

# Believer's Boot Camp

## BASIC TRAINING

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### INTRODUCTION

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The Bible tells us in Hosea 4:6, ..."my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge". The scripture is speaking of *spiritual knowledge*--understanding the purposes of God and of His Word. The goal of Basic Training is to teach you how to mature in God, discover your gifts, and fulfill your calling.

Whenever you want to know "how to" do something, training is required and some practical application (practice) of the principles learned is necessary. This was true prophetically of Jesus according to Isa 50:4--to "know how to" required some effort on the part of the person as well as provision from God. The second half of verse 4 and verse 5 tells us how we learn the "how to"--you have to have your ears opened on a daily basis to hear God and you have to determine not to be rebellious or turn back from the things of God.

Isa 50:4-5     The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. (KJV)

Heb 5:14     But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (KJV)

Heb 5:14     But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (NIV)

One of the marks of a mature Christian is that spiritual discernment has been exercised. The Greek word translated "use" means practice or habit. We must practice discernment until it becomes a habit as we mature. As you can see from the NIV translation of the verse, we have to train ourselves to discern. To do this we have to apply ourselves to the study of God's word and will.

2 Tim 2:15     Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (KJV)

Before Jesus entered into His public ministry, He spent his early life learning the "how to" that was spoken of Him in Isaiah. If it was necessary for Jesus to increase in wisdom and learning, how much more is it needed for us?

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## KNOWING WHO YOU ARE

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In our society it seems that everyone is having some form of identity crises. No one seems to understand who he or she is nor what is required of them. Of course the first one to undergo an identity crises was Lucifer. He was not satisfied with who he was or what he was doing but wanted to be somebody else and do something else. He attempts to stir us with the same unrest and dissatisfaction with who we are and what we are doing. It is imperative that we learn to be unshakable in our identity.

### A CHILD OF GOD

Our sins have made a separation between us and our God. We are strangers, aliens, outcasts from the household of God, lonely, guilty, and in despair. But, Jesus has made a way to deal with these things and bring us back into the household of God. This is the beginning point of the Gospel. And people, deep in their hearts, know its true! We declare the Gospel, the Holy Spirit convicts (John 16:7-9). We have to leave room for the Holy Spirit to do His work.

Instead, we play mind games and try to talk ourselves and others into the Kingdom. If you can be talked in, you can also be talked out. I learned this in sales, if someone can be talked into buying, he can be talked out. It is called buyer's remorse. It is true in evangelism also. The enemy is right there with his friends to convince you of buyer's remorse, that it was a bad idea.

### BORN OF THE SPIRIT

What does it take to get into the Kingdom? Conviction. Repentance. New birth. It takes more than talk, it takes the work of the Holy Spirit. Through the words of the Gospel the Holy Spirit stirs the lost parts of the heart bringing people to a place of receptivity. The only way to see the Kingdom of God is to be born again. The only way that this can happen is through the Holy Spirit.

A mental assent to the truth of the Gospel is not the new birth. Neither is believing in God. In James 2:19 we are told that the Devils believe in God and tremble at His name. A mental acknowledgment of the Truth is no more than the Devils do! We are talking about a work that must be done deep in the heart of a person and can only be done by the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:15 says that we should know no one after the flesh or by the natural but instead we should know people by the spirit. That includes the heathen, the unbeliever, the backslider,

etc. We now must look at people in the light of God's purpose which can only be done by the Spirit. We must adjust our viewpoint to that of the Father to be effective.

Our God has a paternal nature. He is Father. His desire is for a family. His purpose involves bringing many sons to glory. When we minister or look at ourselves from God's perspective, we don't see ourselves as a Judge bringing judgment on criminals but rather as a father to a prodigal son.

The New Birth brings us into the Family of God. We become heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ. We have the full privileges of being a child of God.

### **SON OR SERVANT**

But a child until he comes of age is no different than a servant. We have the same type of growth spiritually as we do physically. A child is entrusted with more responsibility and family authority as he matures. So it is with the things of God. That is why an elder should not be a novice.

Gal 4:1        Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; (KJV)

Therefore, we can be legally lord of all and still be no different than a servant in our experience. Galatians chapter four goes on to say that the heir is put under tutors until he can be brought to the place of functioning as a son. Jesus gave us such a tutor with His promise of the Father--the Holy Spirit--to teach us all things.

He also gave us the process of discipleship where we are apprenticed to mature men of God to learn the ways of God. The Church has let this process fall by the wayside but God is again renewing true discipleship training in preparation for the last days.

As we saw in Isaiah 50 verses four and five, Jesus learned his "how to" by being discipled of the Father. That made Him capable of discipling others, which is what He did for three years with the Twelve.

In many ways, a disciple fulfills the role of a servant to his master. However, there comes a time in the maturing process when the relationship between the disciple and his master change and a new relationship is established. Jesus exemplified this with the Twelve.

John 15:15    Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. (KJV)

This change occurs when the servant has matured in understanding so that he can be a participant in the planning and implementation of the Work of the Lord. We must all become "friends" of the Lord in order to fulfill His purpose with us.

We are under tutors until we become of "age". The Holy Spirit is our tutor to teach us how to become a servant, a friend, and a Priest of God in experience and not just legally.

## A PRIEST OF GOD

In the Old Testament it was the Levites that were priests of God. In the New Testament we all have become a kingdom of priests.

1 Pet 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (KJV)

1 Pet 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (KJV)

Rev 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (KJV)

What is the function of a New Testament priest? It is two-fold: represent the people to God and represent God to the people. But, you may say, there is only one Mediator between God and man--Jesus Christ. Yes, that is true; however, the Lord has given us some work to do and part of that work falls in the category of priestly functions. First Peter 2:5 says that a holy priesthood is to offer up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God and this is done by Jesus Christ. All of our priestly service is through and by Jesus to the Father.

Hebrews tells us that through Jesus we offer up to God the fruit of our lips--a sacrifice of praise.

Heb 13:15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name. (NIV)

The sacrifice of our lips also includes prayers and supplications to God on behalf of others. This is also part of our priestly functions.

1 Tim 2:1-3 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (KJV)

God says that this is a good and acceptable sacrifice.

### THE MINISTRY OF THE HOUSE

The clearest picture of the two functions of Priest is in Ezekiel chapter 44. The first group of priests are those that went astray with the rest of Israel but repented and were restored as priests. However, God limited their service to the House and as a help for the people. They were not allowed to be a priest to God, only to the people.

Their priestly functions only related to helping the people. They helped the people with their sacrifices. It was hard work to tie an animal to the altar, kill it and dress it according to the instructions of the Law. While this was a necessary function, it was not all that was required of priests.

Ezek 44:11 Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. (KJV)

Ezek 44:13-14 And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein. (KJV)

God doesn't change His mind about our calling (Rom. 11:29), however, our actions or lack thereof can cause Him to limit the area of our calling just as He did with the priests. Those that didn't go astray fulfilled a higher calling as priests.

## MINISTRY TO THE LORD

The highest calling of a Priest is not nearly as visible as those who minister to the house.

Ezek 44:15-16 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD: They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge. (KJV)

The priests of the House were very visible to the people while the priests to the Lord weren't seen by the people. Where is our heart? We can be priests to the House or priests to the Lord. It all depends on the desire of our heart and our obedience to His Word.

## A SOLDIER OF GOD

### BECOMING DRAFT AGE

The Scriptures list three areas or categories of growth as we mature in the Lord.

I Jn 2:12-14 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. (KJV)

John lists the categories of "little children", "young men", and "fathers". He thought these important enough to actually list them twice within a couple of verses. The Holy Spirit is very

efficient--He doesn't do things without a reason. Therefore, these distinctions are important to us. We also need to remember that the usage of these words includes both men and women and not just men.

If we take the information in these verses and create a table showing the categories and the various attributes that belong to each category, we see some immediate application to our present topic. The table lists the attributes that the scripture lists--if the same wordage appeared twice in the scripture then it appears twice in the table.

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>ATTIBUTES</u>
<i>Little Children</i>	1. sins forgiven for His Name's sake 2. have known the Father
<i>Young Men</i>	1. have overcome the wicked one 2. you are strong 3. Word of God abides in you 4. have overcome the wicked one
<i>Fathers</i>	1. you have known Him that is from the beginning 2. you have known Him that is from the beginning

Our modern day army doesn't send "little children" or "old men" to battle. There is an age range for acceptable service in the armed forces. So it is with God also. He expects His "little children" to grow up into "young men" and the "young men" to mature into "fathers". Each category has its particular emphasis by the Holy Spirit and its own method of spiritual growth.

The area of focus and rejoicing in the lord for the "little children" is that their sins are forgiven and they know the Father's love. For the "fathers" it is knowing the Father--becoming identified with His purpose as father, receiving His father's heart. But, it is the "young men" who are full of vim and vigor, strong in the Word and ready to battle the enemy.

We need to understand the full meaning of the attributes of the "young men" if we are to understand their work and purpose--especially as it relates to us. The original Greek word used for "overcome" is *nikao* (nik-ah'-o), Strong's Number 3528 derived from # 3529 which means to subdue -- the King James Bible translates it variously as -- conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory.

This is the same word that Jesus used when speaking to each of the seven churches in Revelation. His promise was always to those who "overcome", i.e. subdue, conquer, prevail. We need to remember this. It is not the Lord's intention that we barely hang on by the skin of our teeth. He intends that we overcome because He has overcome.

Revelation also has another key use of *nikao* that gives us insight on how we "overcome".

Rev 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (KJV)

The "him" in this verse refers to the previous verses and means the Dragon--the Devil--and relates to the spiritual war in the heavens.

There are three requirements to subdue, conquer, overcome the enemy:

1. **Use of the Blood of Jesus**--i.e. no condemnation, boldness to enter the Throne of Grace
2. **Word of testimony**--i.e. testifying to what the Blood has done for us--disarmed the spiritual powers
3. **Loving not our lives to death**--i.e. willing to die for the work and call of God

These are attributes of "young men". They are strong and full of the Word and ready to subdue the evil one. Therefore, the battle call goes out to the "young men", not to the "little children" or the "fathers". And "young men" are expected to respond to the call. If you are a "young man" then you can volunteer for the army or you can be drafted by the Holy Spirit. Either way your life changes dramatically!

### **A SOLDIER'S LIFE**

Timothy is a good example of one called as a soldier.

1 Tim 1:18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; (KJV)

His charge, calling, commission was to "war a good warfare". This was to be done through the prophecies that had been given to him before.

2 Tim 2:3-4 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. (KJV)

From this we see that the life of a soldier is different from the life of a civilian. A soldier endures hardship. A soldier doesn't get entangled in the affairs of life but is focused on pleasing his Superior.

Many of our modern Church members treat this calling as if it doesn't involve them personally. During the Gulf War or the War with Iraq most of us did not participate. We sat on our couches and watched it on CNN. In Church, we sit on the pews and watch and listen to missionaries and others who have been on the front lines and react in about the same way that we did watching the Gulf War on CNN--do what you have to, just don't inconvenience me!

I personally believe that if we are not gaining ground for the Kingdom of God then we are losing it to the kingdom of darkness. We **CAN'T** sit and watch. We are participants whether we like it or not. Let's arm ourselves with the Word of God and "occupy till" He comes leading the armies of Heaven for the final battle.

All soldiers require training. There are six areas that are addressed by training.

1. The soldier must be secure in *identity*.
2. The soldier must be secure in *unity*.

3. The soldier must be secure in *obedience*.
4. The soldier must learn his *weapons* and how to use them.
5. The soldier must learn *discipline*.
6. The soldier must learn *loyalty*.

Interestingly enough, the very training we need as a soldier of God is also the training needed to be a functional member of the Body of Christ.

It is the initial basic training that is accomplished in "boot camp" that establishes us as unshakable in these six areas. That is the purpose of boot camp. No one desires boot camp and the strenuous work that it entails but it is absolutely necessary to turn a person into a soldier.

Our problem is that we want to skip boot camp and go on to officer training. It just doesn't work that way. God will not allow anyone to take a short cut. All of God's servants go through the same development process to produce the type of character required of one who desires to do the work of the Lord. There are no exceptions. Just ask Joseph, Moses, David, Jesus, Paul, or any other mature Christian.

Paul said that we should with patience run the race that is before us. When you run a race you have to obey the rules. There is a judge watching. If a runner tried to take a shortcut, he would be disqualified.

Many today have disqualified themselves by trying to take shortcuts to ministry. The Lord, Himself, walked through the process and refused to take any shortcuts. That is the only way that we can fulfill that to which the Lord has called us.

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## KNOWING YOUR PLACE & FUNCTION

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### FITTED TOGETHER

#### LIVING STONES

It is not by accident that we are called living stones.

1 Pet 2:5      Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (KJV)

In order to fulfill God's purpose we have to find our place, our "fit" in the Body. Stones have to be fitted or built together. You can't just pickup any old stone and stick it any old place in a building.

In order to be fitted together, there are some secondary purposes that must be accomplished. The stones have to be “dug up”, “cut up”, “shaped up”, etc. before they can become “fitted together”. If we put this into the context of “harvest” instead of “stones” it might be clearer. I grew up on a farm; therefore, the idea of the field being ripe for harvest makes sense to me. When harvest season comes, it has to be done then or much of the harvest will be lost.

**Example: harvesting corn.** On our farm corn was a staple. We canned a lot of it for our use. We fed it to the pigs, chickens, cows, and saved the best for seed for the next year. When the corn was ready for general harvest (we pulled “roasting ears” while it was young and tender for canning), we pulled the ears and gathered them into a wagon. Then, they were taken to the barn. In the barn they were prepared for their intended use. The “nubbins” (the ears of corn that didn't fully develop) were separated into their own “crib” (bin) to be used as pig feed. The largest and fully developed ears were run through the corn sheller. After shelling, the best was saved for future seed, the rest was used to feed the chickens. The average corn ears were usually ground and mixed with other ingredients to become feed for the cattle. All of the corn was used according to its intended purpose.

Can you see how this applies to the Church. Jesus said the world is the field. We (the workers) go to the field (the world) and gather the harvest (the converts, new births, etc.) that is ready and bring it back to the storehouse (barn, Church). There it is separated (placed, fitted, shaped, etc.) for its intended purpose (call, use, etc.).

Back to the stone analogy, the stones are found in the field or a stone quarry. They are dug up and taken to a stonemason for cutting and shaping for use. The stones that can't be shaped go to the scrap heap.

How does this apply to us? Who is God's stonemason? The Holy Spirit! We are stones that are in the shaping process. The Holy Spirit is working on us. He places us with people and in circumstances that create friction to rub off the rough spots and polish the flat surfaces. But, we don't like that. We seek to escape the shaping process (or refuse to yield to it to begin with) and because God gave us free will, many times we will escape. One who repeatedly does this, refusing to embrace God's purposes, ends up on the scrap heap. As a matter of fact, we use the word Gehenna for the Lake of Fire at the end of time because of the valley of Gehennem (Hinnom) outside the walls of Jerusalem that people used for a garbage dump. Fires burned there continually to burn the garbage. All of the things that defile the Holy City were thrown into this valley. So, we've taken this concept and applied it to the Lake of Fire—the final place for the universes' scrap heap, those that would not yield to the purposes of God (human and devil).

Peter gives us the shaping process to produce the qualities necessary for us to not be unfruitful, useless, idle in the things of God. If we do these things we will never fall. If we don't, we become useless to the purposes of God.

2 Peter 1:4-8 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly

kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (KJV)

After shaping, God places us in His Body, in the place where we fit. We don't choose where we fit, He does. A stone that has been fitted into place has other stones on each side, above and below. There is a closer relationship with those stones than with other stones. This brings us into fulfilling the purposes of the Father in our life.

Eph 1:9-10 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: (KJV)

We are called to fulfill God's purpose. If God's purpose is to sum up all things in Christ, then what are we called to? Evangelism. This is always the primary focus, to reach others so that they may be summed up in Christ.

What then is the second aspect of our call? First is to reach others; second is body ministry. Service to those who are being summed up, ministry one to another.

God's goal focuses on producing One, all things summed up in One. If we desire to serve God, then our goal should be to further God's purposes, to be a help in the summing up of all things. That means that our life, our ministry, is to help bring others into the One and to help the ones who are a part of the One.

There are seven areas of unity described in the Scriptures. As we are fitted together we will come into unity in these areas because God's purpose is to sum up in One.

Eph 4:4-6 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (KJV)

Part of our growing up in Him is to be fitted together into a functioning body (The Body is an *organism* not an *organization*). Each joint (connection) in the body supplies strength and effectual work, which makes increase (growth) and edification.

Eph 4:15-16 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (KJV)

Jesus was the Word made flesh and His desire is to make the Word flesh in us (to be conformed to His image)--from miniature to magnitude, Christ is revealed by His body.

As we continue with the Lord, we are faced with the issue of **unity**. In our early walk with the Lord, we concentrate on our relationship with Jesus. Our focus is on what the Lord has done for us. However, we need to remember that the Lord does something *for* us, that He might do something *in* us, so that He can do something *through* us.

## JOINTS AND SINEWS

As the verse says in Ephesians, the body is "fitly joined together". Joints are necessary if a body is to have any flexibility or movement. The joints are also the supply connection with the rest of the body. Have you ever had a shoulder or arm get out of joint? It causes a lot of pain and can restrict the blood flow to the limb. You become unable to move the arm until it gets put back into the joint. When that happens there is instant relief. Only a soreness remains. However, the sinews or ligaments around the joint have been stretched or even torn, making it very easy for the joint to come out again. Usually, the arm is put in a sling for a period of time until the ligaments can heal and tighten up again around the joint.

We have the same problem with the body of Christ. People get "out of joint" with others in the body. Life flow is restricted and pain results. Someone usually has to help put the person "back into place". The relationship has been stressed and it will be easy for a while to get "out of joint" again. We must strengthen the ligaments.

Within the body of Christ, ligaments and sinews are the covenants which bind us together. While I have a covenant with the Lord and through Him a covenant with all of His people, I must especially recognize that I a covenant relationship with those who have been "fitted together" with me. It is these covenant relationships which hold us in place and keep us from getting "out of joint".

This is the same concept used by Jesus in John Chapter 15 when He talked about abiding in the vine. The analogy is different--vine instead of body--but the concept is applicable to both.

Jesus is the vine and we abide as branches. If we don't abide, we are not connected to the vine. If we are not connected, we die because there is no life flow from the vine.

With the body, we are members one of another. That is, we are connected to each other and life flows from the Head to every member of the body. This life flow is interrupted when we get "out of joint" with each other. It is the same as a branch being separated from the vine. If the situation is not corrected quickly the branch or member will begin to die. That is why Paul said that many partake of the Lord's supper unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body. He means that members are out of joint with each other and because of that many of the members are sick and some have died. The life of the Body was unable to flow to them because they would not discern the Lord's body.

It is easy being spiritual by ourselves, but when others are brought into relationship with us it becomes much more difficult. After all, the scriptures say that we are a "peculiar people"! God has some strange kids! We each are convinced that we are the only normal person around.

However, we are not members alone but "members one of another". God has so structured His body that no one member can do everything by himself but requires others in order to accomplish the work that God has called him or her to do. We need each other.

**Psalms 133:1-3** Behold, how good and how pleasant [it is] for brethren to dwell together in unity! [It is] like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, [even] Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As

the dew of Hermon, [and as the dew] that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, [even] life for evermore.

The emphasis should be on "dwell together." We have lost the sense of community that is the Church. Community is not communal, that is, not necessarily living under one roof. But we should be a community of brethren dwelling together--sharing lives, hopes, and dreams.

It used to be that we grew up in a town, lived there, raised our family there, and eventually died there. It was our community. Everyone knew us, knew who our parents were, knew our reputation, and accepted us as citizens of the community. Now, with our mobile society and broken homes, this is not the case. We are wanderers without roots--aliens, outcasts, never feeling that we fit in. Something is lost from our society and our relationships. That which is lost in the world should be found in the Church--love, acceptance, forgiveness, and unity. Ephesians 4:3 says that we should endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit." We don't need to **create** unity. We only need to **recognize** it.

*Unity is a spiritual experience.* Uniformity is its carnal counterfeit. Unity comes by the Spirit. To dwell together in unity requires that we walk in the Spirit. Unity is something that our hearts cry out for even when we don't realize what it is that we need. The psalmist said that it is "good and pleasant." It is there that God **commands** the blessing.

Notice too that unity begins at the top and flows downward. That's one thing about the oil in the Psalm; it always flows down, never up. Unity must begin in the leadership. As the leaders come together in unity, then the followers will naturally come together also.

**John 17:22, 23** And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

We are made complete in one. This is a testimony so that the world may know that Jesus was sent of the Father. This is evangelism by community witness! Is this where the Church is failing? Where is our testimony? Where is our witness?

We think of unity as something mystical or reserved for Heaven. Is that right? What type of unity is in the Godhead? It's not mystical, but real, authentic, genuine, and powerful. It is a unity based on **light, life, and love**. It is a unity that Jesus prayed that we would have with each other.

However, we find that there is one great barrier between us and unity: **lawlessness**.

Lawlessness means "without law." In society, one who breaks or disdains the law of the land is called an outlaw. Well, the Church is filled with **spiritual outlaws** --those who have become a law unto themselves and have set aside the requirements of God. Several years ago, one poll surveyed those who professed to be Christians. Most of them attended church on a fairly regular basis, yet better than 75 percent said that their religion did not affect their daily decisions!

There is a difference between *lawlessness* and *rebellion*. Lawlessness is a spirit. Rebellion is an attitude of the heart. God exposes rebellion in our heart by His dealings with us in the

circumstances of life. However, lawlessness can be much more subtle. It can be hidden under layers of religious words or pious actions.

A thief can still be a thief even though he is not stealing at the moment. We can be an outlaw even though our actions are acceptable at the moment. Lawlessness is a spiritual issue that is exposed only when law is imposed on us.

"Oh, but we are not under law but grace," some may say. While that is true, our application of it is not entirely correct. We no longer keep the Mosaic law in order to be saved, but we receive grace through Jesus Christ. But Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. Paul said that the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Jeremiah said that in the New Covenant God would write His law on our hearts. God hasn't changed--the law is still the law--it has moved from external rules to internal attitudes of the heart. Jesus re-iterated the ten commandments during His sermon on the mount and His re-statement was more stringent than the old law!

**Commandments** are the specific *instructions* of the law. God has always intended that we keep His commandments. It's not whether we should or shouldn't but *how* we keep them that is important.

Commandment as a word is used 71 times in the New Testament (69 as "commandment," two as "precept"). Someone has estimated that there are more than 1,000 commandments from Matthew through Revelation.

When a commandment comes to our attention, we have two choices:

1. submit, or
2. resist.

This is an individual **choice**. Obedience is not automatic but is a learned accomplishment. The desire to obey is not obedience. Obedience requires action.

**Rom. 13:1-5** Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore [ye] must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

The literal translation of "subject" means "**to stand under.**" The same Greek structure is used for "resist" and means "**to stand against.**" These are our response choices. We either stand under or we stand against. There is no middle ground.

Lawlessness and obedience are dealt with in two different arenas of our lives: the arena of the *external and enforceable* and the arena of the *internal and unenforceable*. There are many areas where our obedience is obvious and external. Rules and regulations are enforceable from the outside because they are easily seen and can be compared with the standard.

However, lawlessness hides in the internal, unenforceable areas. These are a matter of the heart and are subjective and internal. An example is love. Jesus commanded us to love one another, but He doesn't make us do it. Love comes from our heart and is internal. Only we know if we are exhibiting God's love or not. It is unenforceable from the outside. When we can obey in the realms that are unenforceable, we can replace our spirit of lawlessness with a spirit of obedience.

To tear down the wall of lawlessness that keeps us from unity requires that we come to grips with three areas of the unenforceable:

1. **murmuring** typically this is done against people, especially those whom God has placed over us.
2. **criticizing** typically this is against the character and actions of people, especially of those whom God has placed over us.
3. **complaining** typically this is against the requirements or conditions that have been placed on us by God and by people, especially of those whom God has placed over us.

You see, a rebel seeks to find fault with the authority over him so that he will not have to submit.

## **LEARNING TO SERVE**

Lawlessness always wants to do its own thing. God's remedy is to teach us to serve. Being a servant is, like obedience, learned behavior. Learning to serve will break many things in us that are contrary to the way of God.

Jesus presents us with the greatest example of the heart of a servant.

**John 13:1-17** ... Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe [them] with the towel wherewith he was girded. ... So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for [so] I am. If I then, [your] Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. ...

For Jesus to do this required that He be secure about who He was. **Security** is inherent to the art of serving. The spirit of serving as presented by Jesus is the greater serving the lesser without personal gain. Serving flows out of **security and love**.

Our society is filled with selfishness and insecurity. This has created a generation that wants to be served rather than serve. We cannot serve successfully until we have overcome our position seeking and our absence of personal security. (According to Luke 22:24, just prior to the foot washing, the disciples were discussing who would be greatest in the Kingdom and who would be closest to the Master.)

## SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

We often differentiate between spiritual and secular authority. However, Romans 13:1-5 tells us that all authority is from God. Any real authority has its origin in God. That means that God also gives and removes authority to and from people both in the secular environment and in the spiritual. **We always get the authority that we deserve.**

When the children of Israel told Samuel that they wanted a king like the other nations, Samuel thought that they were rejecting him. However, God said no, they were not rejecting Samuel but were rejecting Him. Samuel told them what a king would do to them. They still wanted one. This is a classic picture of Israel as a hypocrite. They wanted to look like the other nations but still call themselves the people of God. We can't act and look like the world and still walk under God's authority.

God's authority can't be separated from His rulership. Jesus said that all authority in Heaven and earth had been given to Him. He is the King of the Kingdom of God. He delegates that authority to whom it pleases Him to do so. As believers we all have a measure of authority because we have "the name of Jesus." We speak the command of the King to demons, and they have to flee. We speak to diseases, and they are healed--all done by the authority of the name of Jesus.

As we continue with Jesus we come under authority--His delegated authority. The Kingdom of God is structured. The Church is structured. All things are ordered of God, and we submit to or resist this order of authority.

We have confused "direct authority" with "delegated authority." Direct authority refers to our access to God as priests. We have direct access by the blood of Jesus. We petition God and He answers. We have the right to use the name of Jesus. We even receive revelation directly. However, this doesn't mean that as we mature we have no need of anyone else. God doesn't intend that we always receive from Him directly, but he teaches us our need of each other by bringing His word to us through some of His servants.

**Matt. 10:40-41** He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

**Luke 10:16** He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

As we see from these scriptures, God places Himself one step behind His delegated authority. The attitude with which we receive God's representatives is also applied to the way we receive

God. He says that the way we treat His delegated authority is the way we treat Him. We see this clearly with the Apostle Paul.

**Acts 9:6** And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord [said] unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

During his encounter on the road to Damascus, it would have been easy for Jesus to tell him everything that he needed to do. Instead, Jesus tells him to go to the city where he will be told what to do. Paul does this, and Ananias, a simple believer, comes and lays hands on Paul for him to receive his sight and the Holy Spirit. Why did Jesus do it this way? Why involve Ananias? Because Paul encountered spiritual authority on the Damascus road, and his submission was tested by his receiving from Ananias.

The Lord has determined that there are some things that we will never receive from Him unless we can receive from His delegated authority. Thus, we stay dependent on each other in the Lord.

**I Cor. 12:21-25** And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those [members] of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely [parts] have more abundant comeliness. For our comely [parts] have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that [part] which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but [that] the members should have the same care one for another.

The Lord has a way of using the "less honorable" to speak to us when we get to thinking more highly of ourselves than we should. This keeps us humble and causes us to see that we need every member of the body not just the ones that we like or who seem to have powerful ministries. The Lord always knows what we need.

## **THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY**

God's authority represents God Himself, whereas His power represents His acts. Many times we seek after the power of God so that mighty acts might be done but forget about His authority. Usually this is done out of ignorance of God and His ways; however, sometimes it is done out of rebellion because a person is unwilling to come under authority. You can't have authority without being under authority. Authority flows from the throne of God to His creation in an orderly manner.

**Matt. 8:7-10** And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this [man], Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth [it]. When Jesus heard [it], he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

The centurion said that he was one *under* authority, not one *of* authority. When one is under authority, one can recognize authority and know the necessity of obedience to the word of authority or suffer the consequences. As seen here, recognition of authority provides faith.

Adam is another example of having authority when under authority. God placed Adam under His authority and gave him a commandment (law) that he might learn obedience: "Do not eat of the tree in the midst of the Garden."

Then God gave Adam dominion (authority) over all of the created things. As long as Adam remained obedient under authority, he had authority over everything else. When he sinned (disobeyed), he came out from under God's authority and lost his authority over the created things.

Our rebellion against authority is not rooted in Adam but rather in Lucifer.

**Isa. 14:12-14** How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [how] art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Pride caused Lucifer to desire to usurp God's authority--to ascend to His throne. The result was that Lucifer became Satan and now desires to overthrow all submission to God's authority. This is Satan's primary principle--stand against authority (resist).

It is pride within us that causes us to harbor within our hearts this same principle of Satan. Yet the scriptures say that "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). You see, if we "stand against authority," God "stands against us." However, Jesus showed us how to "stand under authority" (submit). He humbled Himself and learned obedience. In serving God we must not violate His authority. *It is possible in our work to stand with Christ in doctrine and to stand with Satan in principle.*

To serve without orders in disobedience to authority will result in God's judgment. Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire" (unauthorized fire) to the Lord. They were the sons of Aaron, which meant that they had helped with the offerings many times. They had seen Aaron perform the offering rituals and probably didn't see anything too difficult in them. As a consequence, since they felt like they were perfectly capable of doing the offering, they did one without realizing that God had delegated this to Aaron. Because they lacked understanding about God's delegated authority, they suffered the consequences.

Another way that the principle of Satan is manifested in us is in our desire to find fault. We try to find fault with the authority over us so that we won't have to submit. This fault-finding attitude is revealed by our mouths. The scripture says that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." When this touches God's authority (delegated or otherwise), it produces trouble for us. An example of this is when Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses.

**Num. 12:1-16** And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: ... And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by

Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard [it]. ... and the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood [in] the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, [I] the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, [and] will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses [is] not so, who [is] faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam [became] leprous, [white] as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, [she was] leprous.

In determining punishment, God went on to say that Miriam's actions were equivalent in shame to her Father having spit in her face. As a consequence, God's presence left, Miriam's leprosy caused her to be cut off from the congregation for seven days, and the people had to wait until this rebellion issue was cleared before they could move on.

Even though Miriam spoke too much, she didn't let her mouth get her into trouble the way Korah's did. He went beyond rebellion and also reviled the Lord's authority.

**Num. 16:1-35** Now Korah, ... rose up before Moses, with ... two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, ... And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, [Ye take] too much upon you, seeing all the congregation [are] holy, every one of them, and the LORD [is] among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? . . . And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for [I have] not [done them] of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; [then] the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that [appertain] unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that [was] under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that [appertained] unto Korah, and all [their] goods. They, and all that [appertained] to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. ... And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

God and His delegated authority are inseparable. You can't reject God's representative on the one hand and receive God on the other. *God jealousy protects His authority.* Ten times the children of Israel tempted God; five times they disbelieved Him; yet God forbore and forgave. But, for Korah's rebellion, God came to judge.

Korah and his followers went alive into the pit (sheol, hell). Even though the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church, a rebellious spirit can open the gates of hell. Many times the Church doesn't prevail because there is rebellion in its midst. All sin releases the power of death, but rebellion releases it the most.

King David, a man after the Lord's own heart, exemplifies the proper attitude toward God's authority. Saul was anointed King over Israel when the people demanded a king. Saul disobeyed the commandment of the Lord in the matter of King Agag and as a consequence was rejected by God as king. David is then anointed king by Samuel. Now David has a problem. He is the new anointed king, but Saul still sits on the throne. Saul has not descended from the kingship and David has not ascended.

Saul seeks to kill David because he knows that David is to be the new king. What is David to do? Should he take matters into his own hand and remove Saul?

**1 Sam. 24:4-11** And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he [is] the anointed of the LORD. So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on [his] way. David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself. And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and [some] bade [me] kill thee: but [mine eye] spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he [is] the LORD'S anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that [there is] neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

David refused to act in rebellion. He refused to raise his hand against the Lord's anointed. Even cutting off the hem of the skirt caused him guilt. Later, another test was offered to David.

**1 Sam. 26:7-12** So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not [smite] him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless? David said furthermore, [As] the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The LORD forbid

that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that [is] at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw [it], nor knew [it], neither awaked: for they [were] all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

Even when others are telling him that it is the Lord's will to kill Saul, David refuses to lift his hand against the Lord's anointed. Like David we need to remember that we are in subjection not to the man but to the anointing--the same anointing that came when God ordained the authority. David so respected this that he even had the man who murdered Saul killed!

**2 Sam. 1:14-16** And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed? And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, [and] fall upon him. And he smote him that he died. And David said unto him, Thy blood [be] upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD'S anointed.

## RELATIONAL AND POSITIONAL AUTHORITY

There are two types of authority--relational and positional. Relational authority is derived from our relationships and is primarily a family function. Positional authority is derived from our position or function. It is both a church issue and a societal issue.

I have authority in my family because I am the husband of my wife and the father of my children. Because they are related to me, they are subject to my authority. They are not subject because I am good or wise but because God established it that way. My family doesn't have to decide to be subject or not. They are subject by being my family. (They do have to decide about obedience--remember, submission is absolute, but obedience is conditional.)

The same is true of our authority in the Family of God. The authority of the believer is based on the fact that one has a relationship with Jesus Christ and, therefore, with the Father. It is based upon who Christ is and upon who we are in Christ.

God has chosen (by His own design) to establish the husband as representative of Christ in the family and the wife as representative of the Church. It is difficult for the wife to submit to her husband until she can see the delegated authority vested in him. When submission is difficult, the real issue is God's authority, not her husband.

**1 Cor. 11:3, 10** But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman [is] the man; and the head of Christ [is] God. For this cause ought the woman to have power on [her] head because of the angels.

This is God's ordained chain of command. Because of it, we have to fit into God's authority structure.

Because of their relational submission to their own husbands, women are restricted in the positional authority that is available to them.

**1 Tim. 2:11-13** Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

**1 Cor. 14:34-35** Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but [they are commanded] to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Within the Church, the woman is not to have the position (function) of teacher over men. This is not to say that a woman cannot testify, share, or otherwise proclaim Jesus. Women may even teach, but the parameters of their teaching are limited by the scriptures.

**Titus 2:4-5** That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, [To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

While leadership is primarily a man's responsibility, under proper male covering and headship, women can conduct powerful, effective ministries.

They can:

1. receive and minister spiritual gifts (Acts 21:8,9)
2. teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-5)
3. minister hospitality to ministers (Rom. 16:1-2)
4. share in an almost unlimited ministry under the covering and company of their husbands (Acts 18:1-3, 18, 26)

None of this is a question of inferiority or of lesser worth. Men and women are of equal worth, but they have different functions.

Children too are under the authority of the parents. Again, this is not a decision that is made but is due to the fact that they are the children of the parents.

This is a principle that also carries over into our Church family relationships.

**1 Pet. 5:5** Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

This naturally leads us into positional authority in the Church, for we are admonished to honor those who have authority over us.

**1 Thess. 5:12-13, 17** And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. [And] be at peace among yourselves. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

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# KNOWING YOUR ENEMY

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## SPIRITUAL ENEMIES

We are fighting for "spiritual territory" therefore our enemies are spiritual also.

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (KJV)

These enemies take the form of "principalities", "powers", "rulers of darkness", "spiritual wickedness (wicked spirits)" in high places (literally, the heavenlies). (*Places* is not in the original but was added by the translators).

We could, by looking at the original Greek text, say that we wrestle (fight) against principalities and the realms (jurisdiction) of their authority; against the Chiefs of the world who have used their strength to seize and retain darkness; against wicked spirits in the heavenlies.

### THE HEAVENLIES

The scriptures refer to the place of the Throne Room of God as the Heaven of Heavens. God made the heaven and the heaven of heavens. Paul spoke of a man caught up to the third heaven. It then stands to reason that there must be a heaven 1 and a heaven 2 or the man could not be caught up to heaven 3.

Where are these heavenlies? Heaven 1 is probably what we see when we look at the night sky--the heaven of our universe. I believe heaven 3 to be the dwelling place of God--the heaven of heavens. That leaves heaven 2--the mid heaven. This is the dwelling place of principalities and is the seat of their authority or jurisdiction. When Lucifer rose in rebellion against God, he took about a third of the Angels with him. In quelling this rebellion, these Angels (and Lucifer's seat of authority) were removed from the Heaven of Heavens. They were forced out of the presence of God and into the mid-heaven where they set up their seats of power and wickedness to prevent men from worshiping or glorifying the true God. They created a rival kingdom in opposition to God.

### ANGELS AND DEMONS

It is these fallen angels that are our enemies and, of course, Satan who is THE enemy. There is a hierarchy of authority for the kingdom of darkness that is designed to carry out the will of Satan. The fallen angels make up the chiefs and princes of this hierarchy and have areas of jurisdiction or realms of authority. They develop strategy and oversee the foot soldiers to make sure that their purposes are being carried out. The foot soldiers are demons.

Demons and fallen angels are not the same. Angels never try to occupy a body--they already have a spiritual body. And we know from scripture that angels can manifest themselves to us in their own body. Also, Angels tend to operate in the heavenlies. Demons, on the other hand, operate in an earthly context and are always trying to get a body (they apparently don't have their own). They desire a body so much that if they are about to be cast out of a person they would choose to go into pigs instead of having no body. After being cast out, a demon will return later and try to re-inhabit the body that he left. If he finds it clean and swept, he will invite seven other demons to come and live with him in his new, clean home.

This says to me that at one time demons had bodies or they wouldn't desire one so much. We don't know for sure what happened to their bodies, but, I believe (this is one possibility) that the earth was under the jurisdiction of Lucifer before he rebelled and that the earth had living creatures on it. I believe that these creatures also rose in rebellion with Lucifer and the group of rebellious angels. When God judged the rebellion, judgment also fell on the earth and its inhabitants. The earth was completely wiped clean of life. The creatures living at that time became the demons of today--dis-embodied spirits with no place to go until the final judgment and the Lake of Fire.

Whether you agree with this scenario or not is not important to this particular study. It is still obvious that fallen angels and demons are not the same thing. From the scriptures we see that we cast out demons but we wrestle against principalities and powers. Our approach is different. We deal with demons by casting them out with the command word of the authority of the Name of Jesus. We deal with principalities by the type of prayer that causes us to contest (in the Name of Jesus) their jurisdiction--the realms of their rulership. We wrestle away from them spiritual territory over which they have control.

## **TERRITORIAL SPIRITS**

Because the fallen angels have seats of power and realms of jurisdiction, it appears that many of them are assigned to different portions of the earth to further the purposes of Satan. This is clearly seen in Daniel.

Dan 10:12-13 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. (KJV)

Dan 10:20-21 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince. (KJV)

It is obvious that the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia is not a man, for what man could hold back one of God's angels for twenty-one days? This Prince, then, must be a principality with the jurisdiction of Persia as his area of control. Also mentioned in these verses is the prince of

Greece--another Satanic principality responsible for Greece. This clearly establishes the fact that in the kingdom of darkness there are territories ruled over by principalities. They consider these territories theirs just like the giants considered the Promised Land as belonging to them. We must occupy these spiritual territories and ultimately rule them for Christ.

Notice too, that God's angel referred to Michael as one of the chief princes (of God's angels) and also as "your prince" implying that Michael has responsibility before God for Daniel's people--the Jews. In this we can see that it is possible for angels to have jurisdiction that involves ethnic groups. That means that fallen angels can also be responsible for ethnic groups as well as territories.

It is also clear in chapter 28 of Ezekiel that there are two different beings referred to as the *prince* of Tyrus (Tyre) and the *king* of Tyrus (Tyre). The scriptures explicitly state that the prince of Tyre, though he thinks of himself as God, is a man. However, the description of the king of Tyre is such that he can't be a man. No man has ever been in the mineral Garden of Eden, nor been responsible for covering, nor been on the mountain of God, nor walked up and down among the stones of fire.

Most scholars believe this picture of the king of Tyre to be a description of Lucifer, himself. The prince of Tyre (a man) then obviously thought of himself as God because of the influence of the king of Tyre (either Lucifer, or a powerful fallen angel). People and territories that are under Satan's principalities tend to take on the characteristics of the ruling power.

You would not normally think that a place like Tyre would be important enough that the Devil himself would rule over it. However, there are some interesting parallels between Tyre (as listed here) and Babylon in Revelation 18. Could it be that the driving force behind these two cities is Satan himself? After all, Tyre had a physical ruler who thought of himself as god, Babylon will have the Antichrist who also thinks of himself as god. These are the same characteristics exhibited by Lucifer because he wanted to be god, too.

We do know from Revelation 2 that the church in Pergamos was in the place where Satan's seat is and where he dwells. His seat is his place of authority. It is interesting that the Pergamos Church was full of heresies and false teaching, probably from the influence of Satan's seat of power. Again, people (even in the Church) taking on the characteristics of the ruling spiritual powers.

We can see that cities are important to God when we realize that God has chosen Jerusalem as His city. And in the future even a New Jerusalem for all of us to dwell in. The enemy has also chosen his city--Babylon. One could almost say that the events of the end times are controlled by these two cities! Certainly, God's seat of power will be in New Jerusalem and Satan's seat will be in Babylon the Great.

Can you see now why "spiritual geography" is important? There are territorial spirits ruling over various sections of the earth and over ethnic groups. Their sole purpose is to further the purposes of the Devil--to steal, kill and destroy--to prevent people from glorifying or worshiping God. They hold people captive to the World System, which is under the power of the Prince of this world. We are to wrestle, fight, do battle with these spirits for their territory--to bring the Kingdom of God in power, to set the captives free.

## THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

We know we are bringing the Kingdom of God to an area when we begin casting out devils. Jesus said, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come unto you." God's Kingdom is always manifested in conflict with the kingdom of darkness. Could it be that we have difficulty in stirring faith toward God in people in some areas because we didn't bring the Kingdom of God in power. After all, the scriptures say that "the Kingdom is not in word but in power". In other words, you don't just talk it--you show it.

The Lord told us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come...in earth as it is in Heaven." How does it come? Through us as the ambassadors of Christ. We carry the Kingdom of God in us wherever we go.

Now, the Kingdom is in mystical form in the hearts of people, but, in the fullness of time, Jesus will return and establish His Kingdom in physical form.

The scriptures define the Kingdom of God as peace, joy, and righteousness in the Holy Ghost. These attributes are the result of our submission to the King. Any kingdom takes on the characteristics of its King. The Kingdom of God is no different. The character and power of our King is resident in His Kingdom.

Every kingdom (including the Kingdom of God) has order and structure in order to function properly. There are always various levels of rulers, judges, administrators, etc. in order to accomplish the work of the King. We are even promised positions of rulership in God's Kingdom if we persevere and overcome.

It stands to reason that if the enemy has territorial spirits and a hierarchy of authority then certainly God has a structure of order that includes angels over territories to help the people of God. The scriptures call them "ministering spirits" that help the heirs of salvation.

We are the foot soldiers of the Lord. It is our job to attack and overcome the enemy--to extend the Kingdom of God. We do this with a two fold battle plan. First, we wrestle with the principalities until victory is gained, then we carry the word of freedom to those that were held captive.

There are three reasons why we aren't doing it:

1. For some, it is because they don't know that we are at war. They live in ignorance of spiritual things.
2. Others know that there is a war going on, but the front lines are a long way away and so it doesn't concern them much. After all, they are sure that someone else has been called to do that sort of stuff.
3. Then there are those who know that we are at war and who know that they should be doing something, but don't have a clue about what they should do. As a result, a few feeble attempts are made to seek God's will, but eventually apathy sets in and they become non-productive for the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is always in the increase mode of operation according to the scriptures. How does this happen? How can the Kingdom of God increase? Only by our efforts to extend the boundaries of the Kingdom! God has entrusted us with this--we are to disciple nations, we are to pray for His Kingdom to come.

While legally Jesus is King of Kings, Lord of all, experientially not all of His enemies have been put under His feet. (We know that the last enemy, death, is still operative in the earth.) It was the same with the Children of Israel and the Promised Land. God gave them the land--they legally owned it! Yet, to possess it experientially, they had to walk on it. Walking on it was not easy because it was occupied by others that contested ownership! In practical terms, until they possessed the land by walking on it, there was no benefit to them. It was necessary to fight to get what God had already given! Why would it be any different for us? Fulfilling the promises of God in our life means spiritual battles have to be fought.

According to Jesus, our Kingdom is not of this world. Because of this, we don't fight the people of this world. Instead, we wrestle (struggle) against the spiritual powers that invisibly control the world system. One of our primary jobs then is to battle the enemy in spiritual warfare. We are to pull down the strongholds of the enemy and possess the Land of Promises in the Name of Jesus.

A stronghold is any fortification of the enemy. Enemy strongholds can be anywhere--in our personal lives, in our corporate lives, in our business, in our culture, in our society, in our government, et al. These are spiritual territories possessed, or, at least heavily influenced, by the desires and goals of the enemy. As these are torn down, the Kingdom of God is extended and we reclaim territory for God. We have helped put another enemy under the feet of Jesus.

We have to "strive to keep the unity of the spirit". Unity happens. It comes by the Spirit. However, maintaining unity requires work. That's our job.

Unity can only be produced by the Spirit--it is a spiritual reality. The enemy cannot produce unity--only its secular counterfeit, uniformity. In the natural it is easier for us to conform to uniformity than it is for us to live in spiritual unity.

Our God likes diversity (diversity of administration but the same Spirit). He created a world full of diversity--animals, plants, people. He is glorified when two or three unique, diverse people come together in His Name in one accord and purpose to do the work of the King.

God has said that He commands blessing where the brethren dwell together in unity. I believe that if we do our part here, then God's blessing comes both spiritually and physically.

The enemy strives to keep us from unity. He doesn't want anyone to be blessed. If he can keep us divided and isolated, he can keep us from victory. Effective spiritual warfare requires that we come into unity and be blessed of God.

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# KNOWING YOUR WEAPONS

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## THE BLOOD, THE CROSS, THE LIFE

The Lord has provided three things that enable us to be brought back to a place of being summed up in Jesus. It is important that we understand these three things and their place in our ministry of reconciliation--the blood of Jesus, the cross of Jesus, the life of Jesus

### THE BLOOD OF JESUS

We use words many times without thinking about their meaning. Words become overused to the point that we don't really know what they mean. We only know how to use them in the context which we have heard. That makes it sound like we know the meaning whether we do or not. The blood of Jesus is just such a phrase. It is misused frequently in Pentecostal circles. Have you ever heard the phrase "plead the blood"? Where did we come up with that? It is not in the scriptures. The closest meaning to this is in Revelation where the saints overcome the accuser of the brethren by the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb. As we shall see in a moment, this is the only true form of "pleading the blood". We testify to what the blood of the Lamb has done for us and this testimony is used specifically to overcome the Accuser.

What is the purpose of the blood? Who is it for--us or God? Most people would say us, but it is actually for God. The blood is an atonement. It is what God sees instead of our sin. Therefore, its primary purpose is for God--to satisfy His justice and righteousness.

Leviticus 16:30 tells us that the blood cleanses us before God. We are made pure before Him. Its purpose is to provide justification before God.

Does the blood give us a new nature? No, we still have our old nature which is not cleansed or made righteous. What is God's provision for the old nature? The cross!

God's provision for our justification is the blood of Jesus. His provision for our old nature is the cross of Jesus. The blood and the cross are not interchangeable. We sometimes treat them as if they are, but they are not. The blood takes care of our heavenly needs--righteousness and justification. The cross is God's methodology for our daily walk--the putting to death of the old man.

We need to understand the use of God's provision for us. If we understand this properly we will take away half the enemy's weapons against us. If we are sick and the Doctor gives us a treatment regimen that is designed for a different disease than the one that we have, it doesn't do us much good. The treatment is true for the proper disease but not for others. It is the same with God's provision--the blood of Christ is for certain things and the cross of Christ is for other things. If we need to treat something with the cross, it doesn't mean that the blood is not true. It just means that we are trying to treat the wrong thing with it--that is not what it was designed for.

While the blood justifies us before God, if we are dealing with a “cross” issue, the blood is not what is effective--we need the cross. It is inappropriate to pray, “O Lord, by your blood don't let me sin tomorrow.” It is appropriate to pray, “My old nature has been crucified with Christ, I will not yield to temptation. Strengthen me, Lord, in the inner man.” Do you see the difference between the two?

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST

The blood deals with our sins--what we have done. The cross deals with the body of sin--who we are--the son of Adam. The only thing that can be done with the old nature is crucify it. You can't clean it up, send it to church, make it good, or do anything else with it except crucify it. That's why we receive a new nature in Christ and we are to live by the new nature.

We need to understand three aspects of the cross:

The word of the cross

The work of the cross

The way of the cross.

The word of the cross is the preaching about the cross. The work of the cross is what Jesus accomplished when He hung on the cross. The way of the cross is the daily application of the cross to our lives. It takes the power of the Spirit to reveal the work of the cross to a person and it takes the power of the Spirit to apply the way of the cross to our life.

The work of the cross is a one-time event--a crises event. From then on we reckon the deed done. Our old man was crucified with Christ--it is done--the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.

The way of the cross is the application of the work of the cross on a real-time basis, a daily lifestyle that incorporates the work of the cross. In our lives the old nature is reckoned dead. The work of the cross is for the old man--the way of the cross is for the new man.

Jesus said that we should deny ourselves, take up the cross daily, and follow Him. This is a three-step process. It begins with us denying ourselves. Many people think of this as taking up their cross; but, Jesus said deny ourselves first and then take up the cross. What is the difference between these two?

Denying ourselves does not kill the flesh. A good moral person can deny the urge to steal because he is a good moral person. It doesn't have anything to do with God. Taking up our cross always involves death, the death of the flesh. This always involves God.

There are three aspects of the cross:

1. a *principle* in God before the foundation of the world, the Lamb was slain before there was a need for a savior.
2. a *place* where divine loves meets human hate, where the human will crosses the will of God;

3. a *power* for those that believe.

The old man must be delivered to death so that the life of Jesus may be manifested. As long as our old man is alive and active, Jesus is not revealed in us. We must be delivered to death so that the life can be revealed.

## THE POWER OF GOD FOR US

There are three aspects of the Cross:

1. A Principle in God from Eternity to Eternity
2. an event (place) in history
3. the power of God for us.

We have all heard the scripture preached about the cross being the power of God; in most cases, we have not rightly divided the word of Truth.

1 Cor.1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (KJV)

This is not a scripture for the lost. The preaching of the cross is not for the lost--they consider it foolishness. The preaching of the cross is for us *who are saved!* Read this scripture carefully, that's what it says, the preaching of the cross is the power of God to us who are saved! To those that perish (the lost) it is foolishness, they laugh at it.

Then, what is the power of God to the lost? The Gospel! The lost need to hear that Jesus came, died (shed His blood for atonement), was buried, rose and revived, and is now Lord of all. It is through the Gospel that the lost are wooed by the Holy Spirit.

Why is the Cross the power of God to us who are saved? Because, the power to be transformed into the image of Christ lies in the Cross not in the Blood. Songs and messages about the Cross are not (or shouldn't be) *salvation messages* rather they should be *overcoming messages!* We overcome in our daily walk by the Cross not the Blood.

Look at how the Blood is used in Revelation.

Revelation 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (KJV)

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (KJV)

It is by the Blood that we cast down our Accuser. Who is our accuser? Satan! Where is he? Before God. What is he doing? Accusing us all the time. The Devil is not running around the earth wrecking havoc (this doesn't happen until he is cast out of Heaven in Revelation) he is before God accusing us.

While he is accusing us before God, what is happening in our minds? The same accusations are also being whispered to us. That is the link between our minds and the Throne room of God. As the accusations continue we receive condemnation. How do we stop that? By testifying to what the Blood has done for us.

The Blood has covered our sin. We are justified before God by the Blood. We can declare to the enemy that we stand under the Blood. God sees the Blood not my sin. There is no condemnation because God sees the Blood.

So, you see, the Blood is for God to see and for us to use to overcome the accuser. The Blood is a spiritual weapon to be used against the work of the enemy. The cross is for our daily walk; it is a weapon against the flesh.

The Blood keeps our conscious clear. Our hearts aren't washed by the Blood. Ezekiel 36:26 says that we get a new heart, a renewed spirit.

Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.  
(KJV)

Jeremiah said that the heart is desperately wicked. That is why we have to have a new one. For the same reason that we don't wash and iron clothes that are going to be thrown away, God doesn't wash our heart. We get a new one because the old one is going to be thrown away along with our bodies. The old heart epitomizes the old nature and it is to be done away with.

What did Jesus come to save? Not our bodies or our spirits, but our souls! Jesus gives us a new spirit and a new nature. Our bodies pass away and we get a new body in the resurrection. However, we are not given new souls; Jesus came to save or re-claim our souls. Our souls are what make each of us different. Our personality is a part of our soul and is eternal. Our souls are re-claimed through the process of sanctification.

The work of the Cross is the work of sanctification. The old Adamic nature has been put to death. This happened on the cross with Jesus. He was the Last Man, Adam. When He died the Adamic family tree died with Him. But, Jesus was also the Second Adam. He was the first of a new race, a new family tree. As we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. This is absolutely necessary because the scripture says that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, we must be of the spiritual Adam.

This is why baptism is so important. It is the symbolic burial of the Old Adam and the resurrection of the New Adam. While baptism doesn't save you in the sense of your heavenly inheritance, it does give you a mark in time for testimony purposes. It marks the death and burial of your old nature. This concept alone explains why baptism by sprinkling is inadequate--immersion is necessary to fulfill the type.

2 Cor 4:10-11 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

There are two things in this scripture--death and resurrection life. We have the work and the way of the cross. Its work was done 2000 years ago but its way is a daily application to us. We must continually reckon ourselves dead in order that the life of Christ might be manifested in us.

Luke 9:23     And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

In order to have the life of Jesus manifest in our mortal bodies, we must deny our will and choose God's will. Then, we can choose the cross. This is done daily. It is an act of our will--something that we have actively chosen.

Many people are confused about the cross that they are bearing. Instead of it being something that they have chosen, it is something that they can't or won't do anything about.

There are several things that are NOT our cross:

- ? **Reaping**; the scripture says that whatever a man sows he will also reap.
- ? **Chastisement**; whom God loves He disciplines as a Son.
- ? **Hindrances** to what we want to do; Satan hinders us from what we want to do.
- ? **People**; other people are not our cross.

What is our Cross? It is situations in our daily life where we lay down our life so that the life of Jesus can be manifest--our desires are traded for God's desires.

Ministry happens from resurrection life not from natural life. All of God's work in the earth is done through resurrection life. We can't have resurrection life until we know the cross. When we choose to lay down our life we have chosen the cross.

We cannot fulfill the purposes of God for us until we have chosen the cross. His purposes can only be accomplished through resurrection life.

## TEACH US TO PRAY

"Young men" must learn how to pray as warriors. Why?

Eph 6:12     For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (KJV)

Its not people that we are fighting, but, instead, various levels of evil spirits whose habitat is outside that of the world, i.e., high or heavenly places. Prayer in the authority of the Name of Jesus is the only method that God has given by which we can influence the heavens. Not only are we to pray to God, but also against the evil host in the heavenlies. Most of us know how to petition God for our wants and needs--we learn that as "little children". However, most of us don't know how to pray against wicked spirits and still glorify the Lord at the same time. We need to say with the disciples "Lord, teach us to pray!"

We don't always realize how God looks at prayer and how important it is to Him. For His own purposes He has linked a large portion of His work in the earth to our prayers. He wants us to partner with Him to accomplish His will.

Besides, we forget that God receives something from our prayers too.

Ps 141:2      Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. (KJV)

In the Old Testament Tabernacle, the Golden Altar of Incense stood at the door of the Holiest of Holies so that the aroma of the incense would fill the room. Our prayers come before the Lord as incense and fill the Throne room of God with their sweet aroma, not only for His nostrils, but also for all of the other beings that are around the Throne performing service and giving praise and worship to the Most High God.

Some of our prayers are even stored up in Heaven and are poured forth at the appropriate time on the Altar of Incense before the Lord.

Rev 5:8      And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

Rev 8:3      And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Rev 8:4      And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. (KJV)

I suspect that prayers according to the Will of God have a pleasant, pleasing odor to the Lord, while selfish, self-serving petitions have a stench to Him. If that is the case, I doubt that He stores up that type of prayer but, instead, looks for the pleasing aromas to save.

We can see a very important example of the value of others praying for front line warriors in chapter 12 of the book of Acts. Herod captured both James and Peter and the scriptures record their fate in this chapter.

Acts 12:1-12      Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. . . . Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, . . . and he smote Peter on the side, . . . saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, . . . Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; . . . and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of

the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying. (KJV)

We know that our God is no respecter of persons. Why was James killed and Peter set free? I believe it was the prayers of the church. The scripture doesn't record anything about prayers for James and as a result, the demonic power working through Herod had its way. However, the church was praying specifically and continuously for Peter with the result that God sent His angel to free him from the prison. This was warfare style praying because the evil powers working through Herod were frustrated in their desires and the victory went to the believers.

There are a couple of interesting side notes about the prayer in this chapter. First, Peter wasn't too concerned--he wasn't praying--he was sleeping! Second, the church wasn't praying with great faith--they didn't really believe Peter would be free because when he appeared at the door they didn't believe it was really him!

We can learn two lessons from this.

1. We can rest in bad circumstances if others are praying for us.
2. We don't have to "feel" full of faith to pray for others. God stills acts on our prayers.

Warfare prayer uses the Word of God as a sword. When Jesus was tempted of the Devil in the wilderness, He used the Word--"it is written"--to cut off each temptation. This was a spiritual power encounter of the first magnitude and provides us with the proper example of how to deal with the enemy. It is with the Word of God--the only purely offensive weapon given to us by God.

## DRESSED FOR BATTLE

The scriptures also speak of the armor that God has given, however, we still have to put it on! This is done when battle conditions exist and a fight is anticipated. Armor is for our protection when we are fighting. In the analogy given in the scriptures, the offensive weapon is the sword. When fighting with a sword, you are vulnerable when you are swinging your sword aggressively. The armor protects you from the counter-attack of the enemy you are fighting.

Some commentators have made a big issue of the fact that there is no armor for the back and have interpreted this to mean that the armor is defensive. Not so! The armor protects you as you march forward. There is no protection for the back because you never turn your back on the enemy. Some would then say that the enemy can sneak around you and come up on your back! However, God expects us to be in rank and file. We have our brother soldiers on each side of us as we march toward the enemy. Not breaking ranks is a very important issue for ground troops. It was said of Zebulun in the Old Testament that besides being expert in war, they could keep rank with the result that they were not double minded.

1 Chr 12:33 Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank: they were not of double heart. (KJV)

1 Chr 12:38 All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king. (KJV)

In Ephesians Paul tells us that we have to put on the complete armor to be able to stand against the devil and then he describes the enemy troops as an example of why we need the armor.

Eph 6:11-12 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

It is because we wrestle--fight--against these four areas of wily devilish forces that we need to make sure that we have the armor on.

Paul then proceeds to re-iterate the importance of the armor and explains its function in detail.

Eph 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

To me, "having done all" means when you have vanquished the enemy, then, you "stand", i.e. you occupy the territory gained.

Eph 6:14-18 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Let's put the armor into a table format so that we can see how the various pieces relate to us. Each piece of armor protects a particular part of our spiritual being. Remember, we are not fighting flesh and blood but spiritual beings; therefore, our armor is also spiritual and not natural.

We need to add as further explanation of these scriptures this verse in First Thessalonians where Paul shows us that faith and love are part of the breastplate and hope is the essential element of the helmet.

1 Thes 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. (KJV)

Let us take these scriptures and combine them into one table so that we can easily see the relationship between the items of armor and their attributes and functions.

<u>ARMOR</u>	<u>ATTRIBUTES</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>
Helmet	Salvation Hope	to protect the mind from doubt and hopelessness
Breastplate	Righteousness, Faith Love	to protect the body from lusts and sins of the flesh
Boots	Peace	to protect where we walk from divisions--fights
Belt/Pants	Truth	to protect what we pass to the new generation--loins include the reproductive organs
Shield	Faith	to protect us from the fiery darts of the enemy--these are thoughts that the enemy throws at us
Sword	Spirit/Word	weapon of offense to strike at the enemy

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## KNOWING YOUR MISSION--PART 1

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### PREPARED FOR BATTLE

Any army, anywhere, prepares its recruits for battle through an intensive training program. These "Boot Camps" prepare the recruit for military life: to obey orders, to be loyal to comrades, to respect the chain of command, to use their weapons effectively and maintain them. After boot camp there may be specialized training in the area in which the recruit will be functioning.

No one who enters the army can bypass the boot camp training. Before he can be promoted or go into battle he must complete Basic Training. Every General, Captain, Lieutenant, Sergeant, and Private all went through the same boot camp preparation. Because of this, there is a commonality of experience, comradeship, and purpose regardless of the person's rank.

When a people prepare themselves for spiritual battle, it is absolutely necessary that they bear the mark of the covenant of God. The example for us is the Children of Israel entering the promised land. Since circumcision was not performed in the desert, the children that grew up while the older generation died off did not have the covenant mark. The first order of business after crossing Jordan was to circumcise every male. Under the New Covenant we have to have our heart circumcised as a mark of God's covenant. It is up to the leadership to make sure that those who are entering spiritual warfare have exhibited a circumcised heart.

## PERSONAL PREPARATION

Your personal relationship with God must be clear and clean before entering even the most elementary level of spiritual warfare such as casting out demons. This means that you must be born-again, filled with the Holy Spirit, and moving in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, i.e., have a history of experience with spiritual things. *You can't operate in the spiritual realm on the experience of someone else!*

There is a dramatic example of the importance of our own relationship with the Lord being correct before attempting to cast out a demon. The seven sons of Sceva had seen Paul casting out demons and thought that they could do that too. Their encounter with a demon possessed person left them naked and bleeding. We have to have the *right* to use the Name of Jesus, otherwise, there is no spiritual authority.

The seven sons of Sceva thought that the Name of Jesus was like some magic incantation that could be used by anyone. They were Jewish mystics and classified what Paul was doing as something similar (but a lot easier) than what they had been doing with their magic arts. They had no knowledge of the power and authority of Jesus Christ.

Another example of personal preparation to cast out demons is the requirement for fasting and prayer. A man brought his demon oppressed son to Jesus for help. He told Jesus that he had first tried with His disciples but they couldn't help him. Jesus said that this kind only goes out by prayer and fasting.

There are some ministry situations in which we will not be successful if we haven't prepared ourselves through prayer and fasting. During this process we humble ourselves before God, draw near to Him, cleanse our hands, and purify our hearts. The moment you decide to do spiritual warfare, these functions are no longer optional. Remember, spiritual war is real; casualties are real.

James tells us what we need to do to resist the devil so that he will flee from us.

James 4:6-8 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (KJV)

It begins with submitting to God because God resists or opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. A prideful, arrogant, rebellious person is an easy mark for the enemy because God, Himself, is actively resisting that person! But, one who humbles himself before the Lord receives grace. While we all know that grace is the unmerited favor of God, that definition doesn't help us much in daily living. I have defined grace as "the empowering of God to do what we can't". I believe that is the essence of God's favor.

Based on that definition, if we are going to fight the devil we will certainly need grace! Apart from God's sovereignty, there is only one way that we can get more grace--by humbling ourselves before the Lord. We humble ourselves through prayer and fasting.

The next step is to draw near to God. When we do that He draws near to us. His nearness causes light to shine on our darkness. We recognize that we are sinners--that our hands are dirty. We also recognize that we are double-minded because of our impure hearts. His nearness motivates us to cleanse our hands and purify our hearts.

Cleansing our hands deals with our *actions*. Purifying our hearts deals with our *attitudes*. We need correct actions and correct attitudes. It takes both to walk before the world with confidence in our God and His authority.

If we have un-repentant sins (actions) or our hearts are full of qualities (attitudes) that are contrary to the Word of God, we give the enemy an inroad into our life. These create handles on us that he can grab anytime he wants and toss us this way or that way. When you begin to resist the devil, he will look for every handle in your life--anything that will take you out of the battle.

The devil will provide situations that will tempt the hidden things in your heart. James tells us in Chapter 1 verses 14 and 15 that we are enticed by temptation because of what is in our hearts. This lust of the heart conceives sin and gives birth to death. In other words, there is a progression that begins with enticement and ends with death. If there is nothing in our hearts that can be enticed by temptation then the enemy can't tempt us to sin. We **MUST** purify our hearts before we go into battle.

The process of purifying our hearts also affects our minds. These scriptures say that we are double-minded, i.e., we go back and forth between God and the world. James tells us that the double-minded will receive nothing from God. If we are double-minded then how can we fight the devil if we receive nothing from God?

We **MUST** eliminate our double-mindedness if we are to be spiritually effective. We must focus our lives on fulfilling God's purpose and on seeking the Kingdom of God.

## **CORPORATE PREPARATION**

Powerful, effective spiritual warfare is not done by oneself. There is an exponential increase in effectiveness as spiritual warriors come together in agreement and authority. The Scriptures tell us that one can put a thousand to flight, but two can put ten thousand on the run and tells us again in another place that a three-fold cord is not easily broken. This means that there is multiplied strength in numbers.

Not just numbers but people who are a part of each other. Jesus said wherever two or three are gathered in His Name, He is in the midst of them. It doesn't take many, but it takes a single purpose. We need to be of "one mind, one spirit, one accord". We gather in His Name to accomplish His work. The moment we attempt to do this, the Scriptures that deal with problems between us and our brethren come into play.

To participate in spiritual warfare requires that all barriers, difficulties, walls, hurts, problems, bitterness, envy, backbiting, gossip, manipulation, and other works of the flesh be removed between us and our brethren. Our enemy is referred to in the Scriptures as the Prince of the Power of the Air--he rules over the air. Its no wonder then that communications (they all pass

through the air) are scrambled or mis-interpreted by the participants. That is why we have to apply the principles of the Kingdom of God in order to overcome the communication breakdown in the kingdom of darkness.

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE STRATEGY

God never gives us a job without equipping us, training us, and giving us a plan on how to accomplish it. The same is true of spiritual warfare.

God has a standard, natural procedure for us to bring forth the work that He has for us to do.

1. **Worship.** Everything begins with worship and fellowship with the Lord.
2. **Conception.** God puts into our spirit the vision, idea, burden, insight of the work He is calling us to do.
3. **Gestation.** The vision undergoes a time of purifying. It "cooks" or "percolates" for a time period determined by God. The vision grows and matures until it may look quite different from the original idea.
4. **Birth Pains.** At the appropriate time, the vision has matured to the point that birth must occur. This is a travailing process. Pain is an integral part of the birth procedure. However, the pain is not remembered long because of the joy of the new born.

If we follow this process, all that we need in terms of training, understanding, resources, and equipping will be developed.

### PREPARATION FOR BATTLE

Spiritual encounters of the military kind are not for the "carnal" Christian. Make sure that *you* are right with God first. *You can't go to war with the Devil until you are at peace with God.* It is very important that you have a good scriptural foundation in your life that is not easily shaken.

Before undertaking spiritual warfare, seek God for a Gift of Discernment. This will be a big help in determining the types of spirits that you are dealing with. Any group of warfare intercessors will need at least one person that regularly operates in the Gift of Discernment.

Since spiritual warfare is part of the process of extending the Kingdom of God, it is fought on progressive battlefields:

1. Personal
2. Family
3. City Church (as God sees it) with the Elders
4. Regional with the Apostles and Prophets

In your zeal don't try to bypass some battles in order to get to bigger and better things. We grow, mature, and fight in an orderly, progressive manner.

## MOBILIZING THE ARMY

There is a difference between a mobilized army and an unmobilized one. Each can be trained, prepared, and in readiness; but, it is the mobilized army that engages the enemy. Those who are called on "active" duty have some advantages. They don't have to worry about the supply line. While they are engaging the enemy, the Commander-in-Chief of the army provides housing, clothes, and food. The army can focus on overcoming the enemy ("... seek first the Kingdom of God") without thought to the needs of this world.

Before an army is mobilized, intelligence has analyzed the enemy positions, weapons, tactics, strategies, modes of operation, and other pertinent information. In a spiritual context this involves understanding about "spiritual geography". We must be discerning about the effect the invisible has on the visible. The story of Elisha's servant is a good example. He could see the visible--the horses, chariots, and great host of the enemy coming against them, but could not see the invisible until Elisha prayed for his eyes to be opened. Then he saw the spiritual army that surrounded Elisha and saw the results of their work when Elisha prayed.

II Ki 6:15-18 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. (KJV)

Remember, it is spiritual reality (the heavenlies) where our warfare occurs, but the outcomes of the battles are manifested in natural reality (us, our family, our cities.)

We need to ask God to open our eyes; to help us see reality the way that He does. We no longer see just in the natural but we must also see in the spirit. We need to understand how the enemy has drawn the lines for the "spiritual geography". Is there one strong man or several lesser ones dividing the area?

If we have trouble viewing the spiritual reality, we can usually open our understanding by logically projecting from the groupings of similar societal symptoms that are manifested in particular geographical areas. Remember, the area takes on the characteristics of its ruler. Of course, we must depend on the Holy Spirit to confirm and direct our understanding because our logic is inadequate to bring complete comprehension of spiritual matters.

Also, we need to guard our attitudes as we intercede. We can become so involved in the excitement of spiritual warfare that we forget the reason we are doing it to begin with. We must take time to praise and worship the Lord regularly before moving into spiritual warfare. Remember that the goal is to bring confusion to the enemy, tear down his strongholds and set the captives free for the glory of God.

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## KNOWING YOUR MISSION--PART 2

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During a war soldiers can go on many missions. Each mission has its own purpose and strategy. Jesus equipped His disciples to continue His work and the Holy Spirit equips us today for the same mission of continuing His work.

What was the work of Jesus? (That is, beside being the sacrificial Lamb.) The scripture says that He was revealed to destroy the works of the devil. What are the works of the devil? Again the scriptures say that the thief steals, kills and destroys. Then the work of Jesus is to restore that which was stolen, bring life to that which is dead and resurrect or rebuild that which was destroyed.

In order to train up His helpers, He sent out the twelve and then the seventy to do the work of the Kingdom of God. When they returned to Him they were rejoicing that even the demons were subject to them. Jesus gave us this authority.

Luke 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. (KJV)

There are two different Greek words translated "power" in this verse. The second one is the common word for power, but the first one has more of the meaning of "authority or jurisdiction". Carrying on the work of the Lord against the enemy is within our jurisdiction.

Jesus used the same word when He gave us what is called the Great Commission.

Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. (KJV)

What's the mission? All missions begin with "go". Go where? To all nations. What are we to do? Teach and baptize. Teach what? To observe all things commanded by Jesus.

Our life should be modeled after that of Jesus. He went about teaching the things of God and in the process He healed the sick and cast out devils as He came across them. In the Gospels, you will find that healing and deliverance always occur together. Some afflictions aren't just physical but have also a spiritual dimension. An example is the woman who was bound by a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years. Jesus healed her by loosing her from the spirit of infirmity.

To continue His work, we need to be doing the same things.

Matt 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. (KJV)

## TEARING DOWN STRONGHOLDS

2 Cor 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (KJV)

Paul defines in greater detail some of the work we accomplish as we pursue our mission. As we have said, a stronghold is an enemy fortification. These can be anywhere where the enemy desires to have influence without it being obvious that it is him.

Sometimes strongholds were built in our life before we met the Lord. Part of the process of renewing the mind includes identifying and dealing with these strongholds. Strongholds can also be created in us after being born again. If we repeatedly yield to sin in a particular area we open ourselves to a demonic empowerment in that area which creates a stronghold. Even though we repent and are forgiven, we have to deal with the stronghold in order to be completely free.

All strongholds have the flesh for their foundation. As you can see from the list of the works of the flesh in Galatians, there is a foundation stone of flesh for almost any category of stronghold.

Gal 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (KJV)

How do I know if I have a stronghold of the enemy? The answer is pretty simple. If you can by an act of will (decision) control the behavior then it is the flesh. However, if no matter how much you want to, you find an area seemingly uncontrollable then you probably have an enemy stronghold built to empower the flesh to sin.

## THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

Jesus came to earth with two main purposes: to reconcile and to restore. We also carry on with this ministry. We are to bring reconciliation to God through the blood of Jesus to all who will receive.

Eph 2:14-16 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: (KJV)

Col 1:20-22 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through

death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight:  
(KJV)

2 Cor 5:19-20 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.  
(KJV)

## THE MINISTRY OF RESTORATION

In Acts 3:19-21, the Bible speaks of the time of the restitution or restoration of all things. There are two aspects to this:

1. putting things back into their **right place**, and
2. putting things back into their **right condition**.

Both of God's covenant people, Israel and the Church, require restoration. Israel has wandered in exile far from their God-given **geographical** inheritance. The Church has wandered in similar exile far from its God-given **spiritual** inheritance. All of the principles that are unfolded in the *natural* realm of Israel's restoration are equally applicable to the Church's restoration in the *spiritual* realm.

In the story of the Valley of Dry Bones we have a picture both of Israel and the Church and the process of restoration.

The restoration is presented in two phases. In phase one, the bones are moved upon, brought together and fitted to each other by joints. Then ligaments, muscles, flesh, and skin cover them. The result is physically complete bodies.

In phase two, breath (spirit) enters the bodies and they stand up. The result is "an exceeding great army."

The initiative and plan for this comes from God. However, God doesn't accomplish it directly, but uses human instruments of His choosing.

While the restoration is in two phases, the prophesying also takes two different forms. First, the prophesying is directly to the bones. We can compare this to *preaching and teaching*. Next, the prophesying is to the breath (spirit). We can compare this to *intercessory prayer*.

## REPRODUCTION

We should remember that everything that has life in it reproduces. As a matter of fact, reproduction is one of the criteria that defines life in biology. Jesus said in John 15:8 to "*bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples*." The type of fruit that a disciple produces is that which is after its own kind (Gen 1:24, 25), that is, more disciples.

A disciple is produced through the Gospel. As one is born of the seed of the Gospel, it is natural (or should be) that the new life would seek to continue in the Word and so become a disciple. One who produces disciples then becomes a **spiritual father**.

**1 Cor. 4:14-17** I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

A father has a responsibility toward his children to train them in the ways of God. He does this in two ways: he is an example to them, and he teaches, instructs, and exhorts them as a father would a beloved son.

In the natural, certain things are required before one can become a father. One must be old enough to reproduce; there is a certain physical maturity that is necessary. And, one should be married (covenanted together). The marriage covenant is necessary to properly raise the child.

In the spiritual realm there are similar requirements. Anyone who ministers the Gospel should be willing to receive those born into the Kingdom under his ministry into a discipleship relationship where he would act as a spiritual father toward them. And he should be in a **committed covenant relationship** himself so that he doesn't raise the children alone.

We live in a time when it is easy to say that we are *believers* and yet live like *agnostics*. This is because our society doesn't put the physical pressure on our beliefs that previous generations had to face. Today, our beliefs are tested in a less obvious manner. In America, no one holds a gun to your head and says "deny Jesus or die." Instead, your boss asks you to "shade the numbers just a little," or suggests, "It was John's responsibility--let him take the fall." Every day, people deny Jesus by their agnostic actions, even though they profess Him as Lord on Sunday morning.

Why? Because they are spiritual children living without a father's oversight. With no father to warn them, instruct them, or be an example for them, then, it is no wonder that they live for their own convenience.

Today, the Spirit is bringing an emphasis to fatherhood, both of God and of the believer. The decline of fatherhood in the natural has made it even more important that spiritual fathers be brought forth. I believe that this is part of what is spoken of by the prophets:

Mal. 4:5-6      And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Luke 1:17      And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

I believe that spiritual fathers turning their hearts toward their spiritual children will produce a people prepared for the Lord. The overall purpose of discipleship is to raise up fathers.

God's pattern of reproduction is fathers teaching children who become fathers who teach their children, etc. This is especially true of our experiences with God.

Deut. 4:9      Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.

Isa. 28:9      Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? [them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts.

Just as a natural father oversees his child until he is a man, so the spiritual father travails over his children until the Word is made flesh in them.

Gal. 4:19 ... Little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, ...

We need spiritual fathers that will travail in birth until Christ is formed in the children. After all, that is the goal. Jesus was the Word made flesh and He desires to see the Word made flesh in us. When that is accomplished, then His body, the Body of Christ (us, the Church) will also be the Word made flesh once again in the earth.