, as I reside just moments from Marine Corps Base Quantico. At any given minute, I can hear the thundering booms of explosive demolitions and rapid-fire gun drills—loud enough to make our home rattle. Although this was once unsettling, it's clear that the marines are always training and preparing for the day when a war may be at hand.

So when it comes to motherhood, reading this book is simply not enough. Listening to parenting podcasts or reading blogs on

## WARRIOR MOTHER

motherhood won't do! Instead, immersing yourself in the Word of God, praying intently, and using the methods God teaches you will be key aspects of your hands being "trained for war."

### There Are Many Strategies to War

Depending on the era and the specific country, you will find different methods of war. Aerial warfare, trench warfare, chemical warfare, and biological warfare are just some ways wars have been fought. Today warfare goes beyond the traditional methods and seeks to attack information and systems. The invention of the internet has brought in a new wave of attacks called cyberwarfare, where technology and political systems can be hacked to cause havoc.

Warfare comes in many packages and is not intended to be pretty or to cause minimal damage. War is active, strategic, and purposeful. Even guerilla warfare, a type used by small groups of untrained civilians, has an element of banding together to conduct ambushes and spark fires among enemy forces. In other words, when it comes to war, fighting fair is not the goal—winning is.

Just as countries fight wars with crafty strategies to bring the most damage, we have an adversary who seeks to do the same. However, we can rise up, knowing that God also has a plan. When it comes to the spiritual battles we face, we can win. God has shown us in His Word that we are not helpless victims. We are victorious women armed for battle, if we choose to pick up our weaponry. But we don't fight with natural weapons. We fight differently! From prayer to fasting, to standing in faith, to declaring the Word of God, we employ tactics at every turn. My job throughout this book is to enlighten you about the many approaches you can use to see victory in your parenting.

### War Will Cost You Something

There is no way around the cost of war. In the United States alone, it is estimated that the cost of post-9/11 counterterrorism actions is over \$6 trillion.<sup>3</sup> This doesn't factor in the more than eight hundred thousand lives lost in the mission nor the social, political, or



economic impact. In every war, resources are needed, and people are required on the front lines and behind the scenes. Going into war, countries are aware that someone must be willing to pay for the personnel, weaponry, and damage caused.

Even now, as you're reading this, the Lord may be highlighting an area of your life that you must be willing to forfeit to gain the victory. Much like countries that enter into war, we must know there will be necessary sacrifices. Embrace this fact of life. Your role is to protect the troops in your care no matter the cost. I want to challenge you with this question: What is God calling you to release? It could be the habit that causes your child to not respect you as she should. The Lord could be speaking to you about living arrangements that may be dishonoring Him. It may even be necessary to remove some friendships and relationships that are inflicting pain on those in your care. In this battle, if we expect business as usual, with a dash of prayer, we will be disappointed. Instead, we need to actively seek His face for what must be kept and what must be laid down. Letting go of what God is trying to remove is not defeat—it's victory.

As we continue through the next few chapters, my prayer is that you are empowered to pray in a new way and to see your children for who they really are in the eyes of the Lord. Remember, you don't need a degree in child development, you aren't required to memorize the Bible from front to back, and you do not need a lifetime of experience to see victory in your parenting. I am convinced you will find everything you need, and all the strength required, through the Word of God. No matter how your circumstances look right now, this is the moment to see things shift in a radical way for yourself and your children. Let us fight in prayer and action like their lives depend on it. Together, as we rise up and proclaim God's truth over our families, we can be a great army.

You are a warrior!

---

VICTORY VERSE

---

“No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of

## WARRIOR MOTHER

the LORD, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the LORD. (Isaiah 54:17)

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### REFLECTIONS

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1. In what areas of parenting do you feel insufficient (finances, emotional support, biblical knowledge)?
2. Which aspect of war challenges you the most?
3. Is the Lord calling you to give something up to fight for your child(ren)?

---

### POWER PRAYER

---

Lord, I thank You for \_\_\_\_\_. I ask that You speak Your truth over my life and \_\_\_\_\_’s life. Remind me that You are on my side. Teach me to trust You in my parenting journey. I need Your help to learn how to war for my children. Lord, will You teach my hands to war and my fingers to battle? If there are things within me that are keeping me from being effective in my parenting, I ask that You highlight those areas in my life and give me the strength to overcome. In Jesus’s name. Amen.