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**SECTION ONE:
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FOR LIFE**

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**A. The Importance Of Understanding The Cause And
Effect Sequence In Scripture**

**B. The Progression And Consequences Of Sin
(In The Life Of King David) II Samuel 11-18**

C. The Destruction Consequences Of Sin: Psalm 38

D. The Development Of Reprobation: Romans 1:18-32

E. A Cry For Mercy And Forgiveness: Psalm 51

F. The Joy Of Forgiveness: Psalm 32

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSE AND EFFECT SEQUENCE IN SCRIPTURE

INTRODUCTION

As one studies the Scriptures, it is discovered that there are many “threads of truth” that run throughout. Such “threads” as GOD’s sovereignty, the deity of CHRIST, salvation by grace alone, etc. These truths are all very important to know and understand if we wish to comprehend GOD and learn HIS ways.

Another of these “threads” is “The Cause and Effect Sequence”. This is the principle that teaches us that to every word we speak, every act we commit, every thought we think and every attitude we possess, whether righteous or wicked, there is a corresponding “effect”. The wise man or woman will understand this, and thus order their life accordingly. May this study be a means for us to grow in this wisdom.

This study is based upon that all important admonition given to us by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6:7-8. Here he warned us to ...

“Be not deceived, GOD is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the SPIRIT shall of the SPIRIT reap life everlasting.”

To help illustrate this principle, the Apostle Paul uses the analogy of a farmer. Just as a farmer plants (i.e. - “*soweth*”) his seed in the earth to later enjoy (i.e. - “*reap*”) a harvest of grain, fruit, etc., so we “*reap*” a harvest in the spiritual, emotional, and physical realms according to what we “*soweth*” in our lives. If we plant “seeds” of righteousness in our lives, we will “*reap*” a crop of “*life everlasting*”. Conversely, when we plant “seeds” of wickedness, we “*reap*” a crop of “*corruption*” (i.e. - destruction).

“Every instance of obedience, from right motives, strengthens us spiritually, while every act of disobedience weakens us spiritually.”
George Muller

Seeds of Righteousness = Crop of “*life everlasting*”

* Faith in JESUS CHRIST	* Salvation (Acts 16:31)
* Meditation on Scripture	* Success (Psalm 1:2-3)
* Tithing to the LORD’s Work	* Reward (Luke 6:38a)
* Witnessing to the Unsaved	* Their Salvation (Jude 22-23)
* Remembering the LORD’s Day	* Promotion (Isaiah 58:13-14)
* Fasting unto the LORD	* Glory and health (Isaiah 58:6-8)
* Fearing the LORD	* Wisdom (Proverbs 9:10a)
* Humility	* Grace (I Peter 5:5b)
* Restitution to Those We Offended	* Clear Conscience (Acts 24:16)
* Honoring our Parents (Ephesians 6:2-3)	* Long, Prosperous Life

Seeds Of Wickedness = Crop Of “*Corruption*”

* Rejection of JESUS CHRIST	* Eternity in Hell (Revelation 21:8)
* Sexual Immorality (Proverbs 6:32-33)	* Destruction
* Not Tithing to the LORD’s Work	* Financial Loss (Malachi 3:8-11)
* Dishonesty	* Abomination to GOD (Proverbs 19:5,9)

* Sins of the Parents	* Passed on to Children (Exodus 20:5b)
* Using Alcohol and Drugs	* Pain and Sorrow (Proverbs 23:29-35)
* Keeping Evil Company	* Destroys Right Habits (I Corinthians 15:33)
* Pride	* GOD's Resistance (James 4:6a)
* Not Forgiving Those Who Hurt Us	* Bitterness (Ephesians 4:31-32)
* Not Honoring our Parents	* Short, Trouble-filled Life (Deuteronomy 5:16)

Understanding the “Cause And Effect Sequence” in Scripture should very much encourage us into sowing seeds of righteousness, but frighten us from sowing seeds of wickedness!

Perhaps the most definitive passage in Scripture given to us to illustrate this principle is Deuteronomy 28. It is here that the LORD, through the prophet Moses, lists various “*blessings*” (at least fifteen), and “*curses*” (over ninety!), that will come to us, dependent upon whether we obey HIM or disobey HIM (see Deuteronomy 29:1-2,15,58).

The wise man, women, or young person will learn to perceive why certain consequences are present in their life. If they are being blessed, it is because of their obedience and seeking the LORD. If they are being cursed, it is because of their disobedience and rejecting the LORD.

What should we do if we find ourselves reaping the negative “effects” of disobedience and rebellion towards GOD? Scripture gives us the following steps that can be followed to break that cycle of “*corruption*”, get us back to where we are in right standing with the LORD, and thus once again enjoying the rich “*blessings*” of “*life everlasting*”!

1. Confess Our Disobedience To The LORD As Sin

“If we confess our sins, (GOD) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousnes.” I John 1:9

2. Stop Practicing Our Disobedience To The LORD

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13

3. Make Restitution To Those I Have Offended

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Matthew 5:23-24

To make freedom from the curses of sinful choices complete, restitution should be made to those we have offended if possible.

If we can remember an offense that we have committed against someone else, no matter how small and long ago it was, we should ask for forgiveness from that person and make restitution if needed.

CONCLUSION

We have all made the mistake of making wrong choices in our lives, and thus suffering the tragic consequences from them. However, the LORD is merciful and forgiving, and HIS love is greater than our sins and their consequences. May HIS abundant mercy, forgiveness and love never deceive us into thinking that we can take advantage of HIM in these areas, but instead compel us to respond in total obedience to HIM!

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“Heavenly FATHER, I now see from the study of YOUR Word, that there are cause and effect sequences in relationship to the choices I make. I see that as I make choices based on wisdom, righteousness, etc., I will receive the joy and blessings that result from these. However, I also see that as I make choices based on foolishness, wickedness, etc., I will receive the sorrow and curses that accompany these. I now purpose, through Your grace and the power of Your HOLY SPIRIT, to seek to make the choices in my life that will please YOU and the other authorities YOU have placed in my life. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”

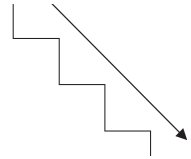
B. THE PROGRESSION AND CONSEQUENCES OF SIN (IN THE LIFE OF KING DAVID) II Samuel 11-18

INTRODUCTION

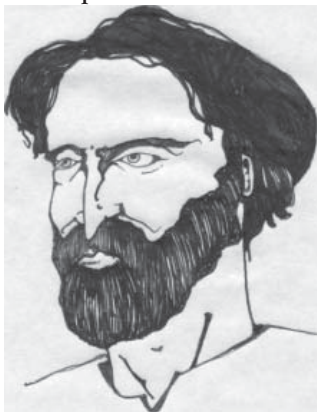
Scripture is very clear, and at times very explicit, in warning us of the terrible consequences of sin.

“The wages (i.e. - payment) of sin is death . . .” Romans 6:23a

Sin does not stand still! It is not stagnate! It is always a downward spiral, with the results (“wages”) always leading to “death” . . . whether physical, emotional, or spiritual!



Perhaps we can find no better illustration of this



King David

in the Scriptures, than in the life of King David of Israel. Here was a man who had a special relationship with the LORD. Indeed, GOD HIMSELF gave testimony concerning David that he was, “. . . a man after MINE own heart, which shall fulfill all MY will” (Acts 13:22b). Yet there came a point in David’s life where he rebelled against the LORD, which then set off a series of tragic events that impacted literally thousands around him. Many in a most terrible way!

Let us follow these events in this man's life (these "steps" if you will), and thus be reminded and admonished ourselves of the tragic, indeed deadly, consequences that will come into our own lives if we too choose to rebel against our GOD!

Step 1 - David Was Not Where He Was Supposed To Be

"And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel, and they destroyed the children of Amnon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem." (11:1)

This Scripture tells us that it was ". . . the time when kings go forth to battle. . ." David was a king, but instead of going out to war, he sent others (" . . . Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel . . ."), to take care of his responsibility.



David's Men At War

Many times we are tempted to sin because we are in a place we should not be, viewing something we should not view, listening to something we should not listen to, even thinking about something we should not think about.

Step 2 - David Went And Stayed In A Place Where He Could Sin

"And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the King's house, and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself, and the woman was very beautiful to look upon." (11:2)



Jerusalem

This Scripture seems to suggest that David innocently wandered into a place of temptation. However, at this very moment, he should have quickly fled back into his house and put the whole incident out of his mind. Instead, he continued to “. . . *look upon*” the woman he should not have.

We all experience various temptations. Indeed, even JESUS HIMSELF did (see Matthew 4:1-11). It is what we do with the temptation that matters. We can either yield to that temptation and thus sin, or, by GOD’s grace and power say “NO” to that temptation and thus experience victory.

Step 3 - David Yielded To The Temptation By Investigating It Further

“And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” (11:3)

It is now that David has yielded to the temptation. So he wants to know more about the woman. He discovers her name, and more importantly that she is another man’s wife. It is here that he should have said, “She’s married . . . she can’t be mine.” But the sins of lust and covetousness (wanting something that belongs to someone else), overtakes him and the downward spiral continues.

GOD has given each of us a conscience. That “inner-voice” that the HOLY SPIRIT uses to speak to us and convict us when we are about to do evil. Every time we ignore that “voice”, we also “quench” and “grieve” HIS HOLY SPIRIT (see I Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30).

Step 4 - David Acted Out The Sin That Was In His Heart

“And David sent messengers, and took her, and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness, and she returned unto her house.”

So David ignores the warnings of the HOLY SPIRIT, and commits this terrible act of adultery with another man's wife. The truth of James 1:14-15 becomes a reality in his life . . .

“But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Sin unchecked always leads to more and greater sin! This is why the Scriptures warn us, “The wages (i.e. - payment) of sin is death . . .” Romans 6:23a. The wise man and woman of GOD will remember this, and thus cling tightly to the LORD JESUS CHRIST and HIS righteousness!

Step 5 - David's Original Sin Leads To Even Greater Sins

“And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter saying, set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die . . . and Uriah the Hittite died . . .” (11:14-15, 17b)



Joab And His Men At War

Now the spiral down of David's sins begins to pick up momentum! First it was just a matter of him not being where he was supposed to be. This eventually led him into committing adultery. Now the progression spirals down to where he commits murder! (see II Samuel 12:9)

Scripture tells us that, “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil . . .” Proverbs 8:13a. To possess this “. . . fear of the LORD . . .” means that we remember that GOD sees everything we do, hears every word we speak, knows every thought we think, and perceives every attitude we exhibit. As we grow in our “. . . fear of the LORD . . .”, so too will we grow “. . . to hate evil . . .” more and more.

Step 6 - David’s Integrity Continues To Diminish Rapidly



“And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife . . .” (11:26-27a)

Bathsheba Mourning For Her Husband

As the progression downward of David’s sin continues, so too does his integrity. He has committed adultery with another man’s wife, and then he murders the husband. His integrity falls even further as he now marries this widow.

The Scriptures tell us that what David has done, “. . . displeased the LORD” (v. 27b). David’s character sinks lower and lower as his sins become greater and greater. Whenever we sin, our integrity suffers and all of this makes GOD very unhappy!

Step 7 - David And His Family Are Cursed By The LORD

“And Nathan said to David . . . Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel . . . Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house, because thou hast despised ME, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.” (12:7a, 10)

Up to this point, GOD has been silent concerning these sinful events in David's life. But now HE speaks, and it is with a thundering righteous indignation that HE pronounces this rebuke and indictment from HIS heavenly judgment seat!

Notice from the Scriptures above, that GOD equates disobedience to HIM with despising HIM. We as CHRISTians are guilty of the same thing when we sin. GOD loves us with an unconditional, everlasting love. HE reaches out to us and offers us everything we need to experience the joys and blessings of fellowship with HIM. However, we so often choose to reject HIM and HIS love, and instead go our own way and thus suffer the consequences. This is why HE is so grieved when we do this!

Step 8 - David's Sin Brings Shame To The LORD's Name

"And Nathan said unto David . . . Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme . . ." (12:14a)

This step in David's progression is indeed the most destructive! For not only has David's reputation been damaged by these terrible sins, but now the LORD's has as well!

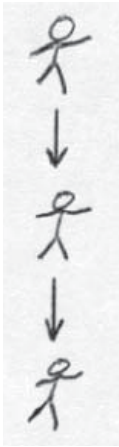
The same is true for us today. This is so, because when we decide to follow the LORD, we become one with HIM (see Ephesians 5:30), and thus people identify us with HIM. With this truth in mind, we should be compelled to living a life that is controlled and directed by the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. When others see us behave, they should see the LORD JESUS CHRIST living through us. When others hear us speak, they should hear the LORD JESUS CHRIST speaking through us. Anything less than these can bring shame and reproach to our LORD!

"Let everyone that nameth the Name of CHRIST depart from iniquity." II Timothy 2:19b

Step 9 - David's Sin Causes Suffering For The Innocent

“And the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died.” (12:15b, 18a)

Even though David has confessed his sins to the LORD, and the LORD has forgiven him of them (see 12:13), we continue to see the progression and consequences of those sins. In this case, the suffering and death of the innocent child. The truth of Deuteronomy 5:9b becomes a reality here . .



“ . . . for I the LORD THY GOD am a jealous GOD, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that love ME.”

Iniquities Passed Down

When we sin, we like to believe that our rebellion only affects us. However, the Scriptures teach just the opposite. Indeed, when we sin, our rebellion affects everyone around us . . . even the innocent!

Step 10 - David's Son Amnon Commits The Same Sin His Father Did

“And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a lovely sister, whose name was Tamar, and Amnon the son of David loved her. And . . . (Amnon) took hold of her, and said unto her, come lie with me my sister. And she answered him, nay, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing ought to be done in Israel, do not

thou this folly. Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice, but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.” (13:1, 11b-12, 14)

Now the progression down of David’s sins really begins to spread in their effects upon those around him, particularly with his own family. Scripture tells us that, “. . . *when King David heard of all these things, he was very wroth*” (13:21). However, he had no one to blame but himself. Amnon was just acting out what he had learned from his father!

Bill Gothard has made the wise observation, “What the parents do in moderation, the child often does in excess.” This can be true in our families as well. Many times parents wonder why their children went so wrong. The answer is, they had “good teachers”! This is why, if we as a parent are indulging in some sin (or thinking of it), we must stop. For our sake . . . and our children’s.

Step 11 - David’s Son Absalom Commits Another Sin His Father Did

“Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, mark ye now when Amnon’s heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, smite Amnon, then kill him, fear not, have not I commanded you? Be courageous, and be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded.” (13:28-29a)



David Weeping For Amnon

GOD’s curse upon David and his family (see 12:10), now begins to be fulfilled. And again, David has no one to blame but himself. David thought it nothing to murder Uriah so he could get his wife Bathsheba. Now his son Absalom murders his half-

brother Amnon to avenge Amnon's rape of Tamar. This chain of events once again causes David great grief, for Scripture records that, ". . . *the king also and all his servants wept very sore*" (13:36b).

The promises of GOD are always fulfilled. If HE promises blessings from living a righteous life before HIM, we will receive blessings. If HE promises curses from living a wicked life, we will receive those curses. May this truth compel us to always seek the way of blessings!

Step 12 - David's Son Absalom Totally Rejects His Father

" . . . so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel saying, as soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. And the conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom." (15:6b, 10, 12b)

When David sinned and committed adultery with Bathsheba, then had her husband Uriah murdered, GOD spoke through the prophet Nathan and proclaimed that because David had done these things, he had, ". . . *despised the Commandment of the LORD . . .*" and indeed, the very LORD HIMSELF (see 12:9-10). Because of this, GOD pronounced that HE would, ". . . *raise up evil against (David) out of (his) own house . . .*" (see 12:11). Here that curse is fulfilled. For now David's own son Absalom rebels against him, wrestles the kingdom from him, and forces David to flee for his life (see 15:13-23).

Sin is such a powerful, evil force, it can compel even family members into becoming the most bitter of enemies. Our rebellion against the LORD and HIS Word always affects (and hurts), those closest to us the most!

Step 13 - David's Son Absalom Is Destroyed

"And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth, and the mule that was under him went away. And (Joab) took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through

the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.”
(18:9, 14b)

Once again, the consequences of David’s rebellion against the LORD claims another victim. This time his son Absalom. And again, this brings great grief to the heart of David. *“And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept, and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would GOD I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”* (18:33). Not only did David hurt over the death of his beloved son Absalom, but even more so because he knew he was to blame!

It would probably be safe to say, that when David first started this terrible, downward spiral of sin in his life and family, he never imagined it would “snowball” into all this destruction. But this is the awful nature of sin. This is why we must never minimize it . . . and always learn to hate it!

CONCLUSION

Scripture tells us that the HOLY SPIRIT has recorded the stories we have in the Old Testament for a reason. That is, “. . . *they are written for our admonition . . .*” (I Corinthians 10:11). There are many lessons for us to learn from these tragic events in the life of King David. Perhaps the greatest is that sin and its consequences is to be feared in a great way! In a fresh and powerful way, may we be committed to living more righteous and holy lives to the glory of our LORD JESUS CHRIST!

“Be not deceived, GOD is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the SPIRIT shall of the SPIRIT reap life everlasting.” Galatians 6:7-8

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“Heavenly FATHER, I am reminded from this sequence of events in the life of King David, that there are terrible consequences that come upon us when we choose to rebel against YOU and go our own way. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to seek to have a new and greater fear of sin and its consequences, and a new and greater desire to live a more righteous and holy life for YOU. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”

C. THE DESTRUCTIVE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN (Psalm 38)

INTRODUCTION



King David

There is a theme that runs throughout the Scriptures that is very important for us to learn. It runs from the very beginning in the book of Genesis, to the very last chapter of Revelation. It is a theme that can be summed up in the words of Romans 6:23a. For there the LORD tells us through the Apostle Paul that, “*the wages* (i.e. - payment) *of sin is death*”.

All sin has its consequences, and those consequences are always destructive. King David was someone who knew of these consequences, for he experienced them firsthand. He

wrote about this in Psalm 38, and it is this Psalm that this study is based on. As we study this great portion of Scripture, may we be reminded just how destructive sin is, and thus learn to hate it and literally flee from it!

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction (vv.1-2)
- II. The Consequences Of Sin To Our Body (vv.3,5,7-8a,10)
- III. The Consequences Of Sin To Our Soul (vv.4,6,8b-9,17)
- IV. The Consequences Of Sin To Others Around Us (vv. 11-14,16,19-20)
- V. The Consequences Of Sin To The LORD (v.21)

I. Introduction (vv.1-2)

What has prompted the writing of this Psalm by David, are those monumental transgressions of adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah (see II Samuel 11). David knows that the LORD is angry with him, and that HIS chastening is about to be administered because of this great rebellion he has committed.

David knew what it was like to be disciplined by the LORD! He says to the LORD in relationship to this . . .

“For THINE arrows stick fast in me, and THY hand presseth me sore.” (v.2)



GOD's Hand Of Conviction

David wrote in another Psalm concerning this as well . . .

“Remove THY stroke away from me, I am consumed by the blow of THINE hand.” Psalm 39:10

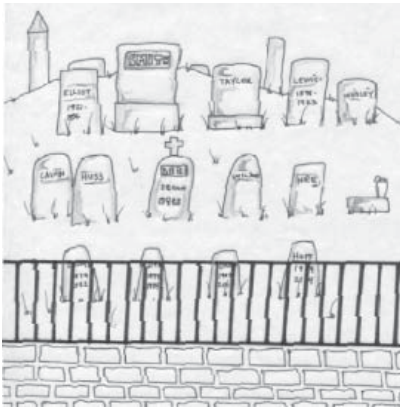
The LORD hates sin! We must never forget this! May we never adopt the attitude, “O well, GOD doesn’t care”, or, “GOD still loves me no matter what I do.” GOD does love HIS people, but HE hates their sin and has to punish it. When GOD disciplines us . . . it hurts!

Why does GOD chasten HIS people? HE answers this question HIMSELF when HE speaks the following . . .

“MY (people), despise not thou the chastening of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of HIM, for whom the LORD loveth HE chasteneth, and scourgeth every (child) whom HE receiveth. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised there by.” Hebrews 12:5b-6,11

The LORD disciplines us because HE loves us. HE chastens us to bring us to repentance and back into fellowship with HIMSELF.

II. The Consequences Of Sin To Our Body (vv. 3,5,7-8a, 10)



It is very evident in the world we live in, that sin has a direct influence on our physical bodies. David gave testimony to this when he made statements such as the following . . .

We Ultimately Die Because Of Our Sin

“. . . neither is there any health in my bones because of my sins.” (v.3b)

“My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.” (v.5)

“For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh.” (v.7)

“I am feeble . . .” (v.8a)

“My heart panteth, my strength faileth me . . .” (v.10a)

“Medical science estimates that from 60% to nearly 100% of disease today is the result of emotional stress.” S.I. Mc Millen, M.D. (Note: According to his book, “None Of These Diseases”, Dr. Mc Millen classifies “emotional stress” as such sins as anxiety, fear, bitterness, unforgiveness, etc.)

Scripture and human history are very clear in pronouncing that there are negative physical consequences when we sin. Indeed, GOD declared this very judgment upon the first man and woman after they committed the very first sin. There HE made it clear that physical death was a direct result! (see Genesis 3:16-19)



III. The Consequences Of Sin To Our Soul (vv.4,6,8-9,17)

Often, when the Scriptures speak of the “soul”, this includes the mind, will and emotions. David experienced the devastating consequences of sin to his soul, and he testified of them in this Psalm before us . . .



King David In Mourning

“For my iniquities are gone over mine head, as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.” (v.4)

“I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.” (v.6)

[“troubled” = depressed (see also Psalm 40:12)]

“I am . . . severely broken, I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.” (v.8b)

[“severely broken” = spirit shattered as with a hammer]

“ . . . my groaning is not hid from THEE.” (v.9b)

“ . . . my sorrow is continually before me.” (v.17b)

[“sorrow” = pain of the mind]

It is the testimony of Scripture and human history that sin brings devastating consequences to our mind, will and emotions. If it seems as if our soul is bearing a heavy “weight” of guilt, depression, or sorrow . . . perhaps it is because of sin in our life!

IV. The Consequences Of Sin To Others Around Us (vv.11-14, 16, 19-20)

A tragedy we often fail to consider when we sin, is the fact others around us are affected by that sin as well. David knew this truth from experience, and he wrote about this in the Psalm before us . . .



“My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore, and my kinsmen stand afar off. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me, and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. But mine enemies are lively, and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.” (vv.11-12,19)

Saul Attempts To Kill David

As noted earlier, David wrote this Psalm after committing those terrible sins of adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah (see II Samuel 11). GOD then pronounces HIS judgment upon David and his family because of these sins (see II Samuel 12:10-11). Following is the chronology of devastation upon David and his family because of his sins of adultery and murder . . .



Death Of Absalom

- The child that was conceived from David's sin with Bathsheba becomes ill and dies.
(II Samuel 12:15b, 18a)
- His son Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar.
(II Samuel 13:1-19)
- Another son Absalom, murders Amnon in revenge.
(II Samuel 13:22-29)
- Absalom revolts against his father, King David, and forcefully takes over the kingdom.
(II Samuel 15:1-37)
- Absalom is killed by Joab.
(II Samuel 18:1-15)

May we never be deceived in believing that when we sin, we only suffer the consequences. It is the clear testimony of Scripture and human history that our sin will always bring devastating consequences to others around us as well!

V. The Consequences Of Sin To The LORD (v.21)

Of all the destructive consequences of sin, the most devastating is the consequences our sin brings to the LORD. When we sin against the LORD, the consequences are felt in two basic areas. The first area concerns our personal relationship with HIM. David experienced this firsthand. This is why he made the following plea to the LORD in the Psalm before us . . .

*"Forsake me not, O LORD, O my GOD, be not far from me."
(v.21)*



David Pleading For Forgiveness

David is not talking about losing his salvation here. Once we are a child of GOD, our salvation is eternally secure (see Romans 8:35-39). However, when the child of GOD sins, that intimate fellowship and communion with the LORD is broken. This is why David cries out to the LORD here, and pleads for HIM not to “forsake” him.

The second area where consequences of our sin are felt in relationship to the LORD, is how others (especially the wicked), view HIM. Scripture tells us, that after David committed these two terrible sins of adultery and murder, he had . . .

“ . . . given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme . . . ”
(II Samuel 12:14a)

The more people that know that we are a follower of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the greater the shame and reproach that is brought to HIS Name and cause when we sin! David was a king. Well known, not only among his own people Israel, but by the surrounding people as well, most of whom were “*enemies of the LORD*” and himself.

It is one thing for our body, soul, and those around us to be affected by our willful disobedience, but quite another when it causes our fellowship with the LORD to be broken and brings shame and reproach to HIM and HIS kingdom!

CONCLUSION

We have learned from the study of this great Psalm that all sin has its consequences. It is as if the Scriptures are declaring this by the following illustration of a blank check . . .

		Whenever We Sin

		Date
Pay to the		
Order of	You and I	Sorrow, Pain
	-----	-----
		Amount
The Bank of Hell		God

<i>"The wages (payment) of sin"</i>		

As we are reminded of the awesome destructiveness of sin, may this compel us to learn to hate it, and thus literally learn to flee it!

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

"Heavenly FATHER, I now see from the study of YOUR Word, the destructive consequences that will come into my life because of sinful choices I might make. I see now how they will affect my body, my soul, others around me, and even my relationship with YOU. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to learn how to hate sin and the terrible consequences of it, and to appropriate YOUR strength in having the will to flee from it. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen."

D. THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPROBATION (Romans 1:18-32)

INTRODUCTION



Lake Of Fire

There is within Scripture, a sobering warning for those who would choose to reject the LORD JESUS CHRIST as their LORD AND SAVIOR and rebel against the laws of HIS Word. It is a warning, that unless heeded and responded to with humility and repentance, will result in physical, emotional and spiritual destruction here on earth, and eventually an eternal condemnation in the “. . . *lake of fire* . . .”, which is hell! (see Revelation 19:20; 20:10)

The individual who has reached this level of rebellion is referred to in Scripture as a “*reprobate*” (see Romans 1:28).

“*reprobate*” = morally perverted; defiled; hopelessly sinful . . . and thus rejected by GOD

The following Scriptures reinforce the above definition . . .

“Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.” II Timothy 3:8

“Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know GOD, but in works they deny HIM, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” Titus 1:15-16

The purpose of this study in Romans 1:18-32, is that we might see the “*reprobate*” described in detail and learn how reprobation develops. We then can learn to defend ourselves against it, and also help free those who might already be in the grip of its devastating destruction.

I. GOD’s Revelation To All Mankind (vv. 18-20)

It is important to remember that as we study “The Development Of Reprobation”, the Scriptures declare that GOD has revealed HIMSELF to all mankind. Every man, woman and child that has ever lived, has had some knowledge of the LORD GOD. Verses 18-20 of Romans chapter one tell us this . . .



No One Is “...Without Excuse...”



“For the wrath of GOD is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which may be known of GOD is manifest in them, for GOD hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of HIM from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even HIS eternal power and GODHEAD, so that they are without excuse.”

All Creation “Speaks” Of GOD

Notice four important truths we learn from this passage . . .

- * *“... the wrath of GOD is revealed ... against all ... unrighteousness of men...”*

The Scriptures declare that, “. . . all (of us) have sinned . . .” (Romans 3:23). Yet GOD has “*revealed*” HIMSELF to all of us in spite of this, even to the point where, “*that which may be known of GOD is manifest in (us) . . .*”

- * *“... men ... hold the truth in unrighteousness.”*

A better translation of this phrase would be, “. . . men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness.” What the Scriptures are saying here is, GOD reveals HIMSELF to all mankind, but many choose to “hold down” (i.e. - suppress and ignore), what GOD has revealed about HIMSELF.



- * *“... the invisible things of HIM from the creation of the world are clearly seen (and) understood ...”*
These “invisible things” are referring to GOD’s “eternal power and GODHEAD . . .” That is, HIS many attributes of Deity such as omnipresence, omniscience, etc. Not only are these “things . . . clearly seen” by all mankind, but they are “understood” as well. That is, all mankind comprehends that there is SOMEONE greater WHO has created the earth and even themselves.

“The Heavens Declare The Glory Of GOD” (Psalm 19:1)

- * *“... so that they are without excuse ...”*
Because GOD has “revealed” HIMSELF to all mankind, so much so that all mankind knows and understands that there is a GOD, every man, woman and child that has ever lived will have to give an account to the LORD someday concerning their response to this revelation. No one will be able to say, “GOD, YOU didn’t tell me about YOURSELF. GOD, YOU didn’t show me concerning YOURSELF.”
Indeed, *“... they are without excuse. . .”*

II. Eleven Steps In The Development Of Reprobation (vv.21-28)



“Religion” Does Not Guarantee Salvation

1. *“... they knew GOD ...” (v. 21a)*
The Word “knew” here means “to understand completely”. This does not mean this person is a CHRISTian, for the

context here makes it clear that they are not. Rather, as verses 18-20 above have taught us, every human being (including the reprobate), has some knowledge and understanding of the LORD.

2. “... *they glorified HIM not as GOD* ...” (v. 21b)

The word “*glorified*” here means “to acknowledge GOD for WHO HE is.” The reprobate knows and even understands GOD to a certain degree. However, he refuses to acknowledge HIM as GOD and the fact that he will have to give an account to HIM someday.

3. “. . . *neither were (they) thankful* ...” (v.21c)

If the reprobate refuses “to acknowledge GOD for WHO HE is”, it naturally follows that he will not be “*thankful*” to the LORD either.

4. “... (they) *became vain in their imaginations* ...” (v. 21d)

This is the next step in the development of reprobation. One’s mind and thinking process becomes defiled (see Romans 1:23). The word “*imaginations*” here means “reasoning”.

As the reprobate becomes more and more defiled in his thoughts, his ability to reason in a Biblical and moral way becomes less and less of a reality.



Man’s Reasoning Can Be Deceptive

5. “... *their foolish heart was darkened.*” (v. 21e)

This step in the development of reprobation is a frightening one. Up until this point, the reprobate has had some knowledge of GOD. But because of their rejection of this knowledge, they begin to experience the loss of this very knowledge. JESUS spoke of the reality of this truth when HE said . . .

“For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance, but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that (which) he hath.” **Matthew 13:12**

6. *“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools ...”* (v.22)
As the reprobate becomes more and more void of true knowledge and understanding, he becomes more and more confused and even delusional in his thinking. He believes what he is doing is right, but in reality he is living in direct contrast to GOD’s righteous standards.
7. *“(They) changed the glory of the uncorruptible GOD into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”* **(v. 23)**

Idolatry is a natural step in the development of reprobation. GOD has created each one of us with a desire to worship someone or something. As the reprobate rejects GOD, he then seeks to fill that void with the worship of idols . . . including himself.



8. *“Wherefore, GOD also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.”* (v. 24)

The word “*uncleanness*” here means “sexual perversion”. Adultery, fornication, sodomy, pornography, incest, bestiality, etc. are all manifestations of this “*uncleanness*”. Notice that Scripture says, “*GOD . . . (gives) them up. . .*” to these practices. In a sense GOD says, “If this sexual perversion is what the reprobate desires, then they will not only practice these wicked habits, but will indeed be enslaved and controlled by them!” It is in verses 26-27a, that the Scripture expands on this one particular aspect of “*uncleanness*”, that being sodomy (i.e. homosexuality). GOD labels sodomy as an “*abomination*” (see Leviticus 18:22), and something HE utterly abhors. It is as if GOD is saying that as far as “sexual perversion” goes, sodomy is the ultimate, wicked manifestation. Scripture proceeds to declare that

because of this perversion, these people “. . . receive in themselves that recompense (i.e. - penalty), of their error which was meet (i.e. - due them).” A host of modern diseases, including A.I.D.S, is one illustration of this Divine judgment!

9. “(They) *changed the truth of GOD into a lie ...*” (v. 25a)

This is the next step in the development of reprobation. When the reprobate reaches this point in his downward spiral of wicked perversion, he then seeks to justify his life-style by taking the Word of GOD and “twisting” it to

say something it was never meant to say. This is certainly a characteristic of many of the religious cults of today.



The Bible Is GOD's Truth

10. “... (they) *worshipped and served the creature more than the CREATOR ...*” 25b)

Now the reprobate has become the “god” of his own life. Not only has he rejected the knowledge and understanding of the only true GOD, but through his own pride and self-will, he actually has become deceived in thinking that he himself is “GOD”.

GOD destroyed the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the great sexual perversion there (see Genesis 19:1-25)



***Sodom And Gomorrah
Being Destroyed***

11. "... *GOD gave them over to a reprobate mind* ..." (v. 28b)
Verse 28a tells us that, "*they did not like to retain GOD in their knowledge . . .*". A clearer translation might read, "*they refused to have GOD in their thinking . . .*". They have now totally pushed GOD and HIS revelation aside. The development of reprobation is complete. They have reached "the point of no return". GOD has no choice but to give up on them, and to give "*them over*" to the foolishness of their own reasoning, the perversion of their own lusts, and the hopeless sinfulness of their own habits!

III. Other Wicked Evidences Of Reprobation (vv. 29-32)

In these last four verses of Romans chapter 1, we have listed for us twenty-five more characteristics of the "*reprobate mind*". GOD is not saying here that if we have committed one of these sins we are a reprobate. We are all guilty of at least one or more of these terrible acts! But here we have twenty-five more evidences of the person who has totally rejected the LORD and HIS Word!

1. "... *filled with all unrighteousness* ..."
2. "... (filled with all) *fornication* ..." (i.e. - sexual immorality)
3. "... (filled with all) *wickedness* ..."
4. "... (filled with all) *covetousness* ..."
5. "... (filled with all) *maliciousness* ..." (i.e. - evil in general)
6. "... *full of envy* ..."
7. "... (full of) *murder* ..."
8. "... (full of) *debate* ..." (i.e. - fighting)
9. "... (full of) *deceit* ..."
10. "... (full of) *malignity* ..." (i.e. - evil manner and character)
11. "... *whisperers* ..." (i.e. - gossipers)
12. "... *backbiters* ..." (i.e. - slanderous)
13. "... *haters of GOD* ..."
14. "... *despiteful* ..." (i.e. - violent)
15. "... *proud* ..."
16. "... *boasters* ..."
17. "... *inventors of evil things* ..."
18. "... *disobedient to parents* ..."
19. "... *without understanding* ..."
20. "... *covenant breakers* ..."
21. "... *without natural affection* ..." (i.e. - sodomy, bestiality)

22. "... *implacable* ..." (i.e. - unforgiving) (see II Kings 9:22)
23. "... *unmerciful* ..."

Notice in verse 32, two last evidences of the "*reprobate mind*". First of all they, "... *knowing the judgment of GOD, that they which commit such things are worthy of death . . .*" This statement by GOD brings us directly back to the beginning of our study (v.18). There Scripture tells us that . . .

"... the wrath (i.e. - judgment) of GOD is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness ..."



Jezebel Was One who Hated GOD

With these two statements, GOD is declaring clearly that even the most wicked of mankind knows that there is a GOD. Not only this, but they also realize, "... *that they which commit such things* (i.e. - the sins listed above), *are worthy of death . . .*" That is, they know that they deserve not only the "physical" death that all of us experience, but also the "spiritual" death (i.e. - the eternal lake of fire), that is the end for all those who reject the LORD JESUS CHRIST and HIS Word!

The last evidence of the "*reprobate mind*" given to us here is perhaps the most tragic one of them all. For here Scripture declares that . . .

"... not only do (they participate in the wicked acts mentioned above), but have pleasure in them that do them."

Here is the "*reprobate mind*" described in its final destructive stage. For here the "*reprobate*" knows of GOD's judgment upon him and his wicked deeds, but yet totally disregards this final punishment, and not only continues to commit these vile sins, but enjoys the company of others who do the same. As noted earlier, this is the person who has reached "the point of no return". GOD has no choice but to give up on them, and to give "*them over*" to the foolishness of their own reasoning, the perversion of their own lusts, and the hopeless sinfulness of their own habits!

CONCLUSION



The Last Judgment

We have learned the destructive steps and consequences that come to those who would choose to reject the LORD JESUS CHRIST as their LORD and SAVIOR and rebel against the laws of HIS Word.

We have seen these bring destruction to the physical, emotional and spiritual areas of the “*reprobate*”, with eventual eternal condemnation in hell. Three times in Romans 1, Scripture declares that GOD, “. . . gave them up (or over). . .” to their “*reprobate*” acts and thinking.

Again, this speaks of the

person who has reached “the point of no return”. Only GOD in HIS sovereign wisdom and power knows who reaches this point. Thus, those of us who love and follow the LORD should still seek to minister to the “*reprobate*” as much as we can, unless the HOLY SPIRIT clearly communicates to us to stop.

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“Heavenly FATHER, I have learned from the study of YOUR Word, the tragic and destructive development of reprobation. It reminds me LORD of the terrible consequences that come to all those who reject YOU and YOUR Word. I thank YOU once again for my salvation through JESUS CHRIST, and for keeping me from experiencing reprobation myself. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to seek to share with those YOU bring into my life, the salvation they too can have in HIM, and thus escape the condemnation that otherwise would accompany this rejection of YOU. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”

E. A CRY FOR MERCY AND FORGIVENESS (Psalm 51)

INTRODUCTION

This portion of Scripture is written by a desperate man. Desperate because he is hurting, and hurting because he has rebelled against the LORD GOD! The author is David, King of Israel, and this Psalm is written in response to the LORD (through the prophet Nathan), confronting him concerning his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and eventual murder of her husband Uriah. [Note: We studied this account in detail with the teaching, “THE PROGRESSION AND CONSEQUENCES OF SIN (IN THE LIFE OF KING DAVID)”, II Samuel 11-18.]



Jerusalem in King David's Day

Yet this is a portion of Scripture that each one of us can identify with, because each one of us has rebelled against the LORD GOD as well. It is because of this rebellion that each one of us needs the gracious and abundant mercy of our loving GOD! As we study this great Psalm, may we like King David both learn and apply these great truths to our hearts, so they can be in turn manifested in our lives . . . everyday!

I. The Cry For Mercy (vv.1-2)

“Have mercy upon me, O GOD, according to THY lovingkindness, according unto the multitude of THY tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.”

David has committed those terrible sins of adultery and murder. He now realizes the awfulness of these acts . . . so he cries out to the LORD for “mercy”!

“mercy” = kindness, tender affection, favour, pity

We can all identify with David here can’t we? We too have sinned, including being guilty of adultery and murder (see Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28)! We all can be very grateful that the LORD has a “multitude of . . . tender mercies”, because we all have a multitude of sins!

As David realizes his sin before the LORD by calling out for “mercy”, he also realizes his need for cleansing from that sin. He cries out for this in verse two . . .

“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.”



David Crying Out For Mercy

II. The Confession OF Sin (vv. 3-6)

“For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against THEE, THEE only, have I sinned, and done this evil in THY sight, that THOU mightest be justified when THOU speakest, and be clear when THOU judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, THOU desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part THOU shalt make me to know wisdom.”

For David thousands of years ago, and for us as CHRISTians today, the only prerequisite to receive GOD’s “mercy” and cleansing, is for us to “acknowledge” that we have sinned against GOD and HIS Word. This is what David does in verse three . . .

“For I acknowledge my transgressions . . .”

“acknowledge” = to know, to agree, to confess, to admit



John the Apostle

As GOD’s HOLY SPIRIT works in David’s life, revealing David’s sins to him, this compels David “to agree” with GOD that he has sinned, and thus “confess” these sins as well.

I John 1:9 is a New Testament passage that supports this principle . . .

“If we confess our sins, (GOD) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

When we sin, our fellowship and communion with GOD is damaged, but all we have to do to restore that sweet fellowship is “confess” that sin . . . “admit” that we have sinned.

There is another aspect of confession that Scripture teaches, that being “repentance”.

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13



Confession And Repentance Go Together

True confession of sin is accompanied by a repentance, that is, a turning from and “forsaking” of that sin. As David did this, he could exclaim to the LORD in verse six . . .

“Behold, THOU desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part THOU shalt make me to know wisdom.”

III. The Cleansing From Sin (vv.7-9)

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which THOU hast broken may rejoice. Hide THY face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.”

So again, David pleads for GOD to cleanse him . . . to “wash” him . . . to make him “whiter than snow”.



The Hyssop Plant

“hyssop” = the little shrub with which the blood and water of sacrificial purification were applied (see Leviticus 14:1-7; Numbers 19:1-19).

There was no Jewish sin-offering for adultery or murder. The penalty in GOD's Law for these two sins was death (see Leviticus 20:10; 24:17)! If David was to live, he needed the LORD's forgiving mercy. Scripture tells us that GOD was merciful. This is why GOD, through the prophet Nathan said, "*The LORD also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die.*" II Samuel 12:13b

We all deserve death and eternal damnation in hell because of our sins. However, GOD's mercy and forgiveness is ours as well as we sincerely cry out to HIM for them!

As David cries out to GOD for mercy and forgiveness, he also pleads for the return of HIS "*joy and gladness*", and "*. . . the bones which (GOD) hast broken (to) rejoice.*" (see also v. 12a)



The Death Of Absalom

Scripture declares that sin has its "*pleasures*", but only "*for a season*" (i.e. - a short time), Hebrews 11:25b. David experienced this firsthand. He may have received some "*pleasure*" from his sin with Bathsheba, but it quickly turned into intense sorrow with the death of their child (II Samuel 12:19); Amnon raping Tamar (II Samuel 13:14); Absalom killing Amnon (II Samuel 13:30); Absalom stealing his father David's throne (II Samuel 15:1-17); and Joab killing Absalom (II Samuel 18:14-15)!

This is why the Scriptures go on to exclaim . . .

“ . . . the wages (i.e. - payment) of sin is death . . . ”

Romans 6:23a

How tragic it is, that many times we exchange a few moments of pleasure, for hours, days, and sometimes many years of sorrow!

David ends this section as he began, crying out for Divine cleansing.

“Hide THY face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.” (v.9)

David knew the cleansing power of GOD’s forgiveness. For he later wrote . . .

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath HE removed our transgressions from us.”

Psalms 103:12



When we truly confess our sins and repent from them, we too can be confident that the LORD will not only forgive us of those sins, but will also forget them as well!

IV. The Restoration From Forgiveness (vv. 10-12)

“Create in me a clean heart, O GOD, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from THY presence, and take not THY HOLY SPIRIT from me. Restore unto me the joy of THY salvation, and uphold me with THY free SPIRIT.”

As David has experienced the cleansing power of GOD’s mercy and forgiveness, he also now receives the blessings of complete restoration too.

David’s sin with Bathsheba and his subsequent murder of her husband Uriah



King David

brought separation between him and HIS LORD. That sweet fellowship that David enjoyed with his GOD had been destroyed. However, after true confession and repentance, that relationship is restored once again.

David again has “. . . *a clean heart . . .*” and “. . . *a right (i.e. - upright) spirit . . .*” (v.10). He again enjoys that sweet fellowship with the LORD, and the presence of HIS “*HOLY SPIRIT*” working within his life (v.11). He again knows what it is like to have “. . . *the joy of (of the LORD’s) salvation . . .*” and the power of HIS SPIRIT giving him strength (v.12).

The Scriptures are clear in proclaiming the tragic results of sins committed. However, we can be very grateful for the cleansing power of GOD’s forgiveness, and the full restoration that comes to our relationship with the LORD because of this!

V. The Witness From Restoration (vv. 13-15)

“Then will I teach transgressors THY ways, and sinners shall be converted unto THEE. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O GOD, THOU GOD of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of THY righteousness. O LORD, open THOU my lips, and my mouth shall show forth THY praise.”

Not only has David been completely restored as to his relationship with the LORD, but he can also now enjoy a new power in his witness to his fellow man.

Notice in verse 13, that David’s relationship with others takes on a teaching and evangelistic role. He now is able to, “. . . *teach transgressors (GOD’s) ways, and (lead) sinners (to) be converted unto (HIM).*”

In verses 14-15, David cannot remain silent concerning GOD’s goodness in forgiving and cleansing him. So his tongue, “. . . *sing(s) aloud of (GOD’s) righteousness.*” HIS mouth, “. . . *show(s) forth (HIS) praise.*”

Just as our sins adversely affect our relationship with the LORD, so too our relationship with others. However, as our relationship with the LORD is restored, so too our relationship with others, even to the point where we can effectively minister to them, and bring praise to the LORD's Name for HIS forgiving and cleansing power!

VI. The Worship Of The Righteous (vv.16-17)

“For THOU desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it, THOU delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart O GOD, THOU wilt not despise. Do good in THY good pleasure unto Zion, build THOU the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt THOU be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering, then shall they offer bullocks upon THINE altar.”

So we arrive at this point in David's “journey” back to a righteous relationship with his LORD. HIS cry for mercy and forgiveness has been answered by GOD. Because of true confession and repentance of his sins, he has been cleansed and fully restored to a right standing with GOD. Even the power to testify to others has returned. Now his ability to draw near to the LORD in sanctified worship is restored as well.

In verse 16-19, David describes the worship that pleases GOD and the worship HE rejects.

First in verse 16, David proclaims the LORD's dissatisfaction with “*sacrifice*” and “*burnt-offering*”. It is not that GOD is advocating the doing-away of this part of Jewish life. Indeed, GOD HIMSELF instituted the animal sacrifices as an integral part of HIS people's worship (see Leviticus chapters 1-7). What the LORD is trying to communicate to us here is that worship without a pure and righteous heart is just vain, “religious” exercise.



GOD Desires Righteous Worship

In verse 17, David explains the worship that GOD does accept. Notice it begins with “. . . a broken spirit . . .” and “. . . a broken and a contrite heart . . .”



“broken spirit” = a shattered mind, will and emotions

“contrite heart” = a bruised or crushed inner-self

GOD Loves A “Broken Spirit”

The principle being taught here is a very important one for us to learn. The principle of “brokenness”. This is the principle that teaches us that before we can experience a truly intimate relationship and worship with the LORD, we must first have our “spirit” and our “heart” shattered and crushed. In other words, we must “come to the end of ourselves”. That place where we are completely dead to what we want and totally alive to what the LORD wants!

Following are several other Scriptures that reinforce this important principle . . .

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” Psalm 34:18

“For thus saith the HIGH and lofty ONE that inhabiteth eternity, WHOSE Name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Isaiah 51:15

For David, this “brokenness” came through his immorality with Bathsheba, and the many tragic and painful consequences he experienced because of this. GOD used this terrible incident in David’s life to bring about a whole new intimacy with HIM! Now David knows that his worship to the LORD will be pleasing to HIM, because this worship is from a cleansed and pure heart. They are now, “. . . the sacrifices of righteousness . . .” (v.19).



***David In His
“Brokenness”***

CONCLUSION

David knew from first-hand experience the awfulness of rebellion against a holy GOD. He learned the hard way of the terrible consequences that accompany this rebellion. However, he also knew the complete and full forgiveness that was his as he truly confessed and repented of this rebellion. He experienced the abundant and never-ending mercies of his LORD WHO was so ready and willing to bestow those mercies upon him.

Like David, each one of us rebels against the LORD as well. Each one of us experiences the terrible consequences that accompanies this rebellion too. But as we cry out to GOD for HIS mercy and forgiveness, we too receive these wonderful gifts from HIM. O, how we can praise GOD for HIS eternal love for us!

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“Heavenly FATHER, I once again have been reminded that rebellion and disobedience towards YOU and YOUR Word brings me many destructive consequences. But I am also very grateful for YOUR abundant mercy and forgiveness that can be mine as I cry out to YOU in repentance. I humbly ask YOU LORD, to help me to keep from taking advantage of YOUR mercy and forgiveness by continuing on in a sinful lifestyle. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to seek to live more of a holy and obedient life for YOU and YOUR glory. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”

F. THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

(Psalm 32)

Introduction

This is Part 7 (and the Conclusion), in the series we have entitled, “Sin Equals Destruction And Righteousness Equals Blessing”. Most of the series has been based on the life and experiences of Kind David, especially covering the tragic consequences of his sin with Bathsheba. In Part 6 (Psalm 51), we learned of David’s sincere repentance, as he cried out to the LORD for mercy and forgiveness for his sinful choices concerning Bathsheba. We saw how GOD forgave him and restored him to a right relationship with HIMSELF.

In this portion of Scripture (also authored by David), we will not only learn of the blessings that return to David’s life because of this forgiveness and restoration, but especially the overwhelming joy and happiness. May this study greatly encourage us to also choose the path of righteousness and forgiveness, so we too might know and experience the blessings and joy that can be ours as well!



David’s Sincere Repentance

David begins this Psalm by proclaiming the wonderful blessedness that accompanies the LORD's forgiveness of our sins . . .

*"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no guile."* (vv.1-2)

To better understand what David is seeking to communicate to us here, it would be profitable for us to define two important words in the above Scripture . . .

"Blessed" (Hebrew - ashere) = very happy
"imputeth" (Hebrew - chashab) = to think, to reckon, to put to one's account

With these two definitions in mind, we could paraphrase vv.1-2 as such . . .

"(Very happy) is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. (Very happy) is the man unto whom the LORD (does not remember or put to one's account their) iniquity . . ."

The following Scriptures reinforce this very powerful truth . . .

*"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath
(the LORD) removed our transgressions from
us."* **Psalm 103:12**

*"I, even I, am (the LORD) that blotteth out
thy transgressions for MINE own sake, and
will not remember thy sins."* **Isaiah 43:25**



How wonderful to know that not only are our transgressions and sins forgiven by the LORD, but they are also forgotten by HIM forever! As with David, we too can be "Very happy" for this wonderful reality!

But notice from verse three, that David did not always experience the joy of sins forgiven . . .

“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.”

Once again we are reminded by David here that unconfessed sin carries its harsh consequences. (For more detailed accounts of this truth, see the accompanying studies entitled, “The Progression And Consequences Of Sin In The Life Of King David” [II Samuel 11-18]; and “The Destructive Consequences Of Sin” [Psalm 38])

In the midst of David’s rebellion however, the LORD is not idle. In verse four, David testifies of GOD’s convicting work in his life . . .

“For day and night THY hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.”

The HOLY SPIRIT of GOD (here likened to a hand), was applying pressure upon David to convict him of his sin and to bring him to repentance.



GOD’s Convicting Hand

This is exactly what takes place, as David proclaims in verse five . . .

“I acknowledged my sin unto THEE, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD, and THOU forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.”

Notice the progression here . . .

1. David does not seek to hide his “*iniquity*” but acknowledges his “*sin*”
2. David confesses his “*transgressions unto the LORD*”
3. David receives forgiveness

Other Scripture supports this very important progression . . .

“If we confess our sins, (GOD) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9

This powerful truth reminds us again why David could be so joyful here. Even though he had sinned and displeased the LORD, he had taken the Biblical steps to receive the forgiveness of GOD, and thus had also experienced full restoration with GOD, This too can be our “happy reality” as well”!

Even though this “joy of forgiveness” can be ours as we attain it the Scriptural way, we must also remember that true confession is accompanied by a true repentance. That is, a “turning away” from that sin as well. This is the truth of Proverbs 28:13 . . .

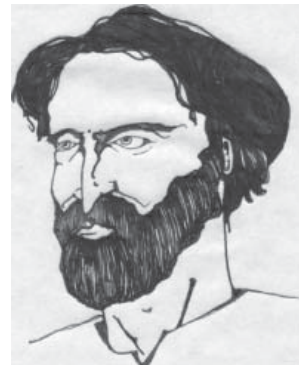
“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

This is the type of person David is describing in the first half of verse six. This is why he tells us here that . . .

“. . . this shall every one that is GODly pray unto THEE in a time when THOU mayest be found . . .”

David is describing the “GODly” person here. The “GODly” person in this context is not the sinlessly perfect. Even the “GODly” person still has a sinful nature, and will on occasion sin. What makes him “GODly” however, is the fact that when he is confronted with his sin, he quickly confesses and repents of that sin.

David was this kind of man. Even though he once had committed adultery, and even later murdered a man, once he was confronted with his sin, he confessed those acts as sin and repented of them (see II Samuel 12:1-13). Perhaps this is why it was the LORD HIMSELF WHO



King David

said of David, “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after MINE own heart, which shall fulfill all MY will.” Acts 13:22b

Can GOD say of us, “(He is) a man after MINE own heart . . .”? HE can, if we like David, confess our sins and truly repent of them quickly. Once again, we will know “The joy of forgiveness” if this is a reality in our life!

In vv. 6b-8, David gives us three other benefits that will be ours if we have been cleansed from our sins.

1. Protection

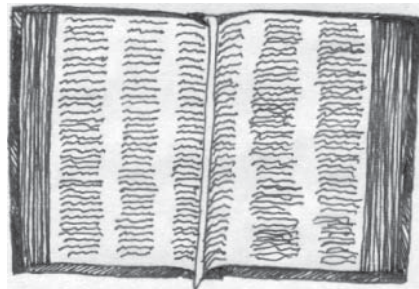
“ . . . surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. THOU art my hiding place, THOU shalt preserve me from trouble, THOU shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.” (vv.6b-7)

As we seek to live our lives in a righteous manner, the promise given to us here of protection, preservation and “*deliverance*” becomes ours. We can live, work and minister in the most dangerous of places, but if we are in the center of GOD’s will, we are in the safest of places!

2. Instruction

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go . . .” (v.8a)

We can receive instruction from many sources. Parents, pastors, other CHRISTians, even experience. However, no source is more valuable or used of GOD than HIS written Word. Every detail of life is addressed therein, either directly or indirectly. This is a promise for all those living their life in a pure and holy way.



The Source Of GOD’s Instruction

3. Guidance

“I will guide thee with MINE eye.” (v.8b)

Not only will the LORD “*instruct . . . and teach (us) in the way (we) shalt go . . .*” but HE will also “*guide*” us as we go. GOD’s perfect will for us as individuals is never designed to be difficult to discern. This too is a promise for all those who order their lives in a righteous way.

These are just a few of the many blessings and rewards that can be ours as we seek to live our lives according to the LORD’s Word and will. These should be strong motivations for us to live in “the joy of (GOD’s) forgiveness”!

As David begins to draw this Psalm to a close, he is led by the HOLY SPIRIT to give us one last warning. We find the warning in verse 9 . . .

“Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.”

David makes the analogy here between the horse, mule and human being. The horse and mule are two animals that can be fiercely wild and independent . . . and even dangerous. Yet when they are “broken” and properly trained (with help from the “bit and bridle”), they can become great assets to mankind. David is admonishing us to voluntarily lay aside our independence and self-sufficiency apart from the LORD, and instead let HIM “break” us and “train” us into becoming assets for HIS glory and the building of HIS kingdom. If we do not follow this instruction, we are reminded that, “many sorrows . . .” shall be ours because of this wickedness, (“*. . . but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.*”)!

David knew what he was talking about here. He had been like that horse and mule, wild and independent, and because of his rebellion against the LORD (i.e. - committing adultery with

Bahtsheba and then murdering her husband), he experienced the “*many sorrows . . .*” that accompanied his sins. But through his genuine confession and repentance, he knew once again “the joy of forgiveness” that brought GOD’s abundant “*mercy*” around him and into a right standing with HIM again.



Bathsheba

Are we practicing this stubborn independence toward the LORD and thus reaping these “*many sorrows . . .*”, or are we trusting in HIM and thus receiving HIS abundant “*mercy*” If the latter is true, we also possess “the joy of (GOD’s) forgiveness” as well!

In verse eleven, David concludes the Psalm as he began it, with the joyous proclamation of the happily forgiven. Notice he does this in the form of an admonition . . .

“Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.”

Though David had sinned against his righteous GOD, and rebelled against the clear teaching of HIS Word, the LORD had forgiven him because of his sincere confession and contrite repentance. Once again David could “*Be glad . . . rejoice . . . and shout for joy . . .*”, knowing his sins were forgiven and his relationship with the LORD was fully restored.

CONCLUSION

Notice from the verse above, that it is only the “*righteous*” and the “*upright*” who can truly possess this real joy of the LORD. This is so, because though they are still sinners, they have learned to quickly confess those sins and sincerely repent of them. May we too learn to possess these rich blessings from the LORD, so we too can experience, “The Joy of Forgiveness”!

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“Heavenly FATHER, once again I have been reminded from the study of YOUR Word, that, ‘Sin Equals Destruction And Righteousness Equals Blessing’. I thank YOU, that even though I often rebel against YOU and YOUR perfect will for my life, YOUR mercy is never ending and YOUR forgiveness brings me great joy. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to seek to be even more committed to living a life of righteousness for YOUR glory and the furtherance of YOUR kingdom. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”

**CHAPTER 2 -
THE NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD
FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS**

A. Psalms 1-50

B. Psalms 51-100

C. Psalms 101-150

THE NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS

A. Part 1 (Psalms 1 – 50)

*“O LORD our LORD, how excellent is THY Name in all the earth!
WHO hast set THY glory above the heavens.” Psalm 8:11*

*“And they that know THY Name will put their trust in THEE, for
THOU, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek THEE.” Psalm
9:10*

*“Our help is in the Name of the LORD, WHO made heaven and
earth.” Psalm 124:8*

The Scriptures teach that in the Name of the LORD there is great power and significance. Within the book of Psalms there is an abundance of different names (and titles), given to HIM. Each one of these is significant to us, because if we understand them, know what each one means, and then how each one applies to us, we can be greatly encouraged and blessed. This is what the following study is dedicated to.

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
1. "LORD"	Psalms 1:2	<i>JEHOVAH.</i> This title speaks of HIS eternal, divine nature, & HIS faithfulness to HIS purposes & promises, especially HIS redemption	We must put our full trust in HIM for our salvation, and rest assured that HE will keep us saved for all eternity.

"Behold, GOD is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; HE also is become my salvation." **Isaiah 12:2**

2. "Lord"	Psalms 2:4	Master; owner; ruler	Because HE is MASTER and OWNER of everything we are and have, we must willingly place our all into HIS care and under HIS authority.

"JESUS said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."
Matthew 22:37

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
3. “King”	Psalms 2:6	To reign	We must let HIM have complete control over us and everything in our lives.

“Not everyone that saith unto me, LORD, LORD, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my FATHER WHICH is in heaven.” **Matthew 7:21**

4. “A shield”	Psalms 3:3a	“shield” = a protector	GOD can and will protect us from the evil “arrows” of attack from Satan and the wicked.

“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear HIM, and delivereth them.” **Psalms 34:7**

5. “the lifter up of mine head”	Psalms 3:3c	“lift” = to be raised up	GOD can and will encourage us when we’re depressed or discouraged.

“Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: THOU hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness . . .” **Psalms 30:11**

6. “GOD”	Psalm 4:1	Hebrew: ELOHIM. This Name speaks of HIS strength and all- powerfulness	Because HE can do anything, we can bring all our cares and problems to GOD and know that either HE will solve the problem, or give us the strength to go through it.

“Come unto ME, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” **Matthew 11:28**

7. “Holy ONE”	Psalm 16:10	Kind; gracious; merciful	GOD wishes to bestow HIS infinite love and forgiveness upon us, even when we fail.

“In a little wrath I hid MY face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy REDEEMER.” **Isaiah 54:8**

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
8. “My rock”	Psalm 18:2a	An immovable fortress	As we build our lives upon GOD and HIS Word, we experience an emotional, physical, and spiritual stability that cannot be shaken.

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of MINE, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.” **Matthew 7:24-27**

9. “My deliverer”	Psalm 18:2c	To escape and be liberated fully	GOD will free us from all of our enemies, either right away, sometime later, or eventually forever in heaven someday.

“The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.” **Psalm 34:17**

10. “the HIGHEST”	Psalm 18:13	Supreme; upper; MOST HIGH	Because the LORD is the only true GOD, no one else or nothing else should command our worship.

“I am the LORD thy GOD, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.” **Exodus 20:2-3**

11. "My <i>REDEEMER</i> "	Psalm 19:14	To ransom; to deliver; to set free	GOD, through the blood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, has set us free from the power of Satan, self and sin.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great GOD and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, WHO gave HIMSELF for us, that HE might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto HIMSELF a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Titus 2:13-14

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
12. "My <i>SHEPHERD</i> "	Psalm 23:1a	To tend and feed sheep	The LORD can and will always meet our every need . . . be it physical, emotional, or spiritual . . . if we let HIM.

"I am the door; by ME if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture . . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the GOOD SHEPHERD, the GOOD SHEPHERD giveth HIS life for the sheep." **John 10:9, 10b-11**

13. “My <i>LIGHT</i> ”	Psalm 27:1a	To shine; to shine upon; to enlighten	As we live our lives according to JESUS CHRIST and HIS Word, HE reveals to us HIS will.

“Then spake JESUS again unto them saying, I am the LIGHT of the world, he that followeth ME shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the LIGHT of life.” John 8:12

14. “ <i>LORD GOD of truth</i> ”	Psalm 31:5b	“truth” = firmness; faithfulness; especially in keeping one’s promises	Because the LORD always keeps HIS Word, we can claim the promises of HIS Word for ourselves.

“O LORD, THOU art my GOD, I will exalt THEE, I will praise THY Name, for THOU hast done wonderful things, THY Counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.” Isaiah 25:1

15. “ <i>the Living GOD</i> ”	Psalm 42:2b	“living” = alive; lively	Because the LORD JESUS CHRIST has conquered death, we too can live forever.

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

I Corinthians 15:54

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
16. “the health of my countenance”	Psalms 42:11b	“countenance” = literally the face, but also applying to the spirit of a person	When we order our lives according to the LORD JESUS CHRIST and HIS Word, we experience health physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” III John 2

17. “my exceeding joy”	Psalms 43:4a	“joy” = to rejoice; to be glad	When we order our lives according to the LORD JESUS CHRIST and HIS Word, we experience the true joy that only HE can give.

“Blessed (very happy) is that man that maketh the LORD his trust . . .”
Psalms 40:4a

18. <i>"The LORD of hosts"</i>	Psalm 46:7a	"hosts" = the celestial armies (i.e. – angels)	If JESUS CHRIST is our LORD, HIS many righteous angels can be there to assist us as well.

"Are they (the righteous angels) not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Hebrews 1:14

19. <i>"the GOD of Abraham"</i>	Psalm 47:9	"Abraham" = the physical father of all Jews, the "spiritual" father of all CHRISTians	As a child of GOD, we become part of "spiritual" Israel. Many of the promises given to Israel are given to us as well.

"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." **Galatians 3:7,9**

20. <i>"The mighty GOD"</i>	Psalm 50:1	"mighty" = strong; powerful; superior to and stronger than all other beings	When the LORD is our GOD, we have access to the power that can help us accomplish anything for HIM.

"I can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth me."
Philippians 4:13

CONCLUSION

After meditating upon these great names and titles of GOD and the accompanying truths and applications, we too can proclaim with King David . . .

“Therefore will I give thanks unto THEE O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto THY Name.” Psalm 18:49

“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto HIS Name, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.” Psalm 29:2

“O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt HIS Name together.” Psalm 34:3

THE NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS

B. Part 2 (Psalms 51 – 100)

“I will freely sacrifice unto THEE, I will praise THY Name, O LORD, for it is good.” Psalm 54:6

“HIS Name shall endure forever, HIS Name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in HIM, all nations shall call HIM blessed.” Psalm 72:17

“Unto THEE, O GOD, do we give thanks, unto THEE do we give thanks, for that THY Name is near THY wondrous works declare.” Psalm 75:1

This is part 2 in our series entitled, “**THE NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS**”. As we learned in Part 1, in the Name of the LORD there is great power and significance. There we learned in Psalms chapters 1 – 50, the abundance of different names and titles given to HIM. We also learned that each one of those is significant to us as we get to understand them, know what each one means, and then how each one applies to us. Each Name and title then is used of GOD to bring us great encouragement and blessing. So it is with Part 2 and Psalms chapters 51 – 100. It is here that we will discover nineteen new names and titles. We will learn that they are just as

powerful and significant as those in Part 1. May they be just as encouraging and blessed to all of us as well!

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
1. <i>"HOLY SPIRIT"</i>	Psalm 51:11	<i>"HOLY"</i> = separation; to set apart	Because the <i>"SPIRIT"</i> of GOD is "set apart" from all that is evil, we should be as well.

"For I Am the LORD your GOD, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I AM holy . . ." **Leviticus 11:44a**

2. <i>"THOU GOD of my salvation"</i>	Psalm 51:14	<i>"salvation"</i> = safety; comfort	Though we live in a world full of sin, death, sorrow and pain . . . we can find safety and comfort in GOD.

"The Name of the LORD is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." **Proverbs 18:10**

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
3. <i>"mine helper"</i>	Psalm 54:4	<i>"helper"</i> = to help; aid; to assist	As GOD allows trials into our lives, HE promises to aid and assist us through those trials.

“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of GOD commit the keeping of their souls to HIM in well doing, as unto a faithful CREATOR.” I Peter 4:19

4. “my defense”	Psalm 59:9	“defense” = high tower	Throughout our lives, we experience the “attacks” of many enemies. Satan, the wicked, even fellow saints. The LORD promises to lift us above those “attacks”.

“. . . in (GOD) will I trust, HE is my high tower . . . THOU savest me from violence.” II Samuel 22:3

5. “The GOD of my mercy”	Psalm 59:10	“mercy” = loving-kindness	The blessings of GOD upon us are innumerable. The greatest of all is to know and experience HIS love for us.

“Behold, what manner of love the FATHER hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of GOD . . .” I John 3:1a

6. “my strength”	Psalm 59:17a	“strength” = prevailing might	Many times in our lives we will experience physical, emotional and spiritual weakness. The LORD promises to give us HIS power in those times.

“HE giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might HE increaseth strength” **Isaiah 40:29**

7. “a shelter”	Psalm 61:3	“shelter” = refuge	Many are the “storms” in life that we must endure. We can be grateful for the LORD’s protection during these times.

“The eternal GOD is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms . . .” **Deuteronomy 33:27a**

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
8. “JAH”	Psalm 68:4	The existing ONE	Our GOD is the true and living GOD, all others are false and dead. Because of this, HE is a personal and real GOD to us.

“Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD GOD of Israel.” **Joshua 24:23**

9. “ALMIGHTY”	Psalm 68:14	Sufficient; the ALL - BOUNTIFUL BEING	We all have many needs in our lives, be they physical, emotional, or spiritual. What a blessed assurance to know that GOD can meet everyone.

“But my GOD shall supply all your need according to HIS riches in glory by CHRIST JESUS.” **Philippians 4:19**

10. “my strong habitation”	Psalm 71:3	“habitation” = dwelling place	We all desire a home where we can feel secure and loved. The LORD can be that place for us.

“And now, little children, abide in HIM, that, when HE shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before HIM at HIS coming.” **I John 2:28**

11. “my hope”	Psalm 71:5a	“hope” = to earnestly expect	As we get to know the LORD, HIS Word and HIS ways, we can seek from HIM great things, and HE will provide.

“Call unto ME (says the LORD), and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”

Jeremiah 33:3

12. “my trust”	Psalm 71:5b	“trust” = a firm and certain confidence	There is only one person in life who can really be trusted, and that is the LORD. All others will fail us in one way or another.

“For we are the circumcision, which worship GOD in the SPIRIT, and rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the flesh.” **Philippians 3:3**

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
13. <i>“the GOD of Jacob”</i>	Psalm 75:9	<i>“Jacob”</i> = A man who once was a deceiver and a thief, but later was transformed by GOD into a spiritual man	No matter how wicked we might have been, we too can be transformed into a spiritual person by the power of GOD.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of GOD. And such were some of you, but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the Name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of GOD.” **I Corinthians 6:9-11**

14. <i>“SHEPHERD of Israel”</i>	Psalm 80:1	<i>“SHEPHERD”</i> = to tend and feed sheep	Even as the LORD has guided, defended and provided for the nation of Israel, HE too will do for us.

“I will feed MY flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the LORD GOD. And ye MY flock, the flock of MY pasture, are men, and I AM your GOD, saith the LORD GOD.” **Ezekiel 34:15,31**

15. “a sun”	Psalm 84:11	“sun” = literally the large star in our solar system, but also carries the idea of a servant	It is a humbling thought to realize that the ALMIGHTY GOD desires to serve us . . . we HIS created beings.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in CHRIST JESUS. WHO, being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD, but made HIMSELF of no reputation, and took upon HIM the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, HE humbled HIMSELF, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Philippians 2:5-8

16. “my FATHER”	Psalm 89:26a	“FATHER” = source; creator	The LORD is the source and creator of all things. If HE is our “FATHER”, we have all that mighty power available to us through HIM.

“For by HIM (CHRIST) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by HIM and for HIM. And HE is before all things, and by HIM all things consist.” **Colossians 1:16-17**

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
<i>“the rock of my salvation”</i>	Psalm 89:26b	<i>“rock”</i> = a sharp and steep formation	Not only do we have <i>“salvation”</i> in the LORD, but it is eternally secure because HE protects and keeps us saved.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of GOD which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.” **Romans 8:38-39**

<i>“THOU judge of the earth”</i>	Psalm 94:2	<i>“judge”</i> = to administer justice	GOD is a GOD of justice. HE will reward us for doing good, but punish us for committing evil.

“Behold, the days come , saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a KING shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth.” **Jeremiah 23:5**

<i>“the LORD our maker”</i>	Psalm 95:6	<i>“maker”</i> = to produce by work and labor	The LORD desires to produce HIS likeness in us. May we be obedient and willing “productions” for HIS glory.

*“Even everyone that is called by MY Name, for I have created him for MY glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him.” **Isaiah 43:7***

CONCLUSION

May we be encouraged and blessed as we learn, meditate and apply the meanings and applications of these wonderful and glorious names and titles of GOD. May they bring a new power and significance into our lives as well. Because of this, we can join in with the Psalmists as they testify . . .

“Sing forth the honor of HIS Name, make HIS praise glorious.”

Psalm 66:2

“And blessed be HIS glorious Name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with HIS glory, Amen, and Amen.” **Psalm 72:19**

“I will praise THEE, O LORD my GOD, with all my heart, and I will glorify THY Name for evermore.” **Psalm 86:12**

THE NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS

C. Part 3 (Psalms 101 - 150)

“Blessed be the Name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore.” Psalm 113:2

“Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the LORD, we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.” Psalm 118:26

“I have remembered THY Name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept THY law.” Psalm 119:55

This is the third and final part in our series entitled, “**THE NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS**”. We have already learned in Parts 1 and 2, that there is great power and significance in the Name of the LORD. We have studied the abundance of different names and titles given to HIM in chapters 1-100. We have also learned that each one of these is significant to us as we get to understand them, know what each one means, and then how each one applies to us. GOD has used each name and title to bring us great encouragement and blessing. So it is with Part 3 and Psalms chapters 101-150. It is here that we will discover nine new names and titles. We will learn that they too are powerful and significant, just as those in Parts 1 and 2. May they be just as encouraging and just as much a blessing as well!

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
1. “SAVIOR”	Psalms 106:21	To save	We are desperately lost in sin and destined for hell because of this. But GOD can save us if we trust in HIM for our salvation.

“But after that the kindness and love of GOD our SAVIOR toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to HIS mercy HE saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY SPIRIT, which HE shed on us abundantly through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOR .” Titus 3:4-6

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
2. “GOD of my praise”	Psalms 109:1	“praise” = psalm; song	As we walk with the LORD, HE gives us a heart filled with HIS songs and melodies.

“Let the Word of CHRIST dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the LORD.” Colossians 3:16

3. <i>“the Head of the Corner”</i>	Psalm 118:22	<i>“head”</i> = first and foremost	If we consider ourselves followers of the LORD, HE should command first place in every area of our life.

“Thus saith the LORD, the KING of Israel, and HIS redeemer the LORD of hosts, I AM the first, and I AM the last, and beside ME there is no god.” **Isaiah 44:6**

4. <i>“my portion”</i>	Psalm 119:57	<i>“portion”</i> = part of a whole	As a member of GOD’s family, we are privileged to share in HIS vast and eternal kingdom.

“Giving thanks unto the FATHER, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, WHO hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of HIS dear SON.” **Colossians 1:13-14**

5. <i>“My hiding place”</i>	Psalm 119:114	<i>“hiding”</i> = secret	Every one of us needs a time and place where we can get alone with the LORD to fellowship with HIM.

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the MOST HIGH shall abide under the shadow of the ALMIGHTY .” **Psalm 91:1**

6. <i>“thy keeper”</i>	Psalm 121:5a	<i>“keeper”</i> = to watch; to preserve	As the world continues to fall apart around us, what a peace and joy to know that GOD is protecting us.

“(The LORD) keepeth the paths of judgement, and preserveth the way of HIS saints.” Proverbs 2:8

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
7. <i>“thy shade upon thy right hand”</i>	Psalm 121:5b	<i>“shade”</i> = shadow	The experiences of life are sometimes like a desert . . . hot, dry and dusty. It is during these times that the LORD will be a cooling shadow over us.

“For Thou (LORD) hast been a . . . shadow from the heat. . . ”
Isaiah 25:4a

8. “ <i>The GOD of gods</i> ”	Psalm 136:2	“ <i>GOD</i> ” = the one, true Deity “ <i>gods</i> ” = idols and false deities	Our GOD is the true and living GOD, all others are false and dead. Because of this, HE is a personal and real GOD to us.

“And we know that the SON of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know HIM that is true, and we are in HIM that is true, even HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. This is the true GOD, and eternal life. Little children keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” **1 John 5:20-21**

9. “ <i>the GOD of heaven</i> ”	Psalm 136:26	“ <i>heaven</i> ” = the residence of GOD HIMSELF	What a glorious eternity we look forward to with all the saints, but especially the privilege to fellowship with the LORD personally.

“And (the angel) showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of GOD and of the LAMB. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of GOD and of the LAMB shall be in it, and HIS servants shall serve HIM, and they shall see HIS face . . .” **Revelation 22:1, 3-4a**

CONCLUSION

What a great encouragement and blessing these names and titles of GOD are. May we always remember their powerful meanings and applications for each one of us. Because of this, we can cry out in thanksgiving with David when he says . . .

“I will extol THEE, my GOD, O King, and I will bless THY Name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless THEE, and I will praise THY Name for ever and ever. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless HIS holy Name for ever and ever.” Psalm 145:1-2, 21

**CHAPTER 3 -
THE DEVELOPMENT OF
“MENTAL ILLNESS” AND HOW
TO EXPERIENCE TRUE MENTAL
HEALTH**

THE DEVELOPMENT OF “MENTAL ILLNESS” AND HOW TO EXPERIENCE TRUE MENTAL HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

“Mental illness”. What is it?
What are its characteristics?
How does it develop?
If someone has been
“diagnosed” with it, is it a
“condition” they must live
with the rest of their lives?
Even more importantly,
how do we experience
deliverance from it and
attain true mental health?
Those are all important
questions. Questions that

this study is dedicated to answering. Perhaps you have been
“diagnosed” with this “label” at sometime in your life, but you
want deliverance from it and desire true mental health. You can
be sure that GOD desires this for you as well. May the LORD,
through HIS HOLY SPIRIT, use the following Biblical principles
to begin to bring this liberating freedom to you . . . today!



GOD's Word Is The Key To Mental Health

I. WHAT IS “MENTAL ILLNESS”?

“Mental illness” is a catch-all phrase for many. A phrase used to describe people with serious emotional “conditions” such as manic-depression, paranoia, schizophrenia, extreme nervousness, hearing “voices”, etc. However, the term “mental illness” is really a misnomer in relationship to the above mental conditions (this is why we put it in quotes). These “conditions” are not “mental” problems, although they manifest themselves as such, but in reality are spiritual. Unless we understand this, none of us will ever experience true mental health!



A Local Psychiatric Institution

Of course there is a whole “system” that is involved in the diagnosis and “treatment” of “mental illness”. Hospitals, treatment centers, doctors, counselors and medications are all used to try to bring some measure of help. However, the individual or family that chooses to seek this kind of

help, should realize that most of the professionals involved in this “system” are anti-CHRISTian and most of the methods used are anti-Biblical. Shock treatments used to erase painful memories and medications to treat symptoms and not root problems are just two.

This is why Scripture warns all of us . . .

“Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of ME . . .” **Isaiah 30:1a**

II. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF “MENTAL ILLNESS”?

We learn what the characteristics of “mental illness” are by studying excerpts from the lives of two men found in the Scriptures.

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon

“The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.”



King Nebuchadnezzar In His Confused Condition

Daniel 4:33

1. Isolation – “. . . he was driven from men . . .”
2. Delusional, confused thinking – “. . . (he) did eat grass as oxen . . .”
3. Physical, unkempt appearance – “. . . and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.”

Saul, King of Israel

1. Demon oppression or possession – “*But the SPIRIT of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.*” I Samuel 16:14
2. Wrong emotions from false thinking
 - a. anger – “*And Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him . . .*” I Samuel 18:8a
 - b. paranoia – “*And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.*” I Samuel 18:12 (see also Psalm 53:5a; Proverbs 28:1a)
 - c. depression – “*And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.*” I Samuel 24:16b

III. HOW DOES “MENTAL ILLNESS” DEVELOP?

By studying exerts from the life of King Saul, we learn the devastating progression that resulted in his “mental illness”.

A. Pride

Pride is basically wanting to be the “boss” of our own life. It is the root that all other sins spring up and grow from. This is why Scriptures warns us that, *“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”* **Proverbs 16:18**

Saul first exhibited pride when he intruded into the priest’s office where only the prophet Samuel was ordained to go (see I Samuel 13:8-13).



Samuel Rebuking King Saul

B. Rebellion Towards The LORD And HIS Word

Rebellion towards the LORD and HIS Word is simply wickedness and sin. The Scriptures are full of warnings concerning what results from this rebellion. Following are just several in relationship to “mental illness” . . .

“The LORD will smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart.” **Deuteronomy 28:28**

“. . . but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind.” (i.e. – depression)
Deuteronomy 28:65b

“. . . but the way of the wicked (the LORD) turneth upside down.”
Psalms 146:9b

“There is no peace, saith my GOD, to the wicked.” **Isaiah 57:21**

Saul demonstrated this rebellion when he did not fully obey the LORD's command to completely destroy the Amelekites (see I Samuel 15:1-23).

C. A “Religious” Life That Is Void Of The HOLY SPIRIT

Many people desire the blessings of the spiritual life, yet seek to live in the world at the same time. Scripture clearly warns us that this is impossible (see Matthew 6:24). Indeed, GOD tells us that if we attempt to live this way, this can lead to “mental illness”!



Pursuing The World Brings Instability

*“A double minded man is
unstable in all his ways.”*

James 1:8

Saul certainly tried to practice this “double-mindedness” by attempting to worship the LORD while living in sin (see I Samuel 15:24-26).

D. Bitterness That Grew From Envy, Anger And Unforgiveness

Bitterness is that terrible “poison” that destroys so many, both the very person that is bitter and others around him (see Hebrews 12:14-15). Bitterness evolves from responding to relational conflicts in an unrighteous way, such as with envy, anger, and unforgiveness. These wicked and unhealthy emotions often then lead to various degrees of “mental illness”! This is why the LORD emphatically commands us to deal with these according to the following Scriptures . . .

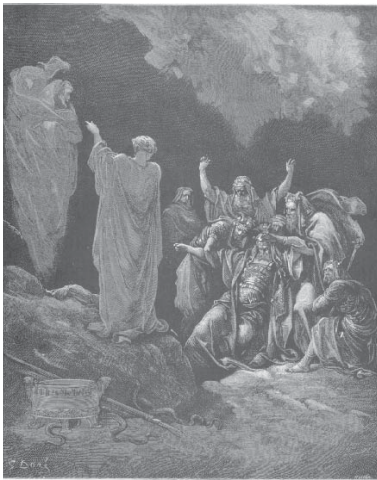


Saul Attempting To Murder David

“Be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the Devil. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as GOD for CHRIST’s sake hath forgiven you.” **Ephesians 4:26-27, 31-32**

Saul was overcome by bitterness, because of his anger towards and jealousy of David (see I Samuel 18:8-12).

E. Involvement With Witchcraft And The Occult



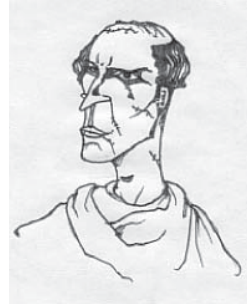
Saul And The Witch Of Endor

The Scriptures are clear in admonishing us to have absolutely no involvement with Satan through witchcraft or the occult! Yet this is exactly what happens with many who end up with the label, “mental illness”. Whether it be through the ungodly “mental health system” using medications, shock treatments and anti-Biblical “counseling”, or, through the devastating progression of sin that we have seen in this portion of our study.

“There shall not be found among you anyone . . . that doeth divination, or an observer of time, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consuler with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD . . .” **Deuteronomy 18:10-12a**

Saul’s entrapment in witchcraft and the occult was the final step in the devastating progression that resulted in his “mental illness” (see I Samuel 28:7-19).

Note: Someone has wisely said, “All mental illness is just varying degrees of irresponsibility”. We have seen this in the life of King Saul . . .



1. He should have humbled himself when confronted with his sin instead of reacting with pride and stubbornness.
2. He should have obeyed the LORD's commands instead of rebelling against them.
3. He should have sought the spiritual life instead of the worldly.
4. He should have loved and forgiven David instead of hating him and wanting him dead.
5. He should have resisted the temptations of witchcraft and the occult instead of succumbing to them.

IV. HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE TRUE MENTAL HEALTH?

As noted in the beginning of this study, “mental illness” is an emotional “condition” that evolves from a spiritual problem. This makes all of us susceptible to it. Unless we understand this, none of us will ever experience true mental health! The Scriptures are very clear in giving the principles for this. By GOD's grace may we all learn them, understand them, and apply them in our lives!

A. Confession Of Sin

Because “mental illness” is a spiritual problem caused by unrighteous responses to situations in our lives, the first step to true mental health is the **confession** of those unrighteous responses as sin. **Confession** in this context is simply agreeing with GOD that we have sinned.

“If we confess our sins, HE (GOD) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9

B. Repentance From Sin

Repentance is an important ingredient of mental health. Whereas **confession** is agreeing with GOD that we have sinned, **repentance** is turning from that sin and committing oneself to living a righteous life.

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

Proverbs 28:13



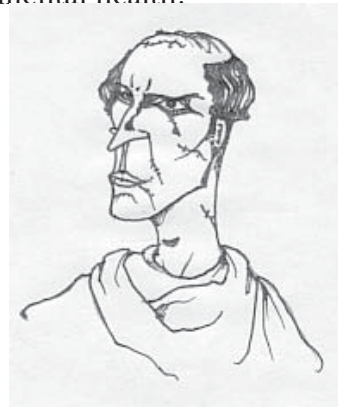
*A Repentant King
Nebuchadnezzar*

Note: This is what brought King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon deliverance and healing from his “mental illness”, he demonstrated complete and genuine **confession and repentance** (see Daniel 4:34-37). Contrast this with King Saul of Israel. He never possessed true **confession and repentance** (see I Samuel 15:26), thus he never received real mental health.

C. Make Restitution

Restitution is also an important part of mental health.

Restitution is that act, where if we have hurt or offended someone, or have done damage to them or their property, we plead for their forgiveness and reimburse them monetarily for that damage. This brings us a **clear conscience** before GOD and our fellow man as well. This was the Apostle Paul’s testimony when he said . . .



*A Clear Conscience Was
Important To The Apostle Paul*

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward GOD, and toward men.” Acts 24:16

D. Taking Responsibility For Every Aspect Of Our Life

1. For every word

“But I (JESUS) say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement.” Matthew 12:36



Peter The Apostle

2. For every deed

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” II Corinthians 5:10

3. For every thought

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalthe itself against the knowledge of GOD, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of CHRIST.” II Corinthians 10:5

4. For every attitude

“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.” I Peter 3:10

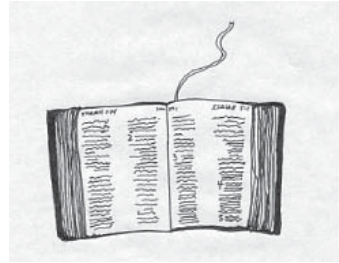
5. For every motive

“I the LORD search the heart, try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” Jeremiah 17:10

The Word of GOD clearly teaches that each one of us are responsible before the LORD for every aspect of our life, and that someday we will all stand before HIM and be judged accordingly by HIM. The more we acknowledge this and respond in a righteous way, the more true mental health we will possess!

E. Immersing Our Soul With The Word Of GOD

Our **soul** consists of a.) our mind (what we think and believe); b.) our will (what we do and how we act); and c.) our emotions (how we feel and the attitudes we hold). Having a healthy **soul** is essential to experiencing true mental health. The key to possessing a healthy **soul** is immersing it with the Word of GOD on a regular basis. Indeed, Scripture command us to “. . . meditate therein day and night . . .” (see Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2).



*The Key To Mental Health
Is Immersing Our Soul
With The Word Of God*

Psalm 119 is that beautiful portion of Scripture that exalts the power of GOD’s Word to bring success, blessing and even true mental health to anyone who will apply it to their life. Following are just several verses that speak to this truth . . .

*“THY TESTIMONIES also are my delight and my counselors.”
(v.24)*

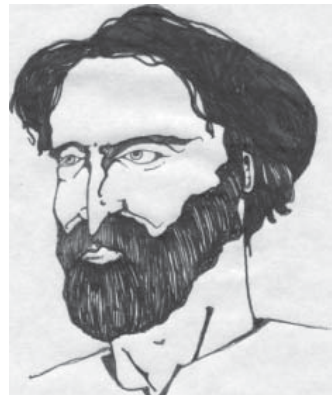
*“My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken THOU me according to
THY WORD.” (v.25)*

*“This is my comfort in my affliction,
for THY WORD hath quickened me.”
(v.50)*

*“My soul fainteth for THY salvation,
but I hope in THY WORD.” (v.81)*

*“Unless THY LAW had been my
delights, I should then have perished in
mine affliction” (v.92)*

*“THOU art my hiding place and my
shield, I hope in THY WORD.” (v.114)*



*King David Knew
The Power of GOD’s WORD
To Bring Mental Health*

*“Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me, yet **THY** **COMMANDMENTS** are my delights.” (v.143)*

*“Great peace have they which love **THY LAW**, and nothing shall offend them.” (v.165)*

V. PROMISES FROM THE WORD OF GOD FOR TRUE MENTAL HEALTH

*“But **THOU**, O **LORD**, art a shield for me, my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.” **Psalm 3:3***

*“The **LORD** is my **SHEPHERD**, I shall not want. **HE** maketh me to lie down in green pastures, **HE** leadeth me beside the still waters. **HE** restoreth my soul . . .”
Psalm 23:1-3a*

*“O **LORD** my **GOD**, I cried unto **THEE**, and **THOU** hast healed me. O **LORD**, **THOU** hast brought up my soul from the grave, **THOU** hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. **THOU** hast turned for me my mourning into dancing, **THOU** hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.” **Psalm 30:2-3***



Isaiah Instructed Us How To Experience Peace Of Mind

*“**THOU** wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on **THEE**, because he trusteth in **THEE**.” **Isaiah 26:3***

CONCLUSION

“Mental illness”. We’ve learned what it is, it’s characteristics, and how it develops. We’ve learned that we are all susceptible to it. (We may even have been “diagnosed” as having it). However most importantly, we have learned that we can have complete deliverance and healing from it, and indeed possess true mental health . . . today! May the following testimony from GOD’s Word be all of ours now . . .

“For GOD hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” II Timothy 1:7

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“Heavenly FATHER, I have learned from the study of YOUR Word, that ‘mental illness’ is a tragic and devastating reality that can afflict anyone. I now realize that unless I follow close to YOU, and diligently seek to live my life according to YOUR Word and ways, I too will suffer these consequences. However, I have also learned that as I seek to love and obey YOU and YOUR Word with all of my heart, soul and strength, I am promised and assured true mental health. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to make those choices of obedience that will make this a reality in my life. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”

Signed _____ Date _____

**CHAPTER 4 -
THE DANGER OF LEAVING OUR
FIRST LOVE**

THE DANGER OF LEAVING OUR FIRST LOVE

Introduction

Almost two thousand years ago, the LORD JESUS CHRIST shared a sobering accusation with a group of HIS followers. It was to the church in the city of Ephesus that HE said,

“... I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”

Revelation 2:4

We learn the seriousness of this warning from HIS admonition in the following verse . . .

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

Revelation 2:5

Who or what is this “*first love*”? And if it is so important to our LORD that we not leave it, how do we keep it? It is discovering the answers to these questions that this study is dedicated. May GOD give us an abundance of HIS grace and power to not only answer these questions, but also apply these truths to our everyday walk with HIM . . . now and in the days ahead!

I. Who Or What Is Our “*First Love*” ?

The answer to this question is found both in the Old and New Testaments of Scripture . . .

“And thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deuteronomy 6:5

When the LORD JESUS CHRIST was later asked, “*MASTER, which is the great Commandment in the LAW?*”, HE responded by quoting this very verse from Deuteronomy . . .

“Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great Commandment.”

Matthew 22:37-38



What the LORD is trying to communicate to us, through Moses in the Old Testament and through JESUS in the New Testament, is that HE HIMSELF is to be our “*first love*”. Notice that HE desires our emotional love (“*heart . . . and . . . soul*”), our physical love (“*might*”), and our intellectual love (“*mind*”). Notice also that HE commands us to give HIM our total love in these three areas. It is not that HE is telling us we cannot love other people and things, it is just that we must love HIM first and foremost!

“He that loveth father or mother more than ME is not worthy of ME, and he that loveth son or daughter more than ME is not worthy of ME.” Matthew 10:37

II. How We Leave Our “*First Love*”

It would be profitable for us here to define the word “*left*” . . .

“*left*” (to leave) = to forsake; to neglect

When we leave our “*first love*”, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, we are forsaking HIM and following another (i.e. - ourselves), or neglecting HIM and putting someone or something else before HIM in our life. The Scriptures call this idolatry, and it is a practice clearly condemned by GOD!

“*Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.*” **Exodus 20:3**

Following are some “*gods*” that can come “*before* (the LORD)” . . .

- spouse	- money	- entertainment
- children	- possessions	- sinful habits
- career	- hobbies	- ministry

Notice from the list above, that even “good things” can become idols, and even for the committed follower of JESUS CHRIST! For many believers this happens in a very subtle way . . . over a period of time.



GOD warns us that HE is a “*jealous GOD*” (see Deuteronomy 6:14-15), a GOD WHO will chasten us and even “take away” the idols that come between HIM and us and cause us to leave our “*first love*”!

III. How We Keep Our “*First Love*”

We have learned WHO our “*first love*” is, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and have seen how we have a tendency to leave HIM. Following are some principles (taken from our original context of Scripture in Revelation chapter 2), that will help us keep that “fresh” intimacy we first had with HIM.

A. Remember WHO Our “*First Love*” Is

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen . . .” **Revelation 2:5a**

“*Remember*” = to call to mind; to review

The first principle in keeping our “*first love*” is to “*remember*” that HE is that “*first love*”. This becomes a reality as we . . .

1. Review WHO the LORD is.

As we meditate and reflect on the many names, titles and character qualities of the LORD given to us in Scripture, we are reminded just how great HE is and why HE commands first place in our lives.

Names of the LORD: GOD, JEHOVAH, JESUS, HOLY SPIRIT

Titles of the LORD: WAY, TRUTH, LIFE, the Door, the WORD, SAVIOR, CHRIST, FATHER, etc.

Character qualities of the LORD: Love, Honesty, Dependability, Faithfulness, Generosity, etc.

2. Review what HE has done for us.

As we meditate and reflect on the many things the LORD has done for us, this will compel us to worship, praise and thank HIM . . . and to keep HIM first place in our lives.

- a. HE has redeemed us from sin and an eternity in hell.
- b. HE has adopted us into HIS eternal family.
- c. HE has given us meaning and purpose in life.
- d. HE has provided for our every need.
- e. HE has given us the Scriptures to learn of HIM and HIS ways.

B. Repent If We Are Starting To Leave Our “*First Love*”

“ . . . *repent* . . . ” **Revelation 2:5b**

“*repent*” = to change one’s mind or purpose . . . especially concerning sin

The second principle in keeping our “*first love*” is to “*repent*” if we are, in the slightest way, starting to have our “*first love*” dim or grow cold.

We all have a tendency to drift from the intimate relationship we should have with the LORD JESUS CHRIST. If we are sensitive in our spirit, GOD will prompt us that this is beginning to take place. We will then quickly “*repent*” (i.e. - change our mind and purpose concerning this), and have that intimacy restored.

C. Demonstrate Our Devotion To Our “*First Love*”

“ . . . *do the first works* . . . ” **Revelation 2:5c**

The third principle in keeping our “*first love*” is to do those “*works*” that we first did when we first “fell in love” with the LORD.

1. A daily time alone with the LORD

- a. Bible study, memorization, and meditation in GOD’s Word

“(JESUS said) *If ye continue in MY Word, then are ye MY disciples indeed.*”
John 8:31b

“(JESUS said) *If ye love ME, keep MY Commandments.*”
John 14:15

b. Prayer

“*Pray without ceasing. . .*”
I Thessalonians 5:17



This of course is the most important aspect of the CHRISTian life and keeping that intimacy “fresh” with our LORD! A special time that we set aside to talk to HIM and HE to us.

2. Times of periodic fasting



“*Is not this the fast that I have chosen (says the LORD), to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burden, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*”

Isaiah 58:6

Many GODly saints (recorded in Scripture and throughout Church history), have testified of how fasting has been used to renew and refresh their intimacy with the LORD! (i.e. - Moses, Elijah, Esther, Daniel, Apostle Paul, George Whitefield, John Wesley, Bill Gothard, etc.)

3. Having a “Sabbath Day” one day each week

*“If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable, and shalt honor HIM, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words. Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father, for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” **Isaiah 58:13-14***

Notice from this Scripture the admonition of the LORD for us to set aside one day each week to seek HIM and HIS fellowship. As we do this, the LORD promises a renewed love for HIM, *“Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD . . . ”*

Conclusion

What is our relationship to the LORD JESUS CHRIST at this time? Is HE still our “*first love*”? Is HE still the ONE that we delight in more than anyone or anything else? If HE is, may we continue to deepen that relationship with HIM. If HE is not, may we come to this realization immediately, and “fall in love” with HIM all over again!

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“Heavenly FATHER, I realize from the study of Your Word, that YOU desire an intimate relationship with me. Please forgive me when I neglect and forsake YOU, and allow other people, things, or activities to displace YOU as my ‘first love’. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to seek to put YOU ‘first place’ in my life and to keep YOU there. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory. Amen”

**CHAPTER 5 -
OUR SPIRITUAL WARFARE WITH
SATAN AND HIS EVIL FORCES**

OUR SPIRITUAL WARFARE WITH SATAN AND HIS EVIL FORCES

INTRODUCTION

“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.”

Ephesians 6:12



*We Are In An Intense Battle
With Satan And His Evil Forces*

Scripture declares that we as followers of the LORD JESUS CHRIST are in the midst of a spiritual war. An intense war, because of the power and magnitude of our very wicked enemy. That enemy of course is Satan and all of his evil forces, both in the spiritual and physical realms. Scripture warns us to not be ignorant of Satan and his ways (see II Corinthians 2:11). This is the purpose of this study. Not only to give us understanding of Satan and his ways, but more importantly to give us insight into the “tools” we have through JESUS CHRIST and HIS Word to wage war against him . . . and win!

I. WHO IS SATAN AND WHO ARE HIS EVIL FORCES?

Before an army goes into battle, it is wise if that army learns as much as possible about the enemy. This also applies to us as we engage Satan and his evil forces in spiritual battle. We will do this in this study by first of all looking at the “history” of Satan and his evil forces. Then secondly looking at the many names and titles Scripture gives to them.

A. The History Of Satan And His Evil Forces

1. *“Moreover the Word of the LORD came unto me saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD GOD, Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of GOD, every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth, and I have set thee so, thou was upon the holy mountain of GOD, thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the storms of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned, therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of GOD, and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness, I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.”* **Ezekiel 28:11-17**

This Scripture from Ezekiel is a very significant one in respect to understanding the very beginnings and nature of Satan. Following are several important truths that we can learn concerning him . . .

Although the King of Tyrus is addressed here, Satan is really the one who is being described (Adam and Eve were the only human beings, “. . . in Eden the garden of GOD . . .” [v.13a]). Note: Many times throughout history Satan has worked through various world rulers to bring about his destructive purpose. (i.e. - Pharaoh of Egypt during Moses’ day; King Herod during JESUS’ infancy; etc.)



Adam And Eve Expelled From Eden

• “ <i>Thou sealest up the sum . . .</i> ”	• Satan was the model of perfection (see also v.15a)
• “ (Thou art) <i>full of wisdom</i> ”	• Satan is very intelligent
• “ (Thou art) <i>perfect in beauty</i> ”	• Satan is perhaps the most beautiful creature GOD has ever created (see also v.13b)
• “. . . <i>the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee . . .</i> ” (v.13c)	• Satan is a musical being
• “ <i>Thou art the anointed cherub . . .</i> ” (v.14a)	• Satan was the most powerful angel in heaven
• “. . . <i>thou wast upon the holy mountain of GOD, thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.</i> ” (v.14b)	• Satan had special privileges in heaven
• “. . . <i>iniquity was found in thee.</i> ” (v.15b)	• Satan was the first in GOD’s creation to sin
• “ <i>By the multitude of thy merchandise . . .</i> ” (v.16a)	• Satan is very “wealthy”

• “. . . they have filled the midst of thee with violence . . .” (v.16b)	• Satan is a violent creature
• “. . . therefore I (GOD) will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of GOD, and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub from the midst of the stones of fire.” (v.16c)	• Satan was judged by GOD and cast out of heaven (see also v.17c)
• “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty . . .” (v.17a)	• Satan became proud of his beauty
• “. . . thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness . . .” (v.17b)	• Satan and his reasoning became corrupted because of his sin

2. “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. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.” **Isaiah 14:12-15**

These verses from Isaiah are very important for us to study if we wish to understand the history of Satan, particularly his original sin and subsequent judgment. Notice several important truths that we learn in relationship to this . . .

- a. Here Satan is referred to as “. . . Lucifer, son of the morning.”

This was Satan’s name before he Sinned. “Lucifer” means “day-star” or “shining-one”, and refers to the great beauty GOD created him with as the highest ranking angel in heaven, (see Ezekiel 28:11-17)



Satan Is A Beautiful Creature

b. In vv.13-14, we have described for us in detail Satan's original sin of pride (i.e. - self-will). These have often been described as the five "I wills" of Satan.

- "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 ..."
- "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ..."
- "I will be like the MOST HIGH."



Satan's Presence Reaches Above The Clouds

Evidently, Satan's great beauty and high position in heaven caused him to be lifted up in pride, even to the point of desiring to be equal with ALMIGHTY GOD. This is what the Apostle John was referring to when he wrote,

"... the Devil sinneth from the beginning." **I John 3:8b**

c. Because of this rebellion against the LORD, Satan is judged by being cast out of heaven (vv.12, 15). This is probably also the time when the many angels (i.e. - demons) that chose to follow Satan in his rebellion were judged and cast out of heaven as well.

"For if GOD spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment . . ." **II Peter 2:4 (see also Jude 6)**

B. The Names And Titles Of Satan And His Evil Forces

The Scriptures give us many names and titles for Satan and his evil forces. As we study them in detail, they give us rich insights into understanding just who these evil beings are.

Name Or Title	Definition	Reference
<i>"Satan"</i>	the hater	Job 1:6
<i>"Lucifer"</i>	day-star/shining one	Isaiah 14:12
<i>"cherub"</i>	angel	Ezekiel 28:14,16
<i>"the Devil"</i>	the accuser	Matthew 4:1
<i>"the Tempter"</i>	the tester	Matthew 4:3
<i>"devils"</i>	demon	Matthew 7:22
<i>"unclean spirit"</i>	impure	Mark 1:23
<i>"the Prince of this world"</i>	the chief	John 12:31
<i>"the god of this world"</i>	object of worship	II Corinthians 4:4
<i>"Belial"</i>	worthless, lawless	II Corinthians 6:15
<i>"the Prince of the power of the air"</i>	the chief	Ephesians 2:2
<i>"principalities"</i>	evil ruler	Ephesians 6:12
<i>"powers"</i>	evil authority	Ephesians 6:12
<i>"the rulers of the darkness of this world"</i>	world-ruler	Ephesians 6:12
<i>"the wicked One"</i>	bad, malignant	Ephesians 6:16
<i>"the angel of the bottomless pit"</i>	abyss	Revelation 9:11
<i>"Abaddon" (Hebrew)</i> <i>"Apollyon" (Greek)</i>	the destroyer	Revelation 9:11
<i>"the Dragon"</i>	large monster or serpent	Revelation 12:9
<i>"that old Serpent"</i>	creeping thing	Revelation 12:9

II. HOW DOES SATAN AND HIS EVIL FORCES WORK?

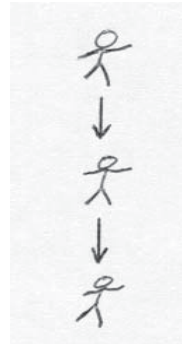
Not only is it of utmost importance that we learn as much as we can about who Satan and his evil forces are, but also how they work. Scripture tells us that, “. . . *we are not* (to be) *ignorant of* (their) *plans*” (II Corinthians 2:11b). The purpose of this portion of our study is to expose these evil “plans” so we can more effectively do battle against them!

A. They Work Through A Chain Of Command

In Revelation 9:1-11, the Apostle John describes for us a future incident where demons are released from “. . . *the bottomless pit* . . .” (v.2), to bring great “*torment*” (v.5), to the inhabitants of earth. It is then in verse eleven that John says . . .

“And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.”

The fact that these demons “. . . *had a king over them* . . .”, tells us of an evil hierarchy within their kingdom, where some demons have more authority than others.



*Satan's Kingdom
Has A “Chain
of Command”*

B. They Work Through Principalities And Powers

“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.”

Ephesians 6:2

“A municipality is an area of land over which there is governmental jurisdiction. A principality is an evil ruler over an area of land. There are ‘principalities’ over nations, cities, and districts.” (Life Purpose, Volume 2 * Institute in Basic Life Principles, p.9)

A Biblical example of this is found in Daniel 10:13 . . .

“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 . . .

Notice from the above Scripture, that we are also in a struggle against, “. . . *the rulers of the darkness of this world . . .*” (which speaks of the false philosophies and teachings of the world), and, “. . . *spiritual wickedness in high places.*” This refers to the warfare that is constantly taking place between spiritual powers.

C. They Work Through Human Beings

1. Through the wicked

When JESUS once rebuked the Jewish religious leaders of HIS day, HE said to them . . .

“Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” **John 8:44a**

If we are to be effective in our struggle against Satan and his evil forces, we must never forget that many times they work through the unbeliever. Biblical illustrations of this would be . . .

- Cain (see Genesis 4:8)
- Balaam (see Numbers 22-24)
- Herod (see Matthew 2:16)
- Judas (see Luke 22:3-6)



Cain Killing Abel

More contemporary illustrations would be . . .

- present evil rulers
- illegal drug “pushers”
- rapists
- many “religious” leaders (i.e. - cults)
- alcohol makers and sellers
- pornographers

Scripture clearly teaches that Satan and his demons desire to indwell human beings. It would seem that when they are able to accomplish this, they can do their most effective destruction. Following are several illustrations from Scripture that prove this . . .

- a) *“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest (i.e. - possession of a human being), . . .”*
Matthew 12:43
- b) *“And (JESUS and HIS disciples), came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when (JESUS) was come out of the ship, immediately there met HIM out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit . . .”* **Mark 5:1-2**
- c) *“Then entered Satan into Judas sur-named Iscariot being of the number of the twelve.”* **Luke 22:3**
- d) *“And it came to pass, as we (i.e. - Paul and Luke), went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by sooth-sayings, the same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, ‘These men are the servants of the MOST HIGH GOD, which show unto us the way of salvation.’”*
Acts 16:16-17

2. Through the CHRISTian

Just as Satan and his evil forces are able to work through the wicked, so they are able to work through the CHRISTian. Although they cannot indwell the CHRISTian, (see II Corinthians 6:14-16), Scripture clearly teaches that they can influence us for evil through our fellow believer.

“From that time forth began JESUS to show unto HIS disciples, how that HE must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took HIM, and began to rebuke HIM, saying, Be it far from THEE, LORD, this shall not be unto THEE. But HE turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind ME, Satan, thou art an offense unto ME, for thou savorest not the things that be of GOD, but those that be of men.” **Matthew 16:21-23**



Peter The Apostle

D. They Work Through Deception

“When (Satan) speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.” **John 8:44c**

Deception is perhaps Satan’s greatest means of warfare against us. As the Scripture above asserts, “. . . he is a liar . . .”, and the source of all lies! Indeed, deception was how he was successful in getting the first human beings to sin (see Genesis 3:1-7), and he has been using the same tactic ever since.

When speaking of the judgment of Satan and his evil forces in the end, Scripture records . . .

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” **Revelation 12:9**

Notice from this Scripture that we are all guilty of falling prey to Satan's deceptive ways. Whether it be through the more obvious means of such evils as illegal drug abuse, drunkenness, and sexual immorality, or through his more subtle ways of lying, cheating and stealing.

Satan and his evil angels are so deceptive, Scripture tells us that they can even make themselves appear to us as GOD's righteous angels,

"... for Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works."

II Corinthians 11:14b-15



E. They Work Through Spiritual Blindness

"But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST, WHO is the image of GOD, should shine unto them." **II Corinthians 4:3-4**

This Scripture is speaking about those that are without CHRIST of course. According to this Scripture, Satan's desire is to keep the unsaved "lost". He accomplishes this by blinding their minds to "... the glorious Gospel of CHRIST. . .", which is the only means by which they can be delivered from the condemnation and judgment of their sins.

JESUS HIMSELF gives us further insight into how Satan is successful in this. When explaining the parable of the sower in Mark chapter 4, HE explains what HE meant by the seed which, "... fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up." In verse 15 HE says . . .



“And these are they by the way side, where the Word is sown, but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the Word that was sown in their hearts.”

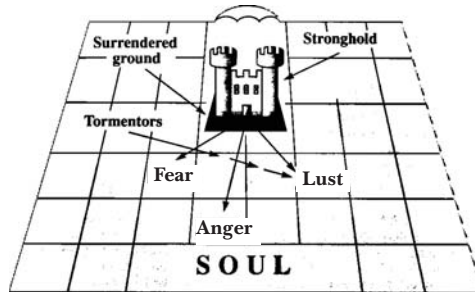
F. They Work Through Surrendered Ground

“Neither give place to the Devil.” Ephesians 4:27

“place” (Greek: topos) = ground

According to this Scripture, Satan seeks to acquire “ground” in our lives. That is, he seeks to take more and more control over our soul (i.e. - mind, will and emotions). This happens as we surrender “ground” through persistent sins in our lives. From that surrendered ground Satan “attacks” us in our mind, will and emotions.

One sin that Satan uses to gain ground in our lives is bitterness [i.e. - unforgiveness] (see II Corinthians 2:10-11; Ephesians 4:26, 31-32). Using bitterness as an example, the following diagram with explanations helps us to understand how Satan works in this way . . .



- According to Ephesians 4:26-32, we surrender an area of our souls to Satan when we are bitter toward someone. Satan then has the legal right to construct a stronghold on his property.
- A stronghold is a way of thinking that is contrary to GOD's will. From his stronghold, Satan torments us with fear, anger, worry, and other destructive emotions.
- GOD tells us in Scripture that HE will turn us over to the tormentors if we do not forgive our offenders (see Matthew 18:34). If we try to fight the tormentors, Satan simply retreats to his stronghold and waits for another opportunity to attack. (Note: The above diagram and explanations are from pp. 2-3 * Weapons Of Truth Series * Institute Of Basic Life Principles)

G. They Work Through Inflicting Physical Ailments

Certainly not all physical maladies are a result of Satan and his evil forces. Many are from the LORD HIMSELF (see Exodus 4:11). However, it is very evident from the testimony of Scripture that Satan and his evil forces are very successful in using this tactic against both CHRISTian and non-CHRISTian alike. Following are several means in which they employ this weapon

1. They can inflict dumbness

“As they went out, behold, they brought to (JESUS) a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake . . .” **Matthew 9:32-33a**
(see also **Matthew 12:22;**
Mark 9:17)



JESUS Healing The Dumb Man

2. They can inflict blindness

“Then was brought unto (JESUS) one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and HE healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.” **Matthew 12:22**

3. They can inflict destructive behavior

“And they brought (a possessed boy) unto (JESUS), and when he saw HIM, straightway the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And (JESUS) asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto HIM? And he said, of a child. And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him . . .” **Mark 9:20-22** (see also **Mark 5:5;** **Luke 6:18;** **9:39**)



The Possessed Boy Delivered

4. They can inflict infirmities

“And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And (JESUS said), ought not this woman . . . whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” **Luke 13:11, 16** (see also **II Corinthians 12:7**)

5. They can inflict death

“(the devil) was a murderer from the beginning . . .” **John 8:44b**

H. They Work Through Cursed Articles In Our Possession

“What say I then? That the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to GOD, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.”
I Corinthians 10:19-20

Here the Apostle Paul warns us about “*idols*” used in the worship of “*devils*”. According to Paul, to be associated in any way with these “*idols*”, is to “. . . *have fellowship with devils*”

There are of course millions of these “*idols*” around the world today, and they are becoming more and more prevalent in America. However, we should be alert to the fact that Satan and his evil forces also work through articles “indirectly” associated with this demon worship! Following are some examples . . .

- evil music
- horoscope books and magazines
- “toys” and “games” (i.e. - ouiji boards, tarot cards, cabbage patch dolls, etc.)
- eastern “religious” books
- occult comic books & novels
- hypnotic tapes

Several Concluding Thoughts Concerning The Ways And Characteristics Of Satan And His Evil Forces

A. They Can Speak If They So Desire

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD GOD had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath GOD said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” **Genesis 3:1 (see also Matthew 4:3,6,9)**

*“But when (the **unclean spirit**) saw JESUS afar off, he ran and worshipped HIM, and cried with a loud voice, and said, what have I to do with THEE, JESUS, THOU SON of the MOST HIGH GOD? I adjure THEE by GOD, that THOU torment me not.”* **Mark 5:6-7**



The Maniac Of Gadara

Many times when people complain of hearing “voices”, they are actually hearing Satan or his demons speak to them!

B. They Seek To Tempt Us When We’re Weak

“Then was JESUS led up of the SPIRIT into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. And when HE had fasted forty days and forty nights, HE was afterward an hungered. And when the Tempter came to HIM, he said, If THOU be the SON of GOD, command that these stones be made bread.” **Matthew 4:1-3**

In this record of CHRIST's forty day fast, Scripture tells us that JESUS was hungry. It was at this point that the Devil himself came to JESUS and tempted HIM in this HIS most vulnerable area. (Note: JESUS would not have sinned if HE had made the stones into bread. HIS sin would have been doing this out of GOD the FATHER's perfect will)

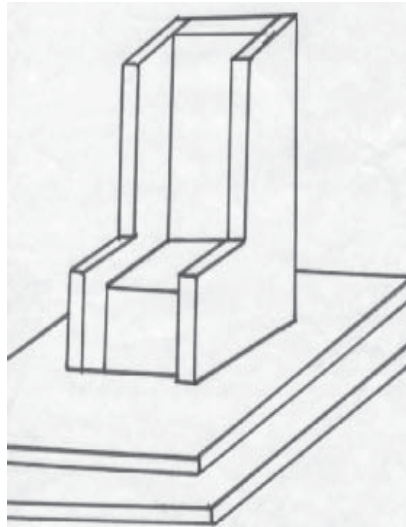
Satan and his evil forces know our weaknesses. They are wise enough to know that this is where we are most vulnerable. Thus, this is where they will seek to tempt us to sin as will.

C. They Seek To Discredit Us Before The LORD

“And I (the Apostle John), 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.”

Revelation 12:10

The picture that John the Apostle paints for us here is one of a courtroom-like scene in heaven. GOD the FATHER is on HIS judgment seat, and the Devil (which literally means “accuser”), is like an attorney, who brings accusation after accusation to the LORD concerning our unworthiness. Yes, even we as children of GOD do not deserve salvation or GOD's blessings, but because of HIS mercy and forgiveness through the blood of JESUS CHRIST, these evil accusations carry no weight. Someday, when Satan is eventually judged and “cast down” out of heaven, this attempt to discredit shall cease.



The Judgement Seat Of GOD

III. How Are We To Fight Satan And HIS Evil Forces And Have Victory?

We have learned from our study so far, who Satan and his evil forces are and how they work. We have learned that they are very powerful and a very formidable enemy. However, we will learn in this next portion of the powerful and effective spiritual weapons that the LORD has given to us to wage war against them. And not only to wage war against them . . . but to experience complete victory over them on a daily basis!

A. By Remembering Our Position In CHRIST

*“Blessed be the GOD
and FATHER of our
LORD JESUS CHRIST,
WHO hath blessed us
with all spiritual blessings
in heavenly places in
CHRIST.” Ephesians 1:3*



**Even Now, We As Saints Are Seated
In The Heavens**

When it comes to being victorious over Satan and his evil forces, it begins with knowing who we are in CHRIST and all the power we have at our disposal because of our position in HIM. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he spoke of “. . . *all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in CHRIST.*”

Satan is the originator of all deception (see John 8:44). One of the weapons he uses to attack us and the believers we are ministering to is doubt and confusion. If he cannot get us to doubt and question who we are in CHRIST, he will at least attempt to confuse us in understanding this important doctrine. However, as we remember who we are in CHRIST, we have that assurance of not only possessing eternal life, but also experiencing daily victory over this formidable enemy and his evil schemes!

B. By Maintaining A Close And Pure Relationship With The LORD

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath CHRIST with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of GOD with idols? For ye are the temple of the living GOD, as GOD hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a FATHER unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD ALMIGHTY. Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD.” II Corinthians 6:4-7:2

According to this Scripture above, it is very clear that if we desire to have “complete and lasting” victory over our spiritual enemies, we must maintain a close and pure relationship with the LORD JESUS CHRIST. We have seen from our study so far that Satan and his evil forces are vicious as they seek to destroy us. This is why the answer to each one of these rhetorical questions above is an emphatic “No!” A consistently close and pure walk with the LORD means an utter hatred and disdain of Satan and his ways, and for all activities and objects that would draw us away from that holy relationship with HIM! We cannot expect to have victory over these spiritual enemies, while also seeing how close we can get to them through “fraternization”.



C. By Cleansing Our Lives Of Articles That Have A Curse Upon Them

“The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire, thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein, for it is an abomination to the LORD thy GOD. Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it, but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it is a cursed thing.”

Deuteronomy 7:25-26

We learned earlier in our study that Satan and his evil forces often will use “idols” (called “graven images” here), or articles “indirectly” associated with them to bring havoc and destruction into our lives. Earlier in our study we listed some of these articles that are being used by the enemy in this way. Evil music, horoscope books and magazines, ouiji boards, tarot cards and Cabbage Patch dolls to name a few. It naturally follows that for us to “cleanse” our lives of these articles is an important element of our spiritual warfare.

The Apostle Paul once instructed some first century CHRISTians concerning the importance of this cleansing. They lived in Ephesus, and the following is their testimony . . .

“And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men, and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the Word of GOD and prevailed.”

Acts 19:18-20



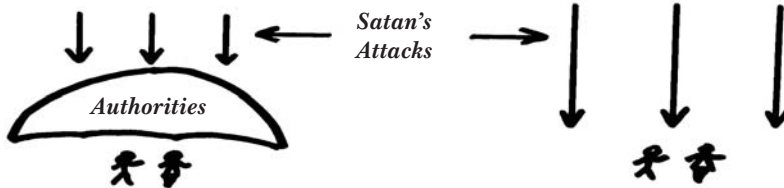
D. By Living Under GOD-given Authority

“Submit yourselves therefore to GOD. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7

All of us have various GOD-appointed authorities over us in our lives. For instance, we all are under government authority (see Romans 13:1-7); if we are an employee, we are under our employer (see Ephesians 6:5-8); if we have parents living yet, we are to honor and respect them (see Ephesians 6:2-3); if we are part of a local church, we are to submit to the spiritual leaders there (see Hebrews 13:17).

Because the above mentioned authorities are GOD-appointed, for us to rebel against them, is to rebel against GOD HIMSELF! This is why the Scriptures give us the following warning

“. . . rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft . . .” I Samuel 15:23a



When we rebel against our GOD-appointed authorities, we open ourselves up to all kinds of Satanic attack which we will have no power to withstand. However, if we *“Submit (ourselves) therefore to GOD”* (including HIS Divinely-appointed human authorities), we then have the power to *“Resist the Devil”*, with the result being, *“. . . he will flee from (us).”*

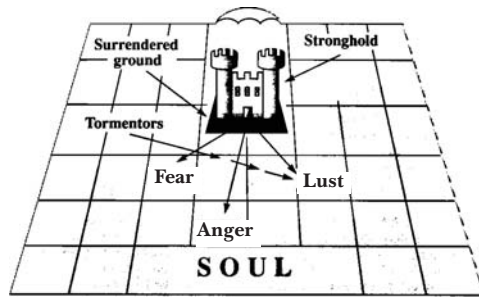
E. By Gaining Back Surrendered Ground

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through GOD to the pulling down of strongholds.” II Corinthians 10:4

We learned earlier in our study that Satan desires to acquire “ground” in our lives (see Ephesians 4:27). That is, he desires to take more and more control over our soul (i.e. - mind, will and emotions). This happens as we surrender “ground” through persistent sin in our lives. From that surrendered ground Satan “attacks” us in our mind, will and emotions.

Using “bitterness” as an example of one sin that Satan uses to gain ground in our soul, we used the following diagram to illustrate how Satan does this. We will use this same diagram (with Steps To Victory), to illustrate how by GOD’s power we can win back that surrendered ground, and thus experience victory over Satan and his evil forces once again.

Principality



1. Confess bitterness as sin

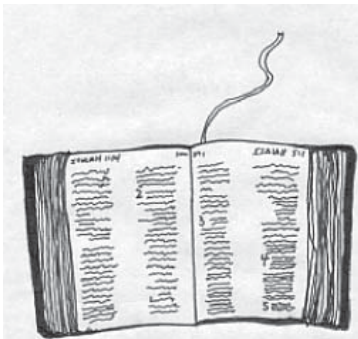
Many of us excuse bitterness. We continually rehearse the damage done to us by our offenders, and in so doing we justify our guilt with blame. We also redefine bitterness, by saying: “I’m not bitter; I was just deeply hurt.” The fact remains that we have closed off our affections to our offender, and GOD says, *“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now”* (I John 2:9). Darkness is Satan’s realm; thus the one who is bitter is living in sin and is under Satan’s power. However, *“If we confess our sins, HE is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (I John 1:9).

2. Ask GOD to regain surrendered “ground.”

According to Ephesians 4:26-27, we surrender “ground” to Satan every time we let the sun go down upon our wrath. For each of these occasions, we must ask GOD to regain the “ground” we gave to Satan. We have the assurance that GOD will hear our prayer in accordance with the comforting statement of Psalm 23:3, “*HE restoreth my soul.*” The Hebrew word for “restore” means “returning to the starting point.”

We should ask GOD to rebuke Satan in the Name and through the blood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and gain the ground that CHRIST won by HIS death, burial, and resurrection.

3. Tear down strongholds with truth.



*Scripture Is The Written Truth Of
GOD*

It is GOD’s responsibility to regain the ground we surrendered, but it is our responsibility to tear down the strongholds that Satan built on the territory. GOD has given us powerful weapons of truth to accomplish this task. “*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (bitter retaliation), but mighty through GOD to the pulling down of strong holds*” (II Corinthians 10:4).

We must purpose to search out and destroy every false idea or conclusion we have accepted from Satan and to build up towers of truth by reading, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture.

4. Show mercy by forgiving your offender.

Now that we understand the spiritual destruction that comes with bitterness and how forgiveness is an aspect of mercy, we should have the motivation to fully forgive our offenders in the same way that we have been forgiven by CHRIST. “*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another,*

tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as GOD for CHRIST's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).

(Note: The above diagram and explanations are from pp. 3 & 7 * Weapons Of Truth Series * Institute Of Basic Life Principles)

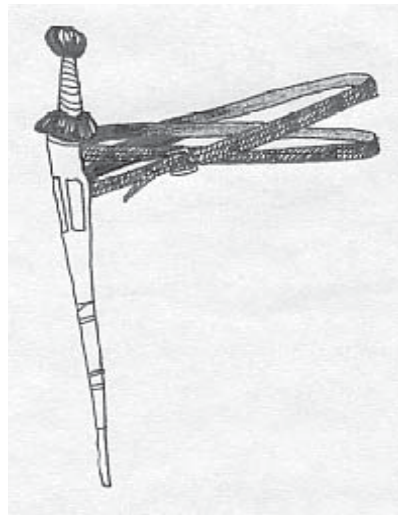
F. By Wearing The "Armour Of GOD"

"Put on the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with Truth, and having on the breast plate 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 one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the SPIRIT, which is the Word of GOD." Ephesians 6:11, 14-17

As the Apostle Paul wrote this Scripture almost two thousand years ago, he pictured in his mind the Roman soldier of his day. As we study these six pieces of the soldier's armour, we can liken a spiritual discipline to each one.

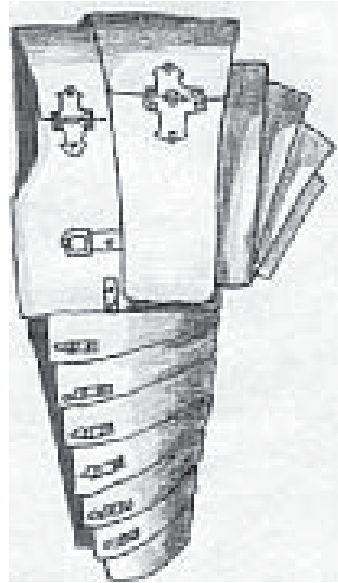
1. The belt of "Truth"

JESUS once proclaimed, *"... ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).* Putting on the belt of "Truth" means that we fight our spiritual enemies with the "Truth" of Scripture. JESUS later said that Satan is the originator of all deception (see John 8:44). As we do battle with Satan and his evil forces, we overcome them and their lies by fighting back with the "Truth"!



2. The “breastplate of righteousness”

We have learned from our study so far that Satan and his evil forces are desperately evil, and their desire is to destroy each one of us (see John 8:44). The spiritual discipline we need to fight off this wickedness is the “breastplate” of a righteous and holy life. To live a righteous and holy life means to allow no evil in our lives. As we do this, Satan and his evil forces have no place in our lives as well!



3. The “feet shod with the . . . Gospel”

The “Gospel” is the Good News of JESUS CHRIST and HIS power to save men from eternal destruction in hell, but also the detailed instruction of how believers are to live for CHRIST on this earth. Satan and his evil forces hate the “Gospel”. This is confirmed by what the Apostle tells us in II Corinthians 4:3-4 . . .

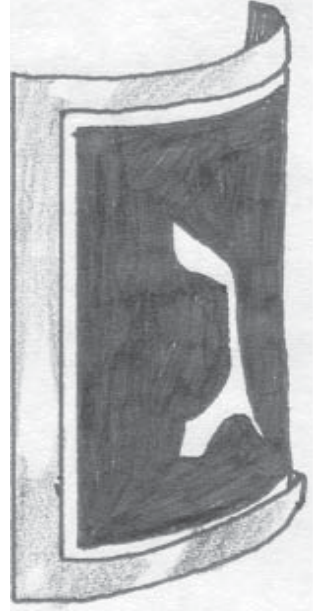
“But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, In whom the god of this world (i.e. - Satan), hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST . . . should shine unto them.”

This is why Scripture goes on to proclaim . . .

“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” **Romans 10:15b**

4. The “shield of faith”

This piece of our armour is a very important one. As the Apostle Paul warns us here, Satan is constantly throwing his “fiery darts” of temptation at us. To lift up the “shield of faith”, means to practice the spiritual discipline of putting our trust in the LORD for deliverance from Satan’s vicious attacks. We are no match for Satan and his evil forces alone, but as we fight them with the LORD’s resources through faith, they are defeated. This is what the Scripture means when it says, “. . . greater is *HE* (the LORD) that is in you, than he (Satan) that is in the world.” **I John 4:4b**



5. The “helmet of salvation”

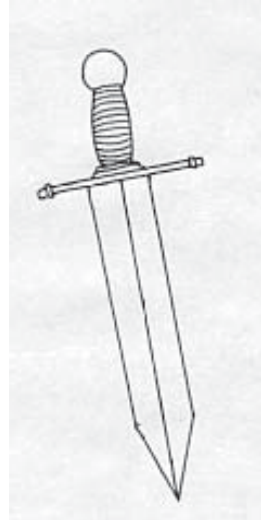
Much of our spiritual warfare with the enemy is waged in the mind. There the enemy seeks to tempt us with the initial thoughts of sin. It is as we entertain these thoughts, that those thoughts become sinful actions and the following truth of Scripture becomes a reality, “. . . the wages of sin is death . . .” (**Romans 6:23a**).

As we put on the “helmet of salvation”, we practice the spiritual discipline of standing up against the attacks of Satan and his evil forces, especially in the battle over our minds. Four times in Ephesians 6:10-17, we are commanded to “stand” against them. As we practice this important discipline, the truth of James 4:7 becomes a reality, “Resist (stand against), the Devil, and he will flee from you.”



6. The “Sword of the SPIRIT”

It is quite obvious what spiritual discipline the Apostle Paul is referring to here, for he tells us that, “. . . *the sword of the SPIRIT . . . is the Word of GOD . . .*” Of the six pieces of our spiritual armour, this is the only one that is “offensive” in nature. Though Satan knows the Word of GOD, and even quotes it (out of context however and for his own perverted purposes), he fears it and has to flee from us as we “wield” it against him.



This is illustrated in a powerful way in Matthew 4:1-11. Here we have the record of the LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF being tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Three times the Devil comes to HIM, seeking to get HIM to sin by doing something out of the FATHER’s will (see vv. 3, 6 & 9). Instead of yielding to these temptations, JESUS answers each of these attacks by quoting the Scriptures (see vv. 4, 7 & 10). This strategy works, for the Scripture declares . . .

“Then the Devil leaveth HIM, and behold, angels came and ministered unto HIM.” (v.11)

JESUS, the SON of GOD HIMSELF, understood the importance of knowing and using the Word of GOD to fight off these personal attacks from the wicked one. If we hope to have victory in our spiritual battles, we too must get to know and use the Word of GOD more and more as well!

G. By Engaging In Warfare Prayer

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the SPIRIT . . .”
Ephesians 6:18a

This admonition from Ephesians 6:18a, directly follows the portion we have just studied concerning the armour of GOD. Because of this, some Bible teachers experienced in spiritual

warfare would contend that “warfare prayer” is part of that armour. Regardless, we shall soon learn that “warfare prayer” is yet another powerful weapon at our disposal as we do battle against Satan and his evil forces.

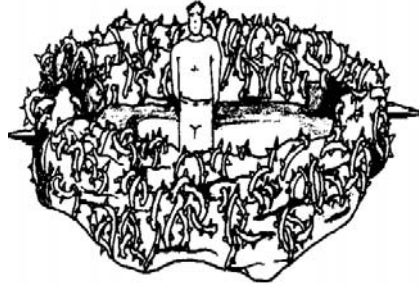
There are two types of “warfare prayer” given to us in Scripture that have proven to be very effective in this struggle. One is defensive in nature, while the other is offensive.



*Prayer Can Be A
Powerful Spiritual Weapon*

1. The “hedge of thorns” prayer

This defensive type prayer is based on the principle found in Job 1:6-12. Here we have the record of Satan’s conversation with GOD concerning Job’s righteous lifestyle. Satan comments that he would like to “attack” Job, but he cannot get at him because the LORD has . . .



The Hedge Is A Weapon Of Protection

“. . . made an hedge about him and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side . . .” (v.10a)

Satan desires to destroy us, our families, and our possessions, but we have this powerful weapon of protection that we can use to defend ourselves. To illustrate how this prayer can be used to accomplish this, following is a model prayer . . .

“Heavenly FATHER, in the Name and through the blood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST (see John 14:13-14 and Revelation 12:11), I pray that YOU would bind Satan (see Matthew 12:29), right now in the life of (name of person), or, in the area of (name of place or thing). I ask YOU to build a hedge of thorns high and

deep around (name of person, place, or thing). I pray this so YOU can keep Satan and his evil influences from (name of person, place, or thing). Heavenly FATHER, I pray all this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, Amen.”

In light of other Scripture, there are three important elements that must be a part of this prayer . . .

a. we must pray that Satan and his evil forces will be bound

“Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house (i.e. - territory), and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house (i.e. - territory).”
Matthew 12:29

Much of the world is under Satan’s power. He is the “strong man” that is in control. As we live in this world and engage in this spiritual warfare, we need the LORD to “. . . bind the strong man . . .”, so in a sense we can take over his kingdom (i.e. - his “house”), and “. . . spoil his goods . . .”



The “Binding” Of Satan Renders Him Powerless

b. we must pray in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in MY (JESUS) Name, that will I do, that the FATHER may be glorified in the SON. If ye shall ask anything in MY (JESUS) Name, I will do it.” John 14:13-14

In the Scripture above, JESUS gives us this wonderful promise of receiving anything we ask if it is done in HIS “Name”. Surely the LORD wants us to have victory over Satan and his evil forces, thus we can be assured that HE will give us this victory as we pray for it in HIS “Name”!



Fig. 9. The Sermon on the Mount (13:1-2)

There Is Much Power In The Name of JESUS

Following are two Biblical illustrations of the power of JESUS' Name in giving victory over Satan and his evil forces . . .

*"And the seventy (**disciples**) returned again with joy, saying, LORD, even the devils are subject unto us through THY Name. And (**JESUS**) said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." **Luke 10:17-18***

*"And it came to pass, as we (**Paul and Silas**) went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same followed*

*Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servant of the MOST HIGH GOD, which show unto us the way of salvation. And this she did many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the Name of JESUS CHRIST to come out of her. And he came out the same hour." **Acts 16:16-18***

c. we must pray through the blood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST

*"And they (**the saints**) overcome him (**the Devil**) by the blood of the LAMB . . ." **Revelation 12:11a***



Satan Was Defeated For All Eternity By CHRIST's Shed Blood

Satan and his evil forces hate the blood of CHRIST, for it was HIS blood shed at Calvary that defeated them once and for all, and eternally stripped them of their spiritual power. This is why we claim the blood of CHRIST in our spiritual warfare, Satan and his evil forces must flee in retreat and defeat!

2. The “prayer target” prayer

This warfare prayer is offensive in nature and is based on the principle found in Ephesians 6:18-19.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the SPIRIT, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for me (the Apostle Paul), that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel.”

Notice the two-fold thrust in the Apostle Paul’s prayer here in Ephesians 6. First of all he admonishes us to pray for other “saints”, secondly to pray that unbelievers would come to know “. . . the mystery of the Gospel.” As we pray for the “saints” to grow in their walk with the LORD and for the lost to be saved, Satan’s kingdom suffers damage!

This is what “prayer targets” will do. A “prayer target” is someone we pray for (whether a CHRISTian or non-CHRISTian), when we or someone we’re ministering to is being attacked by Satan and his evil forces. As we continue to do this on a regular basis, Satan soon stops his assault, because he certainly doesn’t want his evil causes to be thwarted!

In conclusion to this section of our study concerning spiritual warfare and prayer, we would be wise to remember that the LORD has given us another powerful weapon, that when combined with warfare prayer, can bring us victory over Satan and his evil forces.

This weapon is “fasting”. Voluntarily going without food, so the LORD is free to unleash even greater spiritual power through us.

In Matthew 17:14-21, we have the story where JESUS’ disciples are unable to deliver the “lunatic” boy from demon possession (v.16). However, JESUS rebukes the demon and the boy is made whole (v.18). Later when

the disciples ask JESUS why they could not cast out the demon, HE answers by saying, *“Because of your unbelief”* (v.20). HE then concludes by teaching them, *“Howbeit this kind (of demon) goeth not out but by prayer and fasting”* (v.21). Evidently this demon was extra powerful, and in order for it to be rebuked, extra righteous power was needed. Fasting combined with prayer brought that extra righteous power!



H. By Utilizing GODly Music

“And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from GOD was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand, so Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

I Samuel 16:23

GODly, melodious music is a powerful weapon at our disposal for our fight against Satan and his evil forces. Satan and his emissaries hate this kind of music, and as the above Scripture declares, they must flee when it is played!

Martin Luther (who knew what spiritual warfare was all about), once said, “Come, let us sing a psalm and drive away the Devil!”

Conclusion

Satan and his evil forces are powerful and formidable enemies. This is why Scripture commands us to, “*Be sober (i.e. - watchful), be vigilant (i.e. - alert), because (our) adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (**I Peter 5:8**).

However, GOD has promised us victory as we implement these many weapons HE has put at our disposal. Then will we be able to confirm the words of the Apostle Paul, when he reminds us in II Corinthians 10:4 that . . .

“ . . . the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through GOD to the pulling down of strongholds.”

IV. WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF SATAN AND HIS EVIL FORCES?

Scripture declares that one of the reasons the LORD JESUS CHRIST came to earth the first time was to do battle against Satan and his evil forces.

“For this purpose the SON OF GOD was manifest, that HE might destroy the works of the Devil.” **I John 3:8b**

HE was completely successful of course, as the following Scripture gives testimony . . .

*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, HE (**CHRIST**) HIMSELF likewise took part of the same, that through death HE might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil.”* **Hebrews 2:14**

It was at the cross of Calvary, where JESUS shed HIS innocent blood for our sins, that Satan and his evil forces were defeated!

However, if this is so, why is Satan and his evil forces still so powerful? Why do they still today do so much damage to the kingdom of GOD and we HIS people?

The answer can be explained by using the analogy of a modern day court of law. Let's say that a man is found guilty of murder by a jury of his peers. Let us further say that the sentence given is execution by the electric chair. But before the guilty man is actually executed, he spends a number of years in prison on "death row". The judgment has been determined, the sentence has been given, but the actual execution is years later.



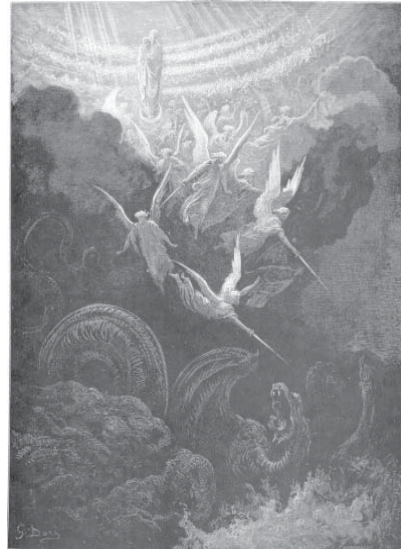
The Lake Of Fire

So it is with Satan and his evil forces. Their judgment has been determined . . . guilty of rebellion against GOD and HIS righteousness. The sentence has been delivered, eternal banishment to the lake of fire. Now we await their final "execution" . . . which only the LORD knows is when.

Following are the Scriptures that give testimony to their eternal destination . . .

"And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 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."

Revelation 12:7-10



The Final Judgement of Satan

“And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” **Revelation 20:10**

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“Heavenly FATHER, I have learned from the study of YOUR Word, that Satan and his evil forces are formidable enemies, dedicated to bringing as much destruction as they can to YOUR kingdom and to me as a follower of YOURS. I understand that even though they have been defeated and judged through the death of the LORD JESUS CHRIST on the cross, I must still be alert to their attacks upon me. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to be alert to these attacks, and to be wise in using all the spiritual weapons YOU have given me. I thank YOU now for the victories YOU will give me on a daily basis, and the ultimate, final victory YOU will give me in heaven someday. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”

Signed _____ Date _____

**CHAPTER 6 -
BE YE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY**

“BE YE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY”

INTRODUCTION

As one studies the Scriptures, it is discovered that GOD is a “*holy*” GOD, and that HE expects (and indeed demands), HIS people to be “*holy*” as well. Over 225 times, the three members of the GODHEAD are referred to as “*holy*”. It is at least 40 times that we are admonished to be. Seven times alone this particular phrase, “*Be ye holy, for I AM holy*” is found.

“*holy*” (Hebrew: qodesh, qadosh) = separate, set apart, to be pure, sacred

“*holy*” (Greek: hagios) = separated from sin and therefore consecrated to GOD

I. The Holiness of GOD

“*. . . Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of HIS glory.*” **Isaiah 6:3b**

“*Who shall not fear THEE, O LORD, and glorify THY Name? For THOU only art holy . . .*” **Revelation 15:4a**

Whenever Scripture mentions a truth more than once, it is obvious that the LORD is trying to emphasize that truth. As noted above, the Bible refers to the GODHEAD over 225 times as being “*holy*”. (Notice that the SPIRIT is not called the “Righteous SPIRIT”, the “Gracious SPIRIT”, or even the “Loving SPIRIT” . . . but the “HOLY SPIRIT”).

As we meditate on this great truth and apply it to our thinking, it should compel us to relate to the LORD in a whole new way. Following are several suggestions . . .

A. We Must Have A Humble Reverence For GOD

“GOD is . . . to be held in reverence by all those around HIM.” Psalm 89:7

“reverence” = to hold in highest respect, awe and affection



We are not to attempt to lower GOD to our human level as our equal, but remember that HE is the ALMIGHTY GOD, infinite, all-powerful, all-knowing . . . and “holy”!

B. We Must Have A Righteous “Fear Of GOD”

“. . . by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.” Proverbs 16:6b

“fear of the LORD” = to live our life realizing that the LORD sees everything we see, hears everything we hear, knows every thought we think and perceives every attitude we possess.

As we conduct our lives remembering that GOD is “holy”, it will naturally produce a desire within us to live a more righteous life for HIM!

C. We Must Have A Clean Heart To Be Heard By GOD

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me.” Psalm 66:18

“iniquity” = to conduct our life, even the righteous acts, but with the motive of self-recognition and glorification



*The Publican (L)
And The Pharisee*

As we remember that GOD is “holy”, it causes us to order our lives in obedience to HIS Word. We then experience no hindrance to HIM hearing and answering our prayers!

As we remember and meditate on the complete and perfect “holiness” of GOD, may we be compelled to join with the psalmist as he proclaims . . .

“Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of HIS, and give thanks at the remembrance of HIS holiness.” Psalm 30:4

II. The Holiness Of Saints



The Temple Mount In Ancient Jerusalem

*“ . . . for the temple of GOD is holy, which temple ye are.”
I Corinthians 3:17b*

*“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.”
I Peter 2:5*

*“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of HIM WHO hath called you out of darkness into HIS marvelous light.”
I Peter 2:9*

Concerning holiness and the follower of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, Scripture teaches that there are two types . . .

A. Positional

*“For GOD hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.”
I Thessalonians 4:7*

To be positionally “*holy*”, means that a person has been declared “*holy*” by GOD HIMSELF. It means that once and for all eternally, the saint has the very holiness of GOD within him. It is nothing that the saint himself earns or merits, but rather is a gift from GOD through JESUS CHRIST.



“(GOD) WHO hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to HIS own purpose and grace, which was given us in CHRIST JESUS before the world began.”

II Timothy 1:9

The child of GOD receives many gifts the moment they are redeemed. The indwelling of the HOLY SPIRIT, eternal life, their spiritual gift, etc. It is also at that moment that they are forever “*holy*” in the sight of GOD!

B. Progressive

“But as HE which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.” I Peter 1:15-16

Progressive holiness means that the saint is becoming more and more “*holy*” all the time. Even though he has been declared completely “*holy*” by GOD HIMSELF, as long as he is in this world, he is in a “process” whereby sin and its contamination is having less and less of an influence in his life.

This is one of those “mysteries” in Scripture that is perhaps difficult to understand. Yet we accept these truths by faith, knowing that GOD does not lie. Positional and progressive holiness is thus easy to reconcile!

But how does this progressive holiness take place? How does the saint become more and more “*holy*” in his relationship to the LORD here on earth?

The answer is found in I Peter 1:14. There the Scriptures tells us . . .

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.”

The key to living a “*holy*” life is simply obedience. Obedience to GOD’s Word and will. For as we sincerely seek to order our lives according to HIS Word and will, the result is a natural separation from sin and the world. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote . . .



Peter The Apostle

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD.” II Corinthians 7:1

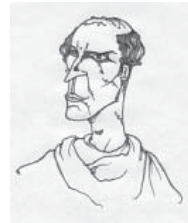
The phrase, “. . . *perfecting holiness* . . .”, means that there is a process involved which eventually leads to a consummation. Paul goes on to explain that this “*holiness*” is brought to completion as we grow in “. . . *the fear of GOD*.” For the saint to live in “. . . *the fear of GOD*”, means that he lives every moment knowing that the LORD sees everything he does, hears everything he speaks, knows every thought he thinks, and even perceives every attitude he possesses.

“We should not see how close we can get to the world and still be a CHRISTian, but rather how far we can get away from it.”

Bill Gothard

Paul speaks of this “*holiness*” in another place when he commands us to . . .

“. . . even so now yield your members as servants to righteousness unto holiness.” Romans 6:19b



The Apostle Paul

When Paul speaks of our “*members*” here, he is speaking of the different parts of our body. As we “*yield*” (or present) these different parts as “*servants*” (i.e. - slaves) for

“*righteousness*”, they then become “*instruments*” (see Romans 6:13) of “*holiness*” for GOD’s kingdom and glory!

Following are some examples . . .

<u>Each “<i>member</i>”</u>	<u>Instead of . . .</u>	<u>“<i>Yield</i>” them to . . .</u>
1. Our minds	Thinking immoral thoughts	Thinking righteous thoughts
2. Our eyes	Viewing wicked television	Reading Scripture
3. Our ears	Listening to evil music	Listening to GODly music
4. Our lips	Speaking cursings	Witnessing about CHRIST
5. Our hands	Using them to steal	Working for wages
6. Our feet	Frequenting the tavern	Attending church

“Never tolerate through sympathy with yourself or with others any practice that is not in keeping with a holy GOD. Holiness means unsullied walking with the feet, unsullied talking with the tongue, unsullied thinking of the mind - every detail of life under the scrutiny of GOD.”

Oswald Chambers



Oswald Chambers

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”

Revelation 22:11

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, we have either been reminded or have learned for the first time the complete and perfect “holiness” of our Mighty GOD. We have also learned what HE demands from us who would claim to love HIM and follow HIM. That is, the exact same “holiness” that HE HIMSELF possesses. May we be even more dedicated to fulfilling the Scriptural admonitions that HE has given us concerning these great truths!

“But as HE which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of living, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I AM holy.”

I Peter 1:15-16

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“Heavenly FATHER, I have learned from the study of YOUR Word, that YOU are a holy GOD. I have also learned that because of this truth, YOU demand the exact same holiness from me as I choose to follow and live for YOU. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to seek to live this kind of sanctified life that pleases YOU. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”

Signed _____ Date _____

**CHAPTER 7 -
HOW TO PRACTICE TRUE WORSHIP**

HOW TO PRACTICE TRUE WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The Scriptures both encourage and command us to worship the Lord. Sincere Christians everywhere truly desire to honor Him in this way. Yet much of the “worship” that is being practiced in the Church today is not true, Biblical worship.

The purpose of this study is to look at this subject through the pages of God’s Word, so that we as the Lord’s people can practice true worship. We will seek to come to this understanding by answering the following five very important questions...

WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

WHO IS THE OBJECT OF OUR TRUE WORSHIP?

WHEN ARE WE TO PRACTICE TRUE WORSHIP?

WHERE ARE WE TO PRACTICE TRUE WORSHIP?

HOW ARE WE TO PRACTICE TRUE WORSHIP?



“But the hour cometh, and now is, when true worshippers shall worship the father in spirit and in truth, for the father seeketh such to worship him.” **John 4:23**

I. WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

A. Four Different Hebrew Words Are Translated “Worship” In the Old Testament...

1. “atsab” = to make an idol (found just once in Jeremiah 44:19)
2. “abad” = to work; to serve (found 5 times, all II Kings 10)
3. “segad” = to bow down (found 11 times, all in the book of Daniel)
4. “shachah” = to bow down; pay adoration (found over 100 times in many different books)

“Shachah” is the Hebrew word and meaning we want to focus on in this study. Following are three Old Testament references where this word is found...



Ezra Worshipping The LORD

“And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great GOD. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.”

Nehemiah 8:6

“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.” **Job 1:20**

“O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our maker.” **Psalms 95:6**

B. Eight Different Greek Words Are Translated “Worship” In The New Testament...

1. “doxa” = glory; esteem (found just once in Luke 14:10)
2. “eusebeo” = to be reverent (found just once in Acts 17:23)
3. “therapeuo” = to serve (found just once in Acts 17:25)
4. “threskeia” = religious observance (found just once in Colossians 2:18)

5. “latrevo” = to worship publicly (found 4 times in 3 different books)
6. “neokoros” = a temple sweeper (found just once in Act 19:35)
7. “sebomai” [or its derivatives] = to venerate (found 8 times in 5 different books)
8. “proskuneo” = to pay homage and reverence (found over 50 times in 8 books)

“Proskuneo” is the Greek word and meaning we will focus on in our study. Following are three New Testament references where this word is found...



*“And as they (Mary Magdalene and the other Mary) went to tell HIS disciples, behold, JESUS met them, saying, All Hail. And they came and held HIM by the feet and worshipped HIM. **Matthew 28:9***

*“And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped GOD...” **Revelation 7:11***

To Worship Is To Pay Homage And Reverence

*“Who shall not fear THEE, O LORD, and glorify THY name? For THOU only art holy, for all nations shall come and worship before THEE, for THY judgement are made manifest.” **Revelation 15:4***



To Worship Is To Bow Down And Pay Adoration

Combining the meanings of both the Hebrew word “shachah” and the Greek word “proskuneo,” we conclude that true worship is...

“to bow down and pay adoration; to pay homage and reverence.”

II. WHO IS THE OBJECT OF TRUE WORSHIP?

We see in our world today that people “worship” many different beings (human and/or spiritual), practices, and things.

- A. Idols and Statues in homes and churches
- B. Money and possessions
- C. Athletes, musicians, actors, religious leaders, and family members.
- D. Careers, hobbies, immorality, and ministry
- E. Satan and other demons

However, Scripture clearly condemns the worship of all of the above!

Concerning spiritual beings...

“And I John (the Apostle) saw those things and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel, which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, see thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren thy prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: Worship GOD.” **Revelation 22:8-9**

Concerning our fellow man...

“And when the people saw what Paul had done they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lyycania, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifices with the people. Which when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their cloths and ran in among the people crying out...

And with these saying scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.”

Acts 14:11-14, 18



The People Preparing To Offer Sacrifice To Paul And Barnabas

Concerning practices and things...

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the Earth, or that is in the water under the Earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them, for I the LORD thy GOD am a jealous GOD...”

Exodus 20:3-5a



In contrast, the scriptures are very clear in proclaiming the only ONE we are to worship!

“For thou shalt worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is JEALOUS, is a jealous GOD.” **Exodus 34: 14**

“Exalt ye the LORD our GOD, and worship at his footstool, for HE is holy.” **Psalms 99:5**

“Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD and HIM only shalt thou serve.” **Luke 4:8b**

III. WHEN ARE WE TO PRACTICE TRUE WORSHIP?

Our Worship of the LORD should be such a prevalent part of our lives, it will seem as if we are worshipping HIM “all the time. ”

A. We Should Worship The LORD In The First Part Of Each Day.

Some might call it “Quiet Time” other perhaps “devotions.” Whatever we call it, however, we should begin each day by spending time with the LORD in personal “worship” (i.e. – study of the Scriptures, prayer, and perhaps singing).



“Oh GOD, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise THEE, oh LORD, among the people; and I will sing praises unto THEE among the nations.”

Psalm 108:1-3



B. We Should Worship The LORD On The First Day Of The Week.

This is an important part of our CHRISTian life when we gather with other saints in corporate worship, so we can encourage and rejoice with them... and they with us.

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as GOD hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” **I Corinthians 16:12**

(see also Acts 20:7 and Hebrews 10:25)

C. We Should Worship The LORD As Often As HE Prompts Us.

Worship is really a “state of mind.” Thus we should always be in a worshipful spirit.

Job was prompted to worship in the midst of his great suffering...

“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.” Job 1:20

Jacob worshipped even as he was dying...

“By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff.” Hebrews 11:21

A leper once worshipped while seeking healing...

“And behold, there came a leper and worshipped HIM, saying, Lord, if THOU wilt, THOU canst make me clean.” Matthew 8:2



Jacob Worshipping The LORD

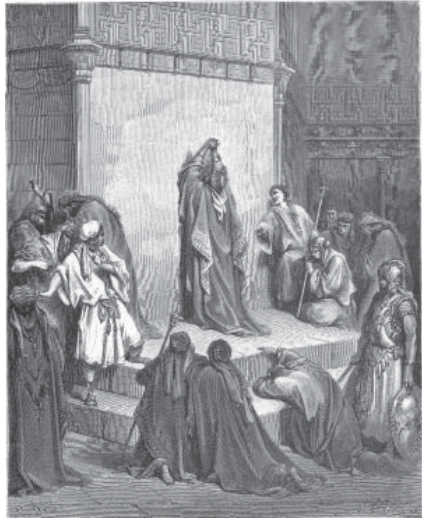
IV. WHERE ARE WE TO PRACTICE TRUE WORSHIP?

Scripture teaches that GOD is omnipresent. That is, HE is everywhere, all the time. Because of this reat truth, we can worship HIM anywhere.

A. Moses Was Commanded To Worship On The Top Of A Mountain.

“And the LORD said unto Moses... be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai, and present thyself to ME in the top of the mount. And Moses made haste, bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.”

Exodus 34: 1a, 2, 8



King David Worshipping The LORD

B. King David Was Led To Worship In The Jewish Temple.

*“Then David arose from the earth and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD and worshipped...” **II Samuel 12:20a***

C. The Wise Men Worshipped In A House.

*“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young CHILD with Mary HIS mother and fell down and worshipped HIM...” **Matthew 2:11a***

V. HOW ARE WE TO PRACTICE TRUE WORSHIP?

We have learned in our study so far, what true worship really is. We have learned that only the LORD GOD HIMSELF is to be the center of our worship. And we have learned that we can worship HIM anytime and anyplace. With this wisdom revealed, let us discover how we are to practice true worship.



We Can Worship The LORD Anytime, Anywhere

Learning how to practice true worship begins with understanding WHO we are to worship. If we understand WHO it is we are worshipping, we will be compelled to worship in the only true way.

We can discover much about who the LORD is, by taking some time to study some of HIS many Names and Titles (and their meanings), that are found in the Scriptures. Following

are just several, with one reference where that Name or Title is found, the literal meaning of the Name or Title, and how it applies to us in the area of our true worship of HIM.

Name/Title	Reference	Definition	Application
<i>“LORD”</i>	Psalms 1:2	JEHOVAH- This title speaks of HIS eternal, divine nature, & HIS faithfulness to HIS purposes & promises	Because the LORD is the only true GOD, and HE always fulfills HIS promises, this should command our worship of HIM.
<i>“THE HIGHEST”</i>	Psalms 18:13	Supreme; Upper; MOST HIGH	Because GOD is superior to all beings, no one else or nothing else should command our worship.
<i>“REDEEMER”</i>	Isaiah 47:4	To Free	If we have been delivered by the LORD from the power and penalty of sin (hell), this must compel us to gratefully worship HIM.

<i>“MASTER”</i>	Matthew 8:19	Teacher	What a joy and blessing to be taught the wonderful truths of GOD’s Words, HIS ways, and even of HIMSELF. May this compel us to worship HIM.
<i>“HOLY FATHER”</i>	John 17:11	“HOLY” =Set apart and without sin. “FATHER” =Nourishing protector and upholder	We must remember that the LORD is perfectly pure and without sin. Knowing this will certainly affect the way we approach HIM in worship.
<i>“KING”</i>	I Timothy 1:17	Royalty	The LORD is not our equal, but infinitely more majestic in character and standing. May we worship HIM accordingly.

The Scriptures give us much detailed instruction as to how we are to practice true worship...

A. We Are To Practice Reverence When We Worship.

Reverence = respect



*“And Ezra opened the Book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people), and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great GOD. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.” **Ezra 8:5-6***

“O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our MAKER.”

Psalm 95:6

B. We Are To Practice Purity When We Worship.

*“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto HIS name, bring an offering, and come before HIM, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.” **I Chronicles 16:29***

“And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place, and read the Book of the Law of the LORD their GOD one fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their GOD.

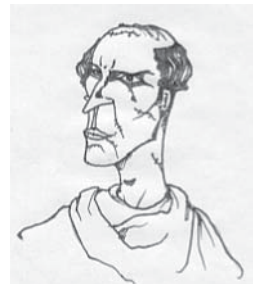
Nehemiah 9:2-3

C. We Are To Practice Spirituality And Honesty When We Worship

*“GOD is a SPIRIT, and they that worship HIM must worship in spirit and in truth.” **John 4:24***

“For we are the circumcision, which we worship GOD in the SPIRIT, and rejoice in CHRIST JESUS and have no confidence in the flesh.”

Philippians 3:3



Paul The Apostle

We get a beautiful picture of how we are to practice true worship, by observing this glorious scene in heaven of the saints and angels worshipping GOD and HIS SON, the LORD JESUS CHRIST...

“After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the LAMB, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our GOD which sitteth upon throne, and unto the LAMB. And all the Angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne and worshipped GOD, saying Amen: Blessings and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our GOD for ever and ever, Amen.” **Revelation 7: 9-12**

CONCLUSION

We have learned from our study that GOD greatly desires our true worshipped of HIM. The Scripture clearly instruct us as to what true worship is, who the object of our true worship is to be, when and where we are to practice this true worship, and finally how we are to practice it. We have discovered that true worship is not only to be a public practice, a regular time with other followers of CHRIST, but also a personal time, a daily time of close, intimate worship just between the LORD and us. As we get to know the LORD in a more personal way, may this prompt us to worship HIM with true worship. Then will we be able to, “... *sing the song of Moses the servant of GOD, and the song of the LAMB, saying...*”



*“Great and marvelous are **THY** works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, just and true are **THY** ways, **THOU** KING of saints. Who shall not fear **THEE**, O LORD, and glorify **THY** NAME? For **THOU** only art holy, for all nations shall come and worship before **THEE**...”* **Revelation 15: 3-4a**

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

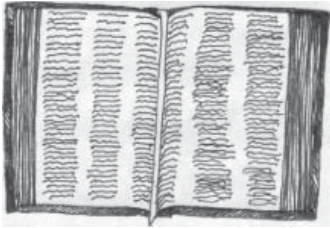
“Heavenly FATHER, I have learned from the study of YOUR Word, that YOU desire, and indeed command us to worship YOU. I realize that as I get to know YOU in a more personal, intimate way, this will prompt me to worship YOU in true worship. I now purpose through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to seek to worship YOU on a regular basis. First of all, on a daily basis through the meditation in YOUR Word and time spent in prayer alone with YOU. Secondly, during a weekly time with other followers of YOU. Thirdly, whenever YOU prompt me to. I praise and thank YOU now in anticipation for the glorious benefits that will result because of this practice. I pray this in the Name of the LORD, JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, AMEN.”

**CHAPTER 8 -
THE DISCIPLINE OF WAITING ON
GOD**

THE DISCIPLINE OF WAITING ON GOD

INTRODUCTION

We live in a world and in a society today that is so fast-paced and hectic. It seems that for the most part, we have been “conditioned” to expect and receive most everything we need or want, instantly and without reservation. When this doesn’t happen, we become impatient, frustrated and even angry. Many times we even direct this impatience, frustration and anger toward the very LORD HIMSELF!



The Scriptures Teach The Importance Of “Waiting On GOD”

Into this lifestyle and perception, the Holy Scriptures invade with a very important truth ... a **discipline** if you will. “**The Discipline Of Waiting On GOD.**” We call it a “**discipline,**” because for most of us it is almost an impossible principle to follow.

The phrase, “**Wait On The LORD**” (or its similar derivatives), is found thirty-seven times in the Bible and in seven different books. This reveals that this is a major theme throughout Scripture, and thus is to be a significant component of our personal, family and ministry life.

May the following study be used of GOD to bring about a greater understanding of this powerful “**discipline**”, which in turn will lead us into a greater and more sincere obedience to HIM.

I. Selected Scriptures Concerning “Waiting On GOD”

A. Psalm 25:2-3, 5, 21

“O my GOD, I trust in THEE, let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on THEE be ashamed, let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Lead me in THY truth, and teach me, for THOU art the GOD of my salvation, on THEE do I wait all the day. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on THEE.”

We have the word “wait” appear in this Psalm a total of three times. Each time it is the Hebrew word “qavah”, the most frequently used Hebrew word in all of Scripture (22 times), in relationship to our subject of study.

“qavah” = to hope strongly; to trust; to expect; to hope that a thing will be effected, and to wait steadily and patiently till it is effected. (Wilson)

Application: David, the author of Psalm 25, knew his GOD well. As he lived his life through the many different circumstances that he experienced, (both good and evil), he learned to “wait” on GOD. This was a strong hope and trust. This was a confident expectation, that even though he had to wait patiently for the desired end, he knew that it would be an eventual reality!

The prophet Habakkuk testified of this reality, when the HOLY SPIRIT spoke through him and said ...

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie, though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” Habakkuk 2:3



King David

B. Psalm 27:14

“Wait (qavah) on the LORD: be of good courage, and HE shall strengthen thine heart: wait (qavah), I say, on the LORD.”

Application: In our natural, human reasoning, we may come to the conclusion that if we have to “*wait on the LORD*” for something, this waiting will naturally produce fear and a weakening within us. However, this Psalm instructs us that to “*Wait on the LORD*” actually will “... strengthen (our) heart ...” if we respond with “... good courage ...”!

C. Psalm 40:1

“I waited (qavah) patiently for the LORD; and HE inclined unto me, and heard my cry.”

Application: Once again, David is our author, and he gives us an interesting sequence as it relates to our subject of study. Notice that as we first *wait* “... *patiently for the LORD* ...”, HE then hears our cry. The Hebrew word for “*inclined*” here means to “stretch or extend the heart towards an object in regard, favour, mercy, (and) compassion” – Wilson. What a beautiful picture of GOD’s concern for us as we wait on HIM!

David wrote in Psalm 37, that we should ...

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for HIM ...” Psalm 37:7a

The LORD has spoken through the prophet Micah ...

“Therefore I will look unto the LORD, I will wait for the GOD of my salvation, my GOD will hear me.” Micah 7:7

D. Psalm 130:5

“I wait (qavah) for the LORD, my soul doth wait (qavah), and in HIS Word do I hope.”

Application: We’re not sure who the author is of this Psalm, but under the inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT, he uses the word “*hope*” (Hebrew – yachal), which means to “wait with hope.” Notice the object of this hopeful waiting ... the Word of GOD. The emphasis here is clear, while we are going through those times of waiting for GOD to move on our behalf, we must be spending quality time with HIM and “HIS Word”, allowing HIM to teach us what we need to learn!

This is a major theme from Psalm 119 ...

“Remember the Word unto THY servant, upon which THOU hast caused me to hope.” Psalm 119:49

“... I have hoped in THY Word.” Psalm 119:74b

“... I hope in THY Word.” Psalm 119:81b, 114b, 147b

E. Isaiah 40:31

“But they that wait (qavah) upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Application: The author here, of course is the prophet Isaiah. What he is emphasizing here are some wonderful results that come our way when we “... wait upon the LORD ...” Not just a renewed “strength,” but a supernatural “strength” likened to soaring as an “eagle” and walking and running without becoming “weary” or “faint”! (See also Psalm 59:9a)

F. Lamentations 3:25

“The LORD is good unto them that wait (qavah) for HIM, to the soul that seeketh HIM.”

Application: The author of these words is the prophet Jeremiah. As you study his inspired writings (i.e. – this book called Lamentations and the book that bears his name), you discover that he was a man of GOD who had to learn to “... wait for HIM ...”. It is here that Jeremiah equates waiting for GOD with seeking HIM. It is imperative that if we’re going through a time of waiting for GOD to move on our behalf, we must be actively seeking HIM through HIS Word and prayer!

G. Psalm 62:1, 5

“Truly my soul waiteth upon GOD, from HIM cometh my salvation. My soul, wait thou only upon GOD, for my expectation is from HIM.”

It is in this Psalm that we find two new Hebrew words for “wait” – “dumiyyah” in verse one and “damam” given in verse five.

“dumiyyah” = silence; quietly wait

“damam” = to be silent; to stand still

The word “dumiyyah” appears only one more time (Psalm 65:1), as it relates to our topic of study. The word “damam” is found just this once, although a slight variation, “dumam,” is used in Lamentations 3:26.

Application: The man who penned this Psalm was David. Within each of these highlighted verses, David addresses his “soul” as needing to “... wait upon GOD ...”. When Scripture speaks of our “soul”,

it is referring to our mind, will and emotions. With this in mind, we can then see how important it is that as we are waiting for GOD to move on our behalf, we learn to “quietly wait” and “be silent” in that time of waiting.

There are two important reasons why we must learn “to be silent” during these times of waiting. First of all, so we can hear GOD’s voice through HIS Word. Often, this is the way the LORD chooses to give us HIS insight, HIS wisdom, and HIS direction. This is why it is imperative that we spend daily “quiet time” with HIM ... reading and meditating in the Scriptures, practicing “listening prayer,” and sometimes adding fasting with these disciplines as well. Second, learning “to be silent” while waiting is important for emotional and physical health reasons. For if we are anxious and become frustrated because of impatience, emotionally we will become depressed and maybe angry, while physically we may develop chest pains, acid reflux, headaches, insomnia, etc.

*Sometimes We
Must Just Be
“Silent” Before the
LORD So HE Can
“Speak” To Us*

The prophet Jeremiah sums up this portion of our study well when he admonishes us in Lamentations 3:26 ...

“It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”

H. Psalm 145:15

“The eyes of all wait upon THEE, and THOU givest them their meat in due season.”

The Hebrew word for “wait” in this Psalm is the word “sabar.”

This word is found one more time translated this way, in Psalm 104:27.

“sabar” = to hope; to look for

Application: Once again, the author of this Scripture we’re considering is David. This verse and its context is dealing with “every living thing” (see v. 16), having their needs met as they “wait” upon HIM. However, the HOLY SPIRIT speaking through David here, emphasizes that the LORD provides these needs, “... in due season.” In other words, not when we feel that we need them, but when HE is ready to meet them. GOD, in HIS infinite and all-knowing wisdom, always provides exactly what we need ... exactly when we need it! Our responsibility is to seek for this same wisdom, through the Scriptures, through prayer, and other means HE has given us to discern this timing.

“Every Living Thing” Needs To Look To The CREATOR For Their Needs To Be Met

Another portion of Scripture that would be profitable for us to consider here is Psalm 104:27-29,

“These wait (sabar) all upon THEE, that THOU mayest give them their meat in due season. That THOU givest them they gather, THOU openest THINE hand, they are filled with good. THOU hidest THY face, they are troubled, THOU takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.”

Within these three verses above, we discover a very significant progression in one of the ways of GOD. First of all, we are encouraged to “... wait ... upon (the LORD) ...” (v. 27a). Secondly, we are assured of HIS provision (vv. 27b-28). Third, oftentimes GOD will then “... hide (HIS) face ...” from us (v. 29). Why will GOD often “... hide (HIS) face ...” from us? To begin the whole progression over again! (See also Isaiah 8:17).

I. Isaiah 30:18

“And therefore will the LORD wait, that HE may be gracious unto you, and therefore will HE be exalted, that HE may have mercy upon you, for the LORD is a GOD of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for HIM.”

Here the Hebrew word for “*wait*” is “chakah.” Eleven more times this word is used in the original Hebrew text.

“chakah” = to wait earnestly

Application: The prophet Isaiah authored these words of course. We shall learn throughout the remainder of this study that he was inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT to write about this subject several more times.

We discover within this verse a very important progression why the LORD often waits to act on our behalf sometimes ...

- A. “... that HE may be gracious unto (us) ...”
- B. “... (so that) HE will be exalted ...”
- C. “... that HE may have mercy upon (us) ...”

According to this progression, GOD often waits to act on our behalf, sometimes until “the very last minute” it seems, so HE can give us HIS very best, and so that HE can also receive the most glory possible through HIS provision! This is why Isaiah exclaims, “blessed (i.e. – very happy) are all they that <u>wait</u> for <u>HIM</u>.”	<i>GOD’s Supreme Desire In Providing For Our Needs Is So That “HE Will Be Exalted ...”</i>

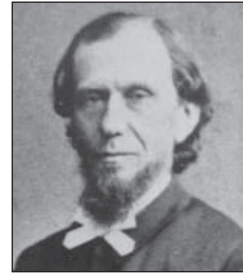
II. Selected Insights From Contemporary CHRISTian Leaders Concerning “Waiting On GOD”

We have learned during the first portion of this study several of the powerful Scriptures that GOD has inspired HIS servants to record for our eternal benefit. Clearly and emphatically, we acknowledge that these are GOD’s Words, and nothing that mortal man can say or write can equal them! However, since the canon of Scripture was completed with the writing of the Revelation by the Apostle John (about A.D. 96), other GODly men and women since have experienced the need, for a myriad of different reasons ... in a myriad of different ways, to “wait on GOD”. They have recorded these experiences, and in many instances rich insights, that they have gleaned from them. They have been sent by GOD to bless, encourage and strengthen many. The following selected examples are hereby given, trusting that the LORD will bless, encourage and strengthen the reader as well. Some will be just short phrases or sentences, some more lengthy, then some will be in poetic form. With the insight or writing that is shared, the author and publication will be given if known.

A. Andrew Murray (1828-1917)

Missionary, Pastor, Author from South Africa

“All the exercises of the spiritual life, our reading and praying, our willing and doing, have their value. But they can go no further than this – that they point the way and prepare us in humility to look to and depend upon GOD HIMSELF, and in patience to wait HIS good time and mercy.



Andrew Murray

It is in waiting upon GOD that our eyes are opened to believe in HIS wise and sovereign will. Then we will see that the sooner and the more completely we absolutely yield to it, the more surely HIS blessing can come to us.

Unfortunately, there can be a lot of praying ... and very little waiting on GOD. Why? Because when we pray we are often occupied with ourselves, with our own needs, and with our

own efforts in presenting those needs to GOD – thinking that if we find just the right way to present our needs, then we can make GOD hear and answer.

But when we wait on GOD, our first thought is of the GOD on whom we wait. We enter HIS presence, and we need simply to be quiet so that HE, as GOD, can overshadow us with HIMSELF. Waiting on GOD gives HIM time, in HIS own way and divine power, to come to us. And resting in HIM is nothing but being silent unto HIM, still before HIM – having our thoughts and wishes, our fears and hopes, hushed into calm and quiet in that great peace of GOD which passes all understanding.

Bow quietly before GOD. Remember who HE is, how near HE is, how certainly HE can and will help. Be still before HIM and allow HIM to stir up in your soul the childlike disposition of absolute dependence and confident expectation. Wait on GOD until you know you have met HIM.

And when you are praying, let there be intervals of silence – reverent stillness in your soul – in which you yield yourself to GOD in case HE may have something HE wishes to teach you or to work in you.

Pray in this way, and prayer will become so different. Waiting on GOD will become the most blessed part of prayer, and the answer to your prayer will be twice as wonderful because it is the fruit of your fellowship with the HOLY ONE.” (Taken from his book, “Waiting On GOD”)

“Be assured that if GOD waits longer than you could wish, it is only to make the blessing doubly precious.”

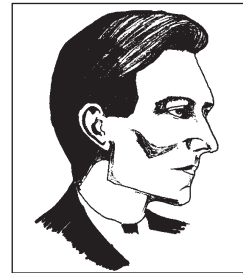
“One of the chief needs in our waiting upon GOD, one of the deepest secrets of its blessedness and blessing, is a quiet, confident persuasion that it is not in vain; courage to believe that GOD will hear and help; we are waiting on a GOD who never could disappoint HIS people.

‘Be strong and of good courage.’ These words are frequently found in connection with some great and difficult enterprise, in prospect of the combat with the power of strong enemies, and the utter insufficiency of all human strength. Is waiting on GOD a work so difficult, that, for that, too, such words are needed, ‘Be strong, and let your heart take courage’? Yes, indeed. The deliverance for which we often have to wait is from enemies, in the presence of whom we are impotent. The blessings for which we plead are spiritual and all unseen; things impossible with men; heavenly, supernatural, divine realities. Our hearts may well faint and fail. Our souls are so little accustomed to hold fellowship with GOD, the GOD on whom we wait so often *appears* to hide HIMSELF. We who have to wait are often tempted to fear that we do not wait aright, that our faith is too feeble, that our desire is not as upright or as earnest as it should be, that our surrender is not complete. Amid all these causes of fear or doubt, how blessed to hear the voice of GOD, ‘Wait on the LORD! Be strong and let thine heart take courage! Yea, wait thou on the LORD!’ Let nothing in heaven or earth or hell – let nothing keep thee from waiting on thy GOD in full assurance that it cannot be in vain.” (Taken from the book, “Streams In The Desert, Volume One”)

B. Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)

Missionary, Pastor, Author from Scotland

“There are times when you cannot understand why you cannot do what you want to do. When GOD brings the blank space, see that you do not fill it in, but wait. The blank space may come in order to teach you what sanctification means, or it may come after sanctification to teach you what service means. Never run before GOD’s guidance. If there is the slightest doubt, then HE is not guiding. Whenever there is doubt – *don’t*.



Oswald Chambers

In the beginning you may see clearly what GOD’s will is – the severance of a friendship, the breaking off of a business relationship, something you feel distinctly before GOD is HIS

will for you to do, never do it on the impulse of that feeling. If you do, you will end in making difficulties that will take years of time to put right. Wait for GOD's time to bring it round and HE will do it without any heartbreak or disappointment. When it is a question of the providential will of GOD, wait for GOD to move." (Taken from the book, "My Utmost For HIS Highest")

"One of the greatest strains in life, is the strain of waiting for GOD.

"Watch for GOD's answers to your prayers, and not only watch but wait. When GOD calls upon you to pray, when HE gives you the vision, when HE gives you an understanding of what HE is going to do through you in your Sunday school class, in your Church or home – watch. How many of us have had to learn by GOD's reproof, by GOD's chastisement, the blunder of conferring with flesh and blood. Are you discouraged where you are, worker? Then get upon this tower with GOD, and watch, and wait. The meaning of waiting in both Old and New Testament is 'standing under,' actively enduring. It is not standing with folded arms doing nothing; it is not saying, "In GOD's good time it will come to pass" – that often means, "In my abominably lazy time I let GOD work." Waiting means standing under, in active strength, enduring till the answer comes." (Taken from the book, "Still Higher For HIS Highest")

"Have we ever caught the full force of the thirty silent years, of those three years wandering in Palestine? Have we ever caught the full force of those ten days of waiting in the upper room? If we measure those periods by our modern way of estimating we will put it down as waste of time; but into the life of Our LORD, into the lives of the early disciples, were going to come elements that would root and ground them on an solid foundation that nothing could shake. The waiting time is always the testing time." (Taken from the book, "Still Higher For HIS Highest")

Note: The following two poems were written by Oswald Chambers, and are taken from the book authored by David McCasland, "Oswald Chambers – Abandoned To GOD."

WAIT
(July 7, 1892)

Cease from disquietude,
Fret not, this is unto thee a preparation time;
Thou must be made in likeness unto HIM thou wouldest serve.
Wait, the diamond must be cut ere from its tiny facets
Flash the glory of the sun's pure ray.
Rain must descend,
Else from yon dull grey bulb springeth no sweet perfumed flower.
Be silent upon GOD, thy time for service has not come;
Patience, this waiting trial is by HIM who loves thee sent;
Be still – HE knoweth all, thou knowest that HIS will is best.

THE CONSUMPTIVE
(Edinburgh, September 14, 1896)

“Waiting – wistful still?”

Yes, just for tonight,
Tomorrow, with the light,
I'm sure to be all right,
Don't you think I will?

“Waiting – wistful still?”

Yes, just for today,
Tomorrow, I'll away,
Just now I'm forced to stay,
For they say I'm ill.

“Waiting – wistful still?”

Yes, just for this year,
Because they say they fear
The cost will be too dear,
So I'm waiting – till!

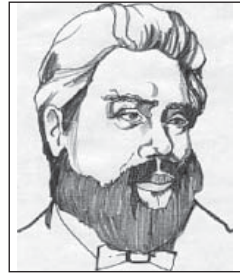
“Waiting – wistful still?”

Yes! From the still white bed,
Came whispered from the dead,
“Till to GOD you're led,
Waiting, wistful still.”

C. Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)
Pastor and Author from England

“Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.” Exodus 14:13

“These words contain GOD’s command to the believer when he is reduced to great straits and brought into extraordinary difficulties. He cannot retreat; he cannot go forward; he is shut upon the right hand and on the left. What is he now to do?



Charles Spurgeon

The MASTER’s Word to him is “*stand still.*” It will be well for him if, at such times, he listens only to HIS MASTER’s Word, for other and evil advisers come with their suggestions. *Despair* whispers, “Lie down and die; give it all up.” But GOD would have us put on a cheerful courage, and even in our worst times, rejoice in HIS love and faithfulness.

Cowardice says, “Retreat; go back to the wordling’s way of action; you cannot play the CHRISTian’s part; it is too difficult. Relinquish your principles.”

But, however much Satan may urge this course upon you, you cannot follow it, if you are a child of GOD. HIS divine fiat has bid thee go from strength to strength, and so thou shalt, and neither death nor hell shall turn thee from thy course. What if for a while thou art called to stand still; yet this is but to renew thy strength for some greater advance in due time.

Precipitancy cries, “Do something; stir yourself; to stand still and wait is sheer idleness.” We *must* do something at once – *we* must do it, so we think – instead of looking to the LORD, will not only do something, but will do everything.

Presumption boasts, “If the sea be before you, march into it, and expect a miracle.” But faith listens neither to presumption, nor to despair, nor to cowardice, nor to precipitancy, but it hears GOD say, “Stand still,” and immovable as a rock it stands.

“*Stand still*” – keep the posture of an upright man, ready for action, expecting further orders, cheerfully and patiently awaiting the directing voice; and it will not be long ere GOD shall say to you, as distinctly as Moses said it to the people of Israel, “Go forward.” (Taken from the book, “Streams In The Desert, Volume One”)

“GOD often delays in answering prayer. We have several instances of this in sacred Scripture. Jacob did not get the blessing from the angel until near the dawn of day – he had to wrestle all night for it. The poor woman of Syrophenicia was answered not a word for a long while. Paul besought the LORD *thrice* that ‘the thorn in the flesh’ might be taken from him, and he received no assurance that it should be taken away, but instead thereof a promise that GOD’s grace should be sufficient for him. If thou hast been knocking at the gate of mercy, and hast received no answer, shall I tell thee why the mighty MAKER hath not opened the door and let thee in? Our FATHER has reasons peculiar to HIMSELF for thus keeping us waiting. Sometimes it is to show HIS power and HIS sovereignty, that men may know that JEHOVAH has a right to give or to withhold. More frequently the delay is for our profit. Thou art perhaps kept waiting in order that thy desires may be more fervent. GOD knows that delay will quicken and increase desire, and that if HE Keeps thee waiting thou wilt see thy necessity more clearly, and wilt seek more earnestly; and that thou wilt prize the mercy all the more for its long tarrying. There may also be something wrong in thee which has need to be removed, before the joy of the LORD is given. Perhaps thy views of the Gospel plan are confused, or thou mayest be placing some little reliance on thyself, instead of trusting simply and entirely to the LORD JESUS. Or, GOD makes thee tarry awhile that HE may the more fully display the riches of HIS grace to thee at last. Thy prayers are all filed in heaven, and if not immediately answered they are certainly not forgotten, but in a little while shall be fulfilled to thy delight and satisfaction. Let not despair make thee silent, but continue instant in earnest supplication.” (Taken from the book, “Morning And Evening”)

“It may seem an easy thing to *wait*, but it is one of the postures which a CHRISTian soldier learns not without years of teaching. Marching and quick-marching are much easier to GOD’s warriors than standing still. There are hours of perplexity when the most willing spirit, anxiously desirous to serve the LORD, knows not what part to take. Then what shall it do? Vex itself by despair? Fly back in cowardice, turn to the right hand in fear, or rush forward in presumption? No, but simply wait. *Wait in prayer*, however. Call upon GOD, and spread the case before HIM; tell HIM your difficulty, and plead HIS promise of aid. In dilemmas between one duty and another, it is sweet to be humble as a child, and *wait with simplicity of soul* upon the LORD. It is sure to be well with us when we feel and know our own folly, and are heartily willing to be guided by the will of GOD. But *wait in faith*. Express your unstaggering confidence in HIM; for unfaithful, untrusting waiting, is but an insult to the LORD. Believe that if HE keep you tarrying even till midnight, yet HE will come at the right time; the vision shall come and shall not tarry. *Wait in quiet patience*, not rebelling because you are under the affliction, but blessing your GOD for it. Never murmur against the second cause, as the children of Israel did against Moses; never wish you could go back to the world again, but accept the case as it is, and put it as it stands, simply and with your whole heart, without any self-will, into the hand of your covenant GOD, saying, ‘Now, LORD, not my will, but THINE be done. I know not what to do; I am brought to extremities, but I will wait until THOU shalt cleave the floods, or drive back my foes. I will wait, if THOU keep me many a day, for my heart is fixed upon THEE alone, O GOD, and my spirit waiteth for THEE in the full conviction that THOU wilt yet be my joy and my salvation, my refuge and my strong tower.’” (Taken from the book, “Morning And Evening”)

“Success is certain when the LORD has promised it. Although you may have pleaded month after month without evidence of answer, it is not possible that the LORD should be deaf when HIS people are earnest in a matter which concerns HIS glory. The prophet on the top of Carmel continued to wrestle with GOD, and never for a moment gave way to a fear that he should be non-suited in JEHOVAH’s courts. Six times the

servant returned, but on each occasion no word was spoken but ‘Go again.’ We must not dream of unbelief, but hold to our faith even to seventy times seven. Faith sends expectant hope to look from Carmel’s brow, and if nothing is beheld, she sends again and again. So far from being crushed by repeated disappointment, faith is animated to plead more fervently with her GOD. She is humbled, but not abashed: her groans are deeper, and her sighings more vehement, but she never relaxes her hold or stays her hand. It would be more agreeable to flesh and blood to have a speedy answer, but believing souls have learned to be submissive, and to find it good to wait *for* as well as *upon* the LORD. Delayed answers often set the heart searching itself, and so lead to contrition and spiritual reformation; deadly blows are thus struck at our corruption, and the chambers of imagery are cleansed. The great danger is lest men should faint, and miss the blessing. Reader, do not fall into that sin, but continue in prayer and watching. At last the little cloud was seen, the sure forerunner of torrents of rain, and even so with you, the token for good shall surely be given, and you shall rise as a prevailing prince to enjoy the mercy you have sought. Elijah was a man of like passions with us: his power with GOD did not lie in his own merits. If his believing prayer availed so much, why not yours? Plead the precious blood with unceasing importunity, and it shall be with you according to your desire.” (Taken from the book, “Morning And Evening”)

D. Arthur T. Pierson (1837-1911)

Pastor and Author from the United States

“The workman of GOD needs to wait on HIM to know the work he is to do and the sphere where he is to serve HIM.”

“... that primary lesson that he who would work with GOD must first wait on HIM and wait for HIM, and that all undue haste in such a matter is worse than waste.”

“(GOD) says to all impatient souls: ‘My time is not yet fully come, yet your time is always ready.’”

“... continued uncertainty as to one’s course is a reason for continued waiting.”

“GOD is often moved to delay that we may be led to pray, and even the answers to prayer are deferred that the natural and carnal spirit may be kept in check and self-will may bow before the will of GOD.”

“There is a constant strain and drain on patient waiting which is a necessary feature of missionary trial and particularly the trial of deferred harvests.” (All of the above taken from the book, “George Muller of Bristol”)

E. George Whitfield (1714-1770)
Evangelist from England

“When GOD sets out to do a great work,
HE takes a long time in doing it.”



George Whitfield

F. George Matheson (1842-1906)
Pastor and Author from Scotland

“It was hard at such times to leave my work undone when I believed that work to be the service of the SPIRIT. But I came to remember that the *SPIRIT has not only a service of work, but a service of waiting*. I came to see that in the kingdom of CHRIST there are not only times for action, but times in which to forbear acting. I came to learn that the desert place apart is often the most useful spot in the varied life of man – more rich in harvest than the seasons in which the corn and wine abounded. I have been taught to thank the BLESSED SPIRIT that many a darling Bithynia had to be left unvisited by me.

And so, THOU DIVINE SPIRIT, would I still be led by THEE. Still there come to me disappointed prospects of usefulness. Today the door seems to open into life and work for THEE; tomorrow it closes before me just as I am about to enter.

Teach me to see another door in the very inaction of the hour. Help me to find in the very prohibition thus to serve

THEE, a new opening into THY service. Inspire me with the knowledge that a man may at times be called to do his duty by doing nothing, to work by keeping still, to serve by waiting. When I remember the power of the ‘still small voice,’ I shall not murmur that sometimes the SPIRIT suffers me *not* to go.”

“There are times when things look very dark to me – so dark that I have to wait even for hope. It is bad enough to wait *in* hope, to see no glimmer of a prospect and yet refuse to despair; to have nothing but night before the casement and yet to keep the casement open for possible stars; to have a vacant place in my heart and yet to allow that place to be filled by no inferior presence – that is the grandest patience in the universe. It is Job in the tempest; it is Abraham on the road to Moriah; it is Moses in the desert of Midian; it is the SON OF MAN in the Garden of Gethsemane.

There is no patience so hard as that which endures, ‘as seeing him who is invisible’; it is the waiting for hope.

THOU hast made waiting beautiful; THOU hast made patience divine. THOU hast taught us that the FATHER’s will may be received just because it *is* HIS will. THOU hast revealed to us that a soul may see nothing but sorrow in the cup and yet may reuse to let it go, convinced that the eye of the FATHER sees further than its own.

Give me this divine power of THINE, the power of Gethsemane. Give me the power to wait for hope itself, to look out from the casement where there are no stars. Give me the power, when the very joy that was set before me is gone, to stand unconquered amid the night, and say, ‘To the eye of my FATHER it is perhaps shining still.’ I shall reach the climax of strength when I have learned to wait for hope.” (Taken from the book, “Streams In The Desert, Volume One”)

G. J. Danson Smith (? - ?)
Poet from England

Waiting! Yes, patiently waiting!
Till next steps made plain shall be;
To hear, with the inner hearing,
The VOICE that will call for me.

Waiting! Yes, hopefully waiting!
With hope that need not grow dim;
The MASTER is pledged to guide me,
And my eyes are unto HIM.

Waiting! Expectantly waiting!
Perhaps it may be today
The MASTER will quickly open
The gate to my future way.

Waiting! Yes, waiting! still waiting!
I know, though I've waited long,
That, while HE withholds HIS purpose,
HIS waiting cannot be wrong.

Waiting! Yes, waiting! still waiting!
The MASTER will not be late:
HE knoweth that I am waiting
For HIM to unlatch the gate.

(Taken from the book, "Streams In The Desert, Volume One")

Sit still, my daughter! Just sit calmly still!
Not deem these days – these waiting days – as ill!
The ONE who loves thee best, WHO plans thy way,
Hath not forgotten thy great need today!
And, if HE waits, 'tis sure HE waits to prove
To thee, HIS tender child, HIS heart's deep love.

Sit still, my daughter! Just sit calmly still!
Thou longest much to know thy dear LORD's will!
While anxious thoughts would almost steal their way
Corrodingly within, because of HIS delay –
Persuade thyself in simply faith to rest
That HE, WHO knows and loves, will do the best.

Sit still, my daughter! Just sit calmly still!
Nor move one step, not even one, until
HIS way hath opened. Then, ah then, how sweet!
How glad thy heart, and then how swift thy feet
They inner being then, ah then, how strong!
And waiting days not counted then too long.

Sit still, my daughter! Just sit calmly still!
What higher service could'st thou for HIM fill?
'Tis hard! ah yes! But choicest things must cost!
For lack of losing all how much is lost!
'Tis hard, 'tis true! But then – HE giveth grace
To count the hardest spot the sweetest place.
(Taken from the book, "Streams In The Desert, Volume One")

The Encouraging And Inspiring Devotional, "Streams In The Desert, Volume One"

H. Horatio Bonar (1808-1889) **Pastor and Author from Scotland**

"The LORD, when HE hath given great faith, hath been known to try it by long delayings. HE has suffered HIS servants' voices to echo in their ears as from a brazen sky. They have knocked at the golden gate, but it has remained unmovable, as though it were rusted upon its hinges. Like Jeremiah, they have cried, *'THOU hast covered THYSELF with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.'*" Thus have true saints continued long in patient waiting without reply, not because their prayers were not vehement, nor because they were unaccepted, but because it so pleased HIM WHO is Sovereign, and WHO gives according to HIS own pleasure. If it pleases HIM to bid our patience exercise itself, shall HE not do as HE will with HIS own!

No prayer is lost. Praying breath was never spent in vain. There is no such thing as prayer unanswered or unnoticed by GOD, and some things that we count refusals or denials are simply delays." (Taken from the book, "Streams In The Desert, Volume One")

I. Alexander McClaren (1826-1910)
Pastor and Author from Scotland

“CHRIST sometimes delays HIS help that HE may try our faith and quicken our prayers. The boat may be covered with the waves, and HE sleeps on; but HE will wake up before it sinks. HE sleeps, but HE never oversleeps; and there is no ‘too lates’ with HIM.” (Taken from the book, “Streams In The Desert, Volume One”)

J. C. G. Trumbull (1872-1941)
Author from England

“An assured part of GOD’s pledged blessing to us is delay and suffering. A delay in Abram’s own lifetime that seemed to put GOD’s pledge beyond fulfillment was followed by seemingly unendurable delay of Abram’s descendants. But it was only a delay: they *‘came out with great substance.’* The pledge was redeemed.

GOD is going to test me with delays; and with the delays will come suffering, but through it all stands GOD’s pledge: HIS new covenant with me in CHRIST, and HIS inviolable promise of every lesser blessing that I need. The delay and the suffering are part of the promised blessing; let me praise HIM for them today; and let me wait on the LORD and be of good courage, and HE will strengthen my heart.” (Taken from the book, “Streams In The Desert, Volume One”)

Note: The following five poems were written by unknown authors and are taken from the book, “Streams In The Desert, Volume One.”

When I cannot understand my FATHER’s leading.
And it seems to be but hard and cruel fate,
Still I hear that gentle whisper ever pleading,
GOD is working, GOD is faithful, ONLY WAIT.

Be quiet! why this anxious heed
About thy tangled ways?
GOD knows them all. HE giveth speed
And HE allows delays.
'Tis good for thee to walk by faith
And not by sight.
Take it on trust a little while.
Soon shalt thou read the mystery aright
In the full sunshine of HIS smile.

Trust and rest when all around thee
Puts thy faith to sorest test;
Let no fear or foe confound thee,
Wait for GOD and trust and rest.

Trust and rest with heart abiding,
Like a birdling in its nest,
Underneath HIS feathers hiding,
Fold thy wings and trust and rest.

O troubled soul, beneath the rod,
Thy FATHER speaks, be still, be still;
Learn to be silent unto GOD,
And let HIM mould thee to HIS will.

O praying soul, be still, be still,
HE cannot break HIS plighted Word;
Sink down into HIS blessed will,
And wait in patience on the LORD.

O waiting soul, be still, be strong,
And though HE tarry, trust and wait;
Doubt not, HE will not wait too long,
Fear not, HE will not come too late.

I longed to walk along an easy road,
And leave behind the full routine of home,
Thinking in other fields to serve my GOD;
But JESUS said, "MY time has not yet come."

I longed to sow the seed in other soil,
To be unfettered in the work, and free,
To join with other laborers in their toil,
But JESUS said, "Tis not MY choice for thee."

I longed to leave the desert, and be led
To work where souls were sunk in sin and shame,
That I might win them; but the MASTER said,
"I have not called thee, publish here MY Name."

I longed to fight the battles of my KING,
Lift high HIS standards in the thickest strife;
But my great CAPTAIN bade me wait and sing
Songs of HIS conquests in my quiet life.

I longed to leave the uncongenial sphere,
Where all alone I seemed to stand and wait,
To feel I had some human helper near,
But JESUS bade me guard one lonely gate.

I longed to leave the round of daily toil,
Where no one seemed to understand or care;
But JESUS said, "I choose for thee this soil,
That thou might'st raise for ME some blossoms rare."

And now I have no longing but to do
At home, or else afar, HIS blessed will,
To work amid the many or the few;
Thus, "choosing not to choose," my heart is still.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the study of GOD's Word, that, "The Discipline Of Waiting On GOD" is a principle very dear to the heart of the LORD ... and thus a principle very important for us to follow. Because this principle can be so difficult to live out, we obviously need GOD's abundant grace and power to do so. Indeed, as we avail ourselves of this Divine grace and power, and then choose through obedience to live out this principle, we actually become more and more like the LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF! (See II Peter 1:3-8)

Are you waiting for the LORD to move on your behalf in some area of your life? If you're confident that it is also GOD's will, then be patient and persevere ... HE will answer, HE will work!

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our GOD, we have waited for HIM, and HE will save us, this is the LORD, we have waited for HIM, we will be glad and rejoice in HIS salvation."

Isaiah 25:9

"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O GOD, beside THEE, what HE hath prepared for him that waiteth for HIM."

Isaiah 64:4

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“HEAVENLY FATHER, I have discovered from the study of YOUR Word, the importance of developing this discipline of **“Waiting on THEE”**. I accept the truth that it is to be a significant component of my personal, family and ministry life. Please forgive me when I take my eyes off of you and display impatience, frustration and even anger in waiting for YOU to act on my behalf. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to learn to **“Wait on THEE”** for all of my needs. I praise and thank YOU now in anticipation for the glorious benefits that will result because of this discipline. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”

Signed: _____ Date: _____



**CHAPTER 9 -
WHY GOD DOES NOT WANT US, OUR
FAMILIES, AND THE I.C.P.M. TOO
“COMFORTABLE”**

WHY GOD DOES NOT WANT US, OUR FAMILIES, AND THE I.C.P.M. TOO “COMFORTABLE”

I. When We Get Too “Comfortable”, We Tend To Forget GOD And Drift Into The World

A. Israel In The Promised Land

“And it shall be, when the LORD thy GOD shall have brought thee into the land which HE swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things, which thou fillest not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not, when thou shalt have eaten and be full, then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” Deuteronomy 6:10-12

B. Professing CHRISTians In The Laodecian Church

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodecians write, These things saith THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD, I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of MY mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked . . .” Revelation 3:14-17

C. CHRISTians Like Us Erecting “Idols” In Our Lives

“And GOD spake all these Words, saying, Thou shalt have no other gods before ME, Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I the LORD thy GOD am a jealous GOD . . .” Exodus 20:1,3,5

II. Thus God Will Regularly Bring Trials And Tests Into Our Individual Lives, Our Families, And Our Ministries

A. Biblical Examples

1. Joseph – study Genesis chapters 37-40
2. Moses – study Exodus chapters 14-18
3. David – study I Samuel chapters 19-23
4. Job – study Job chapters 1-3
5. Jeremiah – study Lamentations chapter 3
6. Daniel – study Daniel chapter 6
7. Peter – study Acts chapter 5
8. Paul – study II Corinthians chapters 4, 11-12

B. Church History Examples

1. John Huss – Imprisoned, martyred
2. George Muller – “Tight” finances, often ill
3. Hudson Taylor – “Tight” finances, often ill, hardships in China, “burnout”
4. Amy Carmichael – “Tight” finances, bed-ridden for last 20 + years
5. Corey Ten Boom – Imprisoned by Nazi’s, “tight” finances
6. Pastor Hin Go Lamb – Imprisoned in coal mine many years
7. Joni Tada – Paralyzed from shoulders down
8. Bill Gothard – Constant attack from other CHRISTian leaders

C. Personal Examples

1. I.C.P.M. – “Tight” finances, spiritual warfare, discouragement
2. Schutte family – “Tight” finances, Kathy’s fight with cancer
3. Daniel Schutte – fatigue, “burnout”, discouragement,

III. Because The Benefits From This Are Many And Eternal

A. It Will Drive Us To Prayer

1. The People Of Israel

Read and study the Book of Judges to see the following “cycle” GOD continually brought the people of Israel through:

- a. they wandered from the LORD
- b. GOD sent affliction through their enemies
- c. they cried out to GOD for deliverance
- d. GOD sent them a deliverer

2. The Prophet Jeremiah

“Wherefore doth a living man complain, a men for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto GOD in the heavens. I called upon THY Name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon. THOU hast heard my voice, hide not THINE ear at my breathing, at my cry. THOU drewest near in the day that I called upon THEE, THOU saiddest, fear not.” Lamentations 3:39-41, 55-57

3. The Prophet Daniel

“As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our GOD, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand THY Truth. Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our GOD is righteous in

all HIS works which HE doeth: for we obeyed not HIS voice. And now, O LORD our GOD, that hast brought THY people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O LORD, according to all THY righteousness, I beseech THEE, let THINE anger and THY fury be turned away from THY city Jerusalem, THY holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and THY people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our GOD, hear the prayer of THY servant, and his supplications, and cause THY face to shine upon THY sanctuary that is desolate, for the LORD's sake. O my GOD, incline thine ear; and hear; open THINE eyes, and behold our desolation's, and the city which is called by THY Name: for we do not present our supplications before THEE for our righteousness, but for THY great mercies. O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive; O LORD, hearken and do; defer not, for THINE own sake, O my GOD: for THY city and THY people are called by THY Name." **Daniel 9 13-19**

B. It Will Sanctify Us And Make Us More Like CHRIST

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, MY son despise not thou the chastening of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of HIM: For whom the LORD loveth HE chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom HE receiveth. For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but HE for our profit, that we might be partakers of HIS holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."
Hebrews 12:5-6, 10-11

C. It Will Glorify The LORD

"Wherin ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor, and glory at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST." **I Peter 1:6-7**

**CHAPTER 10 -
TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH**

TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH

INTRODUCTION

In chapters two and three of the book of Revelation, we learn of seven distinct messages addressed to seven existing churches of that day. Seven local churches, consisting of CHRISTians . . . just like you and I. The messages are delivered by the LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF, through the Apostle John.



The Apostle John

Though these very distinct messages are given to these seven different churches, there is one common theme found in each one. Each message closes with an admonition and promise. Seven admonitions and seven promises, though given almost two thousand years ago, still needed for each one of us who profess JESUS CHRIST as LORD and SAVIOR today.

Each admonition contains the phrase, *“To him that overcometh”*. The purpose of this study is for us to discuss first of all, what this important phrase means, then secondly to learn what each of these seven promises are in light of this accompanying phrase.

The phrase, “*To him that overcometh*”, is found in Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, and 3:5, 12, 21.

“*overcometh*” (Greek - Nikao) = to gain the victory, to be victorious

With this definition in mind, the LORD JESUS CHRIST is speaking to those of us who have been “victorious” and have “gained the victory”. But “the victory” over what? The following Scriptures help us to answer this question . . .

“I (the Apostle John), write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked One. 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.” I John 2:13-14

As in Revelation, the inspired author here is the Apostle John. He is speaking to “*young men*” here (probably young converts to CHRISTianity), and he commends them because they, “. . . *have overcome the Wicked One*.” The “*Wicked One*” here refers to Satan. As in the Apostle John’s day, so it is for us today. The only means for us to have real victory over our enemy Satan, is . . .

“. . . by the blood of the LAMB, and by the word of (our) testimony . . .”
Revelation 12:11a



The “LAMB Of GOD” At Calvary

We are not only reminded that we can have victory over Satan, but Scripture also tells us that we can have victory over “*the world*” as well.

“For whatsoever is born of GOD overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that JESUS is the SON of GOD?” I John 5:4-5

Notice three important truths from these verses above . . .

1. The one that “*overcometh*” here “*. . . is born of GOD . . .*”
To be “*. . . born of GOD . . .*” means to have trusted in JESUS CHRIST as personal LORD and SAVIOR (see John 3:3, 15-16). This would include believing “*. . . that JESUS is the SON of GOD.*”

2. The object of our victory here is “*... the world ...*”
The Greek word for “*world*” is “*Kosmos*”, which literally means the whole world-system apart from and opposition to GOD. We can be encouraged by the words of the LORD JESUS CHRIST when



“The World” Is Our Enemy As Well

HE said, “*. . . in ME ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*” **John 16:33**

3. The means for our victory here is “*. . . our faith.*”
Scripture defines “*faith*” as, “*. . . the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*”(Hebrews 11:1). In several places, Scripture reminds us that, “*. . . the just shall live by faith . . .*” (see Habakkuk 2:4b; Hebrews 10:38a). As we put our “*faith*” in the LORD, not only for salvation, but also on a daily basis for victory over the evils in this “*world*”, we experience real and lasting victory over it’s temptations and destructiveness.

We have learned “*what*” the LORD desires for us to “*overcome*” (Satan and the world), and we have learned “*how*” to “*overcome*” (through the LORD JESUS CHRIST and our “*faith*” in HIM). In the remaining portion of our study, we will learn of the wonderful and glorious promises that become ours as we become “*overcomers*” in CHRIST.

Promise #1

“To him that overcometh will I (JESUS) give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of GOD.” **Revelation 2:7b**

In Genesis 2:9-10, we first learn of “. . . the tree of life . . . in the midst of the garden (of Eden) . . .” After Adam and Eve sin by eating of “. . . the tree of the knowlege of good and evil . . .” (see Genesis 3:6-7), GOD drives them out of the garden, “. . . lest (they) put forth (their) hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” (see Genesis 3:22)



Man Driven Out Of Eden

Apparently the LORD has “transplanted” “. . . the tree of life . . .” from the Garden of Eden into heaven (see Revelation 22:2, 14). A tree that will yield her “healing . . . fruit” throughout eternity. Yet only, “To him that overcometh . . .”

Promise #2

“He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”
Revelation 2:11b



The “Lake Of Fire”

If the LORD JESUS CHRIST tarries in returning for those that are HIS, all of us will die physically. Yet Scripture refers to a “. . . second death.”

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire, This is the second death.”
Revelation 20:14

If “. . . *the second death*” is “. . . *the lake of fire*”, who are the ones destined for this terrible place?

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” **Revelation 21:8**

There is only one type of individual who will escape this eternal punishment and destruction! *“He that overcometh . . .”*

Promise #3

“To him that overcometh will I (JESUS) give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”

Revelation 2:17b

As the children of Israel made their journey through the wilderness on their way to the land that GOD had promised them, GOD fed them by providing a sweetened cake-like substance called manna (see Exodus 16:14-22). This provision was only for GOD's people. In eternity there will also be manna, “. . . *the hidden manna . . .*” for the redeemed.

Along with this “heavenly food” will be given a “. . . *white stone . . .*” A stone with the “. . . *new name*” of the recipient in it. Many times in Scripture the color “white” is synonymous with purity and righteousness.

There is only one type of individual who is worthy to eat of “. . . *the hidden manna . . .*”, and receive the “. . . *white stone . . .*” of purity and righteousness. *“To him that overcometh . . .”*

Promise #4

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth MY works unto the end, to him will I (JESUS) give power over the nations.” **Revelation 2:26**

Unlike the first three promises in our study, this promise is dependent upon another condition. Not only must we be “victorious” over Satan and this present world’s system with its temptations and destruction, but we must be one who, “. . . *keepeth (CHRIST’s) works unto the end . . .*”

The “*works*” of CHRIST are those righteous deeds we do for the glory of GOD and the furtherance of HIS kingdom. These righteous “*works*” are,

1. evidence of our love for CHRIST (see James 2:17, 24, 26)
2. ordained of GOD for us to do (see Ephesians 2:10)
3. carried out by GOD through us (see Philippians 2:13)

Notice the special promise given here. CHRIST says that HE will, “. . . *give power over the nations.*” The Greek word for “*power*” here is “*exousia*”, which means “privilege and authority”. Scripture tells us that when CHRIST sets up HIS (yet future) earthly kingdom of one thousand years, (see Revelation 20: 4-6), only certain individuals will have this “privilege and authority”

to rule and reign with HIM. “. . . *he that overcometh, and keepeth (CHRIST’s) works unto the end . . .*”



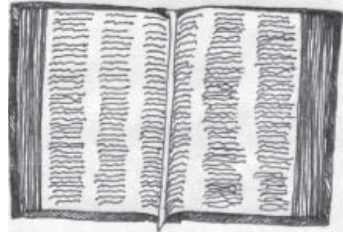
Promise #5

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I (JESUS) will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before MY FATHER, and before HIS angels.” Revelation 3:5

“. . . *white raiment . . .*” is the clothing of the redeemed in heaven (see Revelation 4:4; 19:8, 14). All those throughout history who have called upon the Name of the LORD to be saved (see Romans 10:13), will be given these righteous garments for all eternity.

But notice two other promises given as well.

First, JESUS declares that HE, “. . . will not blot out (i.e. - erase) his name out of the book of life . . .” Apparently GOD has a book in HIS possession called, “. . . the book of life . . .” It must be a rather large book, for it contains the names of all the saints throughout history who have “overcome”.



“The Book Of Life”

Secondly, JESUS proclaims that HE, “. . . will confess (**our**) name before (HIS) FATHER, and before HIS angels.” The word “confess” here means “to acknowledge openly”. What an honor and privilege to have the very LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF, say to GOD the FATHER and all the holy angels, that we are HIS and that HE loves us!

There is only one type of individual however, who will be worthy to “. . . be clothed (with this) white raiment . . .”, have their “. . . name (in) the book of life . . .”, and have JESUS HIMSELF “. . . confess (their) name . . .” in heaven. *He that overcometh . . .*

Promise #6

“Him that overcometh will I (JESUS) make a pillar in the temple of MY GOD, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon HIM the Name of MY GOD, and the Name of the city of MY GOD, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from MY GOD, and I will write upon him MY new Name.”

Revelation 3:12

This Scripture too contains a multiple of promises . . . three in all,

First, to “*Him that overcometh . . .*”, JESUS declares that HE will, “. . . make (him) a pillar in the temple of (HIS) GOD . . .” This of course is an analogy referring to the



The Old Jewish Temple In Jerusalem

LORD's temple in heaven (see Revelation 11:19). The picture here is of GOD giving this saint a strong and permanent place in HIS celestial sanctuary.

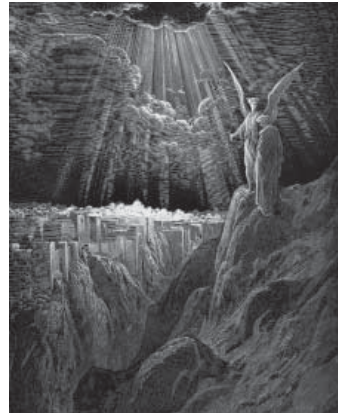
Secondly, The promise is given that, “. . . *he shall go no more out . . .*” In this world, CHRISTians are called “*pilgrims*” (see Hebrews 11:13; I Peter 2:11). That is, our time here is very short. However heaven will be our permanent home, and it is there that we “. . . *shall go no more out . . .*”

This third promise consists of three parts, all of which have to do with a name. To “*Him that overcometh . . .*” JESUS promises that HE “. . . *will write upon him . . .*”

“. . . *the Name of (HIS) GOD . . .*”

“. . . *the Name of the city of (HIS) GOD . . .*”

“. . . (HIS) *New Name.*”



The “New Jerusalem”

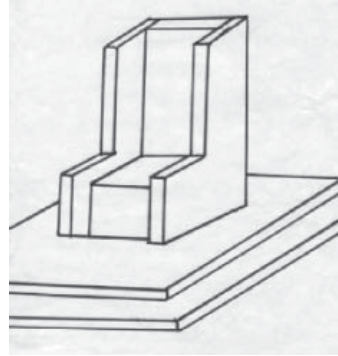
Scripture reveals WHO the GOD of JESUS is. HE is the only GOD . . . the GOD of the Bible. We also know the Name “. . . *of the city . . .*” that JESUS is referring to here, for John the Apostle tells us it is the, “. . . *new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from (HIS) GOD . . .*” However, this “. . . *new Name*” that JESUS is referring to, is a Name yet to be discovered (see Revelation 19:12).

We are reminded that there is only one kind of individual who will experience these eternal rewards. “*Him that overcometh . . .*”

Promise #7

“To him that overcometh will I (JESUS) grant to sit with ME in MY throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with MY FATHER in HIS throne.” **Revelation 3:21**

This is the last promise in this section of Scripture, and what a glorious promise it is! The magnificent privilege of actually sitting with the LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF in HIS heavenly “*throne*”.



A “*throne*” in Scripture is a symbol of royalty and authority. CHRIST is promising that even as HE is “royalty”, and has the “authority” to rule and reign in HIS heavenly Kingdom, HE makes us “royalty” as well, and allows us to share in HIS ruling and reigning too. JESUS declares that all this is possible because HE HIMSELF, “. . . *also overcame, and (has) set down with (HIS) FATHER in HIS throne.*”

For the seventh time however, it is emphasized that there is only one kind of individual who will partake of this glory. “*To him that overcometh . . .*”

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that each of these seven promises is referring to heaven. That glorious and eternal place that is the final destination for each individual who has professed JESUS CHRIST as LORD and SAVIOR.

We also know from the testimony of Scripture, that this admonition concerning overcoming is not teaching a “works” salvation (see Romans 4:1-25; Ephesians 2:8-9; etc.). Rather, it is the outward evidence of the individual who has put their trust in CHRIST for this salvation, and who on a consistent basis, is victoriously overcoming Satan and all that stands in opposition to JESUS CHRIST and HIS righteousness!

May this indeed be the testimony of everyone of us that proclaims their love for the LORD JESUS CHRIST and seeks to follow HIM and HIS righteousness. Then will the Scripture be true that says . . .

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his GOD, and he shall be MY son.” **Revelation 21:7**

MY LIFE COMMITMENT

“Heavenly FATHER, I thank YOU for these wonderful promises that will be mine someday in eternity. I realize however, that these will only be mine as I heed the admonition to be a victorious “overcomer” of Satan and all that stands in opposition to the LORD JESUS CHRIST and HIS righteousness. I now purpose, through YOUR grace and the power of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, to be this “overcomer” for YOUR glory and the furtherance of YOUR kingdom. I pray this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and for HIS glory, Amen.”

Signed _____ Date _____

**CHAPTER 11 -
THE DISCIPLINE OF FASTING**

THE DISCIPLINE OF FASTING

Great men and women who fasted ...

1. **Moses** - *“And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights, he did neither eat bread, nor drink water.”* Exodus 34:28
2. **David** - *“David therefore besought GOD... and David fasted...”*
II Samuel 12:16 (see also Psalm 69:10-11)
3. **Elijah** - *“And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of GOD.”* I Kings 19:8
4. **Nehemiah** - *“And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the GOD of heaven.”* Nehemiah 1:4
5. **Esther** - *“... fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day, I also and my maidens will fast likewise...”* Esther 4:16a
6. **Daniel** - *“And I set my face unto the LORD GOD, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.”*
Daniel 9:3
7. **Christ** - *“And when HE fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered.”* Matthew 4:2
8. **Anna** - *“And there was one Anna... a widow... which departed not from the temple, but served GOD with fastings and prayers night and day.”* Luke 2:36a, 37

9. **Paul** - "... in fastings often ..." II Corinthians 11:27
10. **Others** - Martin Luther, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Bill Gothard

Reasons to fast...

1. To seek the LORD's will. *"Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our GOD, to seek of HIM a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance."* Ezra 8:21 (see also II Chronicles 20:3; Acts 14:23)
2. To bring deliverance and protection. Read Esther 4:16 - 5:8; (see also II Chronicles 20:3)
3. To bring humility. *"... I humbled my soul with fasting ..."* Psalm 35:13 (see also Isaiah 58:5a)
4. To be heard by GOD. *"... to make your voice to be heard on high."* Isaiah 58:4b (see also Deuteronomy 9:18; Acts 13:2-3; I Corinthians 7:5)
5. To mourn. *"Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came into the house of GOD, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even ..."* Judges 20:26 (see also I Kings 21:27; Nehemiah 1:4)
6. To intercede for others. *"is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke:"* Isaiah 58:6 (see also Deuteronomy 9:18)
7. To give the money that you would normally spend to purchase food with to the poor. *"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house" When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him ..."* Isaiah 58:7
8. To accompany repentance. *"And I set my face unto the LORD GOD, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and*

sackcloth, and ashes, and I prayed unto the LORD my GOD, and made confessions ...” Daniel 9:3-4a (see also Joel 2:12; Jonah 3:5)

9. To unleash great spiritual power. Read Matthew 17:14-21
10. To serve GOD. *“And there was one Anna... and she... served GOD with fastings and prayers night and day.” Luke 2:36a, 37b*

Reasons not to fast...

1. For pleasure. *“... in the day of your fast ye find pleasure...”* Isaiah 58:3b
2. For profit. *“... and exact all your laborers.”* Isaiah 58:4c
3. For strife and fighting. *“Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness...”* Isaiah 58:4a
4. For selfishness. *“Then came the WORD of the LORD of hosts unto me saying ... when ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto ME, even to ME?”* Zechariah 7:4-5
5. For pride. Read Luke 18:9-14 (note the bragging Pharisee. Contrast Matthew 6:16-18)

Activities to practice during a fast...

1. Confess sin in prolonged prayer. See Psalm 51
2. Read and study large amounts of SCRIPTURE.
3. Memorize SCRIPTURE.
4. Praise the LORD through song.
5. Pray. (i.e., petition, intercession, praise, thanksgiving, confession)
6. Read CHRISTian biographies or books.

7. Worship and fellowship with other CHRISTians.
8. Rest.
9. Take a walk.

Activities not to practice during a fast...

1. Watch television, listen to the radio (even CHRISTian), play games.
2. Manual labor if possible.
3. Drink coffee, soft drinks, juices, milk shakes, etc. Only water.

Other points...

1. Expect attacks from Satan (i.e. - to eat). *“And when HE had fasted forty days and forty nights, HE was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to HIM, he said, If THOU be the SON of GOD, command that these stones be made bread.”* Matthew 4:2-3
2. Some have to be told you’re fasting. i.e. - family, roommate, etc.
3. Might experience slight headache. (i.e. - caffeine withdrawal)
4. May feel tired. *“My knees are weak through fasting ...”* Psalm 109:24
5. All, both young and old, male and female can participate. *“... sanctify a fast... gather the people... gather the children...”* Joel 2:15-16
6. The best *single* day to fast is Sunday, (from Saturday night to Sunday night).
7. Time may go slow.

**SECTION TWO:
BIBLICAL RESOURCES
FOR MINISTRY**

**CHAPTER 1 -
THE PERSONAL EVANGELISM
HANDBOOK**

THE PERSONAL EVANGELISM HANDBOOK

Introduction

This part of the ministry is based on I Thessalonians 1:7-8. Here the Apostle Paul commends these believers for their reaching out to the unsaved with the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST. “. . . ye were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the *WORD* of the *LORD* not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to *GOD*-ward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything.” This is true evangelism! Everyone in the local church reaching out to witness. In contrast to this, the Apostle rebukes the believers in Corinth. “Awake to righteousness, and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of *GOD*, I speak this to your shame” I Corinthians 15:34. This is the purpose of this handbook. To help equip those in the body of CHRIST who would desire to share their LORD and HIS saving grace, with a lost and dying world.

We here at the Inner-city Church Planting Mission feel that there are three main reasons why *GOD* has called us to serve HIM. First of all, to glorify HIM in all that we do. So whether we are preaching, counseling, discipling, or witnessing, it is our prayer that, “. . . *GOD* in all things may be glorified through *JESUS CHRIST*.” I Peter 4:11b. Secondly, to be a ministry where HIS people can receive edification and discipleship. The Apostle Paul realized this as a main reason for his ministry. He writes in Colossians 1:27b-29, “. . . *CHRIST* in you, the *Hope* of glory, *WHOM* we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect (or complete) in *CHRIST JESUS*. For this

I also labor, striving according to HIS working, which worketh in me mightily.” Therefore, if GOD can use this part of our ministry (i.e. – the personal evangelism), to train and equip the saints, not only to be evangelists, but to become more CHRIST-like, we would be very pleased. The third reason we feel called to minister within the inner-city, is to reach out to the spiritually lost with CHRIST’s Good News of salvation. We still believe that CHRIST’s great commission to “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . .*” (Matthew 28:19), is still for today.

So these are the reasons, (in order of importance), for the ICPM’s existence. And we believe that these are the reasons, (in order of importance), for this part of our ministry, (i.e. – the personal evangelism). So whether we are able to really lead people to the saving knowledge of CHRIST is not of primary importance. It’s first of all, that GOD would be glorified, secondly, that those involved in this evangelism would be disciplined, edified, and built up in their walk with the LORD, then thirdly, (if GOD would so will it), for people to be saved. Because if the salvation of souls was indeed our primary reason for preaching the Gospel in the inner-city, we would be failures, for we have seen very few people saved. But it has been the glorification of GOD and the discipleship of saints that GOD has seen fit to let us bear abundant fruit in.

Learning to witness is very much like learning to swim. You can read all the “how to” books you desire, but until you actually “jump in and start to peddle your feet and swing your arms,” you just will not really learn. So too with these principles below. You can study these over and over again., and know and memorize all the Scriptures listed, but until you actually “get on the street,” they won’t bear much fruit. So the street is our real “classroom.” But may these principles and Scriptures listed below, better equip us for that classroom, and for reaching a lost and dying world for JESUS CHRIST!

I. Personal Preparation

Introduction: These Scriptures and principles listed below deal with the individual evangelist, and how he can prepare himself before he joins the other evangelists he might be working with.

A. Individual Prayer

1. and confessing of all sin. *“Create in me a clean heart O GOD, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from THY presence, and take not THY HOLY SPIRIT from me. Restore unto me the joy of THY salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then will I teach transgressors THY ways, and sinners shall be converted unto THEE”* Psalm 51:10-13. These verses tell us that unless our hearts and lives are pure from daily sin, GOD cannot use us as a vessel to carry HIS Good News to the lost. So this is very important. Read Joshua chapter 7 and the story of Achan for a tragic illustration of one man’s sin affecting the welfare of a whole group of people!
2. for “the hedge of thorns.” This tool, as with Job (see Job chapter 1), will protect us from the attacks of the Evil One. When one chooses to share JESUS CHRIST with another soul, Satan will use every weapon in his arsenal to attack us. This “hedge” will keep him from being able to do that, (unless GOD allows it, as HE did indeed with Job). One can also pray this hedge of protection around the people he’ll be sharing the Gospel with, (i.e. – that the Word that has been “sown” will not be snatched away by Satan, see Matthew 13:19). It might also be profitable for the evangelist to *“Put on the whole armour of GOD . . .”* through prayer (see Ephesians 6:10-20).
3. for GOD to be glorified. As mentioned above, we believe that this should be the main reason and motivation for us doing anything for GOD. Paul reminds us in I Corinthians 10:31 that, *“. . . whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of GOD.”*

4. for boldness. If we concentrate on the individual's need of JESUS CHRIST, and not on the rejection or ridicule we might receive from that individual, our fears will be overcome. The great Apostle Paul had to ask others to pray that he would have boldness. “. . . *with all prayer and supplication in the SPIRIT, . . . (pray) for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel.*” Ephesians 6:18-19
5. for sensitivity. To the HOLY SPIRIT and HIS guidance as we talk to people. And to the people themselves, so we will be able to detect their needs and where they stand spiritually. “. . . *lean not unto thine own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge HIM, and HE shall direct thy paths.*” Proverbs 3:5-6
6. for a love for the people. If we have a genuine CHRIST-like love for the lost, we will see through their “unloveliness”, and be able to look past their rejection of us, and see a soul that is in desperate need of a SAVIOR. “*And though I bestow all my goods to the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.*” I Corinthians 13:3
7. for wisdom and understanding. Wisdom to know what to share, when to share, and how to share. Understanding of their spiritual state and needs. “*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of GOD, WHO giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.*” James 1:5
8. for fellow workers. They may be just as scared and apprehensive as we are. So we can pray for their boldness. But also for these other qualities mentioned above. Sensitivity, a love for the people, and wisdom and understanding as well. “*Continue in prayer . . . praying also for us, that GOD would open unto us a door utterance, to speak the mystery of CHRIST . . .*” Colossians 4:2-3
8. for contacts to listen to us, and that they would take and read the tracts we offer them. Sometimes we will be able to have a lengthy conversation with someone, clearly explaining

the Gospel to them from the Scriptures. Other times they'll only take a tract. In either case we can pray, LORD, may YOUR WORD “. . . *not return unto (YOU) void, but (may) it accomplish that which (YOU) please, and (may) it prosper in the thing whereto (YOU) send it.*” Isaiah 55:11

B. Scripture Memorized

Peter declares to us that we are to, “*Sanctify the LORD GOD in (our) heart, and be ready always to give an answer, to every man that asketh (us) a reason of the hope that is in (us) with meekness and fear*” I Peter 3:15. The Apostle Paul writes that, “*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of GOD*” Romans 10:17. If we desire to share the “*hope that is in us*” with a lost and dying world, and to lead them to a saving faith in CHRIST, it is the Word of GOD, with the anointing of the HOLY SPIRIT that will do this. We will very seldom get a chance to open up the Scriptures and share directly from them. But many times we will get a chance to quote a verse or two that we have put to memory. Thus the importance of memorizing some key “salvation” Scriptures, (which are listed and discussed later). If and when we share Scriptures with people, we can claim that promise in Isaiah 55:11. That GOD’s Word would, “. . . *not return unto (HIM) void . . .*” Note: It is also very profitable to memorize the Scripture references as well, so if the person that you are sharing with for any reason doubts that GOD has said it, you can open up your Bible and show them, even letting them read it themselves. Notice whenever Christ’s authority was challenged, or HE or was asked why HE did something, HE would say, “*It is written . . .*” (i.e. – Matthew 4:4, 6, 7, 10; 21:13 etc.).

C. Personal Testimony Ready

Next to Scripture itself, there is nothing more powerful to share with people than your own personal testimony. Indeed, the mighty Word of GOD, shared with a personal testimony explaining what GOD has done for you, can really speak to the unregenerate heart. The masses are hurting and in great need, and if they can meet someone who was once as needy (spiritually) as they, but have now had all their needs met in

CHRIST, they will relate and be very attentive. For a beautiful example of this, study the Apostle Paul's defense before King Agrippa in Acts 26. Notice how he tactfully but boldly addressed Agrippa's need of JESUS while sharing his own story of coming to CHRIST. Note: We would even encourage you to write your own tract, perhaps using your personal testimony and favorite Scripture.

D. Know The Correct Gospel

Terms are important here. It is not "repenting" (turning from sin), making JESUS "LORD of your life", or "asking JESUS into your heart" that saves you. It is simply "*believing on the LORD JESUS CHRIST*" (John 3:14-18, 36; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-9). So a clear and simple (which the Gospel is), presentation is very important! Remember, these are unregenerate and blinded people you are sharing with. They will only be able to understand the simplest truths of the Word, (see I Corinthians 2:14).

E. Know How Different Types Of People (religious groups, cults, etc.) Will Respond

Not only this, but also what truths and Scriptures to share with them. Again, the admonishment of the Apostle Peter is important, ". . . *be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*" I Peter 3:15. Note: the Scriptures to have ready and memorized for this are discussed under Section V.

II. Corporate Preparation

Introduction: In this section, we discuss some practical principles of preparation that we can participate in as a group (i.e. – at the church, in someone's home, or wherever the group might be gathering), before we are actually "hitting the streets."

A. A Time Of Sharing

Specifically, any events, blessings, or answers to prayer that might have transpired over the last week in relationship to

contacts from weeks previous. Perhaps someone was able to follow-up on a contact, and they would be able to share this with the rest of the group. Or, a contact from the street attended a church service, or even better, a former contact professed CHRIST as SAVIOUR!

B. A Time Of Teaching

It is during this time that we have found it profitable and a blessing for someone to share a particular portion of Scripture and/or evangelistic principle with the rest of the group. Thus this can be an instructive time, but also an inspirational time, a time that can be used to get the group's hearts and minds thinking on spiritual things.

C. A Time Of Praying

Here everyone in the group (if they wish to), calls upon GOD to work that day or night in a mighty and powerful way, both in the lives of the unbelievers who will be confronted, and in their own lives as well. The same requests petitioned for under "Personal Preparation", (A. Individual prayer), can be petitioned for here as well. JESUS said, *"That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of MY FATHER WHO is in heaven."* Matthew 18:19

Note: Perhaps there would be some value to the group engaging in "role-playing". That is, members "acting out" different situations that might occur while ministering on the streets, (i.e. – talking to an "atheist", a Mormon, etc.).

III. Street Principles

Introduction: In this section we will discuss the practical aspects of actually witnessing on the streets.

A. Ministering In Pairs Or Threesomes

This is important. JESUS, in Mark 6:7 and Luke 10:1, sent HIS disciples out to minister in pairs. Why? Probably for mutual protection (physical), and encouragement (emotional)

and spiritual). When one is involved in evangelism, it is very easy to get discouraged (i.e. – when people reject or make fun of you), thus, if ministering with one or two other evangelists, they can draw that much needed encouragement from each other when needed. Ministering in pairs or in threesomes is also advantageous because in the course of a conversation with an unbeliever, one evangelist may not know the answer to a particular question the unbeliever might ask, or what Scripture to share in a particular situation, but the other evangelist may. “. . . *a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*” Ecclesiastes 4:12b

Within each pair or threesome, it is ideal if both sexes can be represented. So when encountering a male or female, the respective male or female can relate to the same sex much better. It is also profitable to have at least one experienced evangelist in each pair or group, someone the others can be led by, instructed by, and draw wisdom from. Note: For obvious reasons, it is not wise for a woman or group of women to evangelize alone, without being accompanied by at least one male.

B. Gathering Information

Without being too “forward” or personal, try to get people’s first names when possible. So, (1) you can share with them in a more personal way; (2) you can pray for them more specifically; and (3) in case they cross your path again, you can call them by name (which will impress them in a good way, in that you remember their name). If they are willing to give this to you, get their phone number and/or address, and ask them if they might let you “follow-up” on them in the future. But again, don’t be too forward here, for it may offend them. Note: An alternative to this is leaving your phone number and address with them, inviting them to contact you.

C. Praying For The Other Pairs Or Threesomes

If you are in eyesight of another pair or group, and you see them witnessing to someone, stop a moment and pray for them. Pray that they would have wisdom and understanding

as they share with that person, and that the person that they are sharing with would have “eyes to see and ears to hear”.

Note: For those who do not or cannot actually go out and evangelize, they may want to stay behind at the church or place of meeting and just pray.

D. Approaching Individuals

1. If possible, approach only those of the same sex. Then, the spouse or friend that may be with that person will not feel threatened or intimidated by you. Again, this underscores the importance of having each sex represented in each group if possible.
2. If approaching a family, only approach the parent. And again if possible, only the one of the same sex as you. If you address the child or children, the parent(s) may very well feel threatened and offended.
3. Identify yourself. Let people know as soon as possible that you are a CHRISTian, and that you are representing JESUS CHRIST. They will then know who you are and why you are approaching them.
4. Don't scare people. Let people see or hear you approaching them if possible. If you scare them, it may damage any opportunity of you witnessing to them after that.
5. Be courteous and kind. This goes without saying of course. Peter tells us to “*Honor all men,*” I Peter 2:17a. See also II Timothy 2:24-25.
6. Don't surround people. That is, do not have the two or three evangelists in a group when sharing with someone, surround that person by placing themselves in a circle or semi-circle. This could easily cause that person to feel threatened, especially if that individual is a woman or young person. Rather, have the evangelists all stand to one side. Then, if the individual does not desire to communicate any longer, they have the freedom to just walk away unhindered.

E. Know What Kind Of People To Spend Time With

JESUS said in Matthew 7:6, *“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”* Often Satan will want to waste our time, or divert us from people who are sincerely seeking for truth. He will do this by bringing people our way who are not sincerely seeking for truth. Be sensitive to this. This is why it is also wise not to argue or “debate” with people. This usually doesn’t accomplish very much. The Apostle Paul tells us that, “. . . *the servant of the LORD must not strive (fight) . . .*” II Timothy 2:24a. Then also too, “. . . *avoid foolish questions, and genealogies and contentions and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*” Titus 3:9-11 Another point, don’t “Beat around the bush.” Always deal with the individual’s need of CHRIST and salvation, not with philosophy, religion, or politics. *“Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, from such withdraw thyself.”* I Timothy 6:5

F. If Possible, Try To Encourage A Conversation With Those You Meet

This takes skill, understanding, and sensitivity to the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT. The longer you can speak with an individual the better, (but remember point E. Above). One very effective way to do this is to ask questions. First of all, questions dealing with general I information, (i.e. – what is your name, where are you from, what church do you go to , etc.). But secondly, what they believe in and why they believe it. Again, without being too forward or personal. You usually can discern very quickly if someone wants to talk or not. But if they do not want to talk, at least try to leave them with a tract, so they can take it and read it later, and still be ministered to by the HOLY SPIRIT and HIS Word. Note: Read the account of JESUS and the woman at the well for a beautiful illustration of this (John 4:1-29).

G. When Witnessing At Events

By this we mean ethnic festivals, concerts, parades, etc. Concentrate on those people who are leaving the event and are away from the noise. They will be more apt to listen and not be distracted.

H. Concerning Tracts

First of all, do not place tracts in or on inanimate objects like cars, mailboxes (this is illegal), doors, etc. For in some cities (i.e. – Grand Rapids), this is considered littering. This could also greatly offend those who own the car or live at the premises. Secondly, respectfully and courteously offer the literature to individuals, so they can refuse it if they want to. Again, the idea is not to offend or anger anyone by our method.

I. Always Seek To Share Scripture

The importance of this is noted earlier.

J. Share Personal Testimony If Possible

The value of this is noted earlier in detail.

K. If People Ask For Money

This is a common occurrence in the inner-city. First of all, do not give them any, for it is probable that they would use it for some illicit purpose (i.e. – to purchase alcohol, drugs, etc.). Secondly, use the opportunity to share CHRIST and the Scriptures with them (see Acts 3:1-11 for a beautiful example of this). Note: It is best to not even carry any money with you. If you do, only bring a small amount.

L. Concerning Private Property

If you desire to witness on private property, you must get permission of course. We here at the Inner-city Church Planting Mission personally stay away from this.

IV. Post Street Activity

Introduction: It is in this section that we will look at some important activities to engage in after we return from “the streets”.

A. Reports Of How The LORD Worked

We here at the I.C.P.M. have found it very profitable and a rich blessing, to have those evangelists who desire to, share their experiences while out witnessing with the others in the group. For example, certain contacts that were made and what was shared with them. Then also, how the contact might have responded. In having this time of sharing, (1) the other evangelists can learn from each other's experiences; (2) they can pray for those contacts more specifically and intelligently; and (3) they can rejoice or empathize with each other

B. Corporate Prayer

It is during this time that all the evangelists from the different groups can take some important time to pray. (1) Giving praise and thanksgiving to GOD for safety, contacts made, tracts taken, HE being glorified, the privilege to serve Him, etc.; (2) For the individuals (by name if possible) they ministered to that day or night (i.e. – that they would continue to be convicted of their need of CHRIST, that the Scripture shared with them would “not return unto the LORD void”, and that perhaps there might be chances for further contact and follow-up); (3) For the tracts that were taken, that they would be read and reread, and even passed unto others to read; (4) For people to write us for further information and spiritual help; (5) For those individuals that said they would like to attend church, really would.

C. Fellowship

After the times of sharing and praying, we at the I.C.P.M. have always enjoyed a time of prolonged and deeper fellowship (for those who can stay), over some coffee, hot cocoa, or soft drinks. This has also proven to be a good time to “unwind” and relax.

D. Follow-Up

This can be done more extensively through the week (again, if express permission was received earlier) by (1) telephone; (2) visiting their home (i.e. – by appointment if possible, and in pairs, each sex being represented if possible); (3) taking them to a church service (midweek or Sunday). Note: Evangelizing in some areas lends itself to meeting the same people week after week, thus leading to unique opportunities for follow-up.

V. Scriptures To Memorize

Introduction: It is in this section that we discuss certain Scriptures to memorize in relationship to specific types of people and the responses you may encounter.

A. For Personal Preparation

1. *“Create in me a clean heart O GOD, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from THY presence, and take not THY HOLY SPIRIT from me. Restore to me the joy of THY salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then will I teach transgressors THY ways, and sinners shall be converted unto THEE.”* **Psalm 51:10-13**
2. *“But sanctify the LORD GOD in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”* **I Peter 3:15**

B. For “Atheists” (though there is no such thing) And Agnostics

1. *“For the wrath of GOD is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, because that which may be known of GOD is manifest in them, for GOD hath shewed it unto them.”* **Romans 1:18-19 (see also vv. 20-32 of the same chapter).**
2. *“The fool hath said in his heart, there is no GOD . . .”* **Psalm 53:1a**

C. For the Downtrodden And Vile (i.e. – prostitute, sodomite, drunkard, convict, etc.)

1. Share Scripture that assures them of GOD's love. *"For GOD so loved the world, that HE gave HIS only Begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in HIM, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. For GOD sent not HIS SON into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through HIM might be saved."* **John 3:16-17**
2. Share Scripture that assures them they can be saved. *"The LORD is not slack concerning HIS promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* **II Peter 3:9**

D. For the "Religious" But Unregenerate

1. Share Scripture that stresses that it is faith alone that saves. *"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on HIM that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."* **Romans 4:4-5 (see also Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5 among many others).**
2. Share Scripture that assures them that they can know now that heaven is theirs. *"And this is the record, that GOD hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in HIS SON. He that hath the SON hath life, and he that hath not the SON of GOD hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the SON of GOD, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the SON of GOD."* **I John 5:11-13**

E. For Muslims (remembering that they accept the Old Testament and the Gospels as Scripture)

1. Share Scripture that proves the Deity of CHRIST. *"In the beginning was the WORD and the WORD was with GOD, and the WORD was GOD. And the WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld HIS glory, the glory as of the only Begotten of the FATHER), full of grace and truth."* **John 1:1, 14**

2. Share Scripture that asserts that CHRIST is the only way of salvation. *“JESUS saith unto him, I AM the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE, no man cometh unto the FATHER, but by ME.”*
John 14:6

F. For Jews

1. Share Scripture that reveals that JESUS is the MESSIAH.
“Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion, shout O daughter of Jerusalem, behold, thy KING cometh unto thee, HE is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” Zechariah 9:9. Then share Matthew 21:1-11. *“But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall HE come forth unto ME that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”* Micah 5:2. Then share Matthew 2:1, *“Now when JESUS was born in Bethlehem of Judea . . .”*
2. Share Scripture that proves that JESUS CHRIST has already paid the price and made the sacrifice for sin. **Isaiah 53:1-12**

G. For Cults (i.e. – Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, CHRISTian Scientists, the Way International, etc.)

Note: There are many other groups that we cannot take the space to mention. But they all break down in relationship to truth either in one or all of the three following areas . . .

1. Share Scripture that proves the Deity of CHRIST, and that one cannot be saved if they deny it. *“Who is a liar but he that denieth that JESUS is the CHRIST? He is antichrist, that denieth the FATHER and the SON. Whosoever denieth the SON, the same hath not the FATHER . . .”* I John 2:22-23. *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of GOD, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye that SPIRIT of GOD, every spirit that confesseth that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh is of GOD, and every spirit that confesseth not that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh is not of GOD, and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.”* I John 4:1-3

2. Share Scripture that asserts that CHRIST is the only way of salvation. See John 14:6 above.
3. Share Scripture that stresses that it is faith alone in JESUS CHRIST that saves. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of GOD, not of works, lest any man should boast.”* Ephesians 2:8-9

Note: There are two beautiful and orderly progressions of Scripture one can use (if time is permitted), to present the Gospel with. One is in the Gospel of John, the other in the Epistle of Romans.

A. The Gospel Of John

1. Here JESUS emphasizes that a man must be born again. *“Verily, verily I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of GOD.”* 3:3
2. JESUS had to die for us. *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the SON of MAN be lifted up . . .”* 3:14
3. One has only to have faith the CHRIST’s death to be saved. *“That whosoever believeth in HIM should not perish, but have eternal life. For GOD so loved the world, that HE gave HIS only begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life. For GOD sent not HIS SON into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through HIM might be saved.”* 3:15-17
4. He that does not believe this is condemned. *“He that believeth on HIM is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten SON of GOD.”* 3:18

B. The Epistle Of Romans

1. All are sinners. *“There is non righteous, no, not one. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of GOD.”* 3:10, 23

2. CHRIST died for all sinners. *“But GOD commendeth HIS love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us.”* 5:8
3. In CHRIST, all are free from the judgement of sin. *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS.”* 8:1
4. Simply believe this and you will be saved. *“For the Scripture saith, whosoever believeth on HIM shall not be ashamed. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the LORD shall be saved.”* 10:11, 13

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation...” **Isaiah 52:7**

“And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday, and the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places, thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.” **Isaiah 58:10-12**

LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM

1. Be ready always to explain to people why you are a CHRISTIAN. *“But sanctify the LORD GOD in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” I Peter 3:15*
2. Let your life be holy so as to be a witness. *“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in CHRIST.” I Peter 3:16*
3. Every day we should have our full armor on. (i. e. truth, righteousness, prepared in the Word, faith, salvation, the Word and prayer. *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the LORD, and in the power of HIS might. 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. 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. 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: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the SPIRIT, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:10-20*
4. Keep yourself free from worldly entanglements. (i. e. indebtedness, pursuit of riches, sinful habits, etc.) *“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of HESUS 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.” II Timothy 2:3-4*

5. We are to offend no one by our attitudes or actions. (The Word itself will offend some people, this cannot be helped.)
“Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed.”

II Corinthians 6:3

6. Our prayer life should reflect our burden to see people come to know JESUS. *“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; WHO will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”*

I Timothy 2:1-4

7. Carry Gospel tracts with you. You never know when you will be able to use one.
8. Be observant. Look for opportunities to share with others.

DOOR TO DOOR EVANGELISM

1. Ask GOD to work in you. Pray continually. *“Pray without ceasing.”* I Thessalonians 5:17
2. Bring tracts or booklets you can leave at the homes you visit. (It’s good to have a telephone # on it so they can call for more information if they desire to.)
3. Do no walk on their grass or treat their property recklessly. *“As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not stritened in us, but ye are stritened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath CHRIST with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of GOD with idols? For ye are the temple of the living GOD; as GOD hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and*

I will be their GOD, and they shall be MY people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a FATHER unto you, and ye shall be MY sons and daughters, saith the LORD ALMIGHTY.” II Corinthians 6:10-18

4. If applicable, you may start the conversation, “Hello, we are from _____ Church and would like to give you this booklet concerning GOD and the Bible. If you have just a few moments we would like to explain it to you.
5. Be polite when talking with them regardless of how they respond to you. *“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is MINE; I will repay, saith the LORD. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:17-21*
6. Keep your visit short (about 5-10 minutes) unless the person you are speaking with obviously wants to talk longer.
7. Keep JESUS CHRIST and HIS work the focal point of the conversation. *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of GOD. For I determined not to know anything among you, save JESUS CHRIST, and HIM crucified.” I Corinthians 2:1-2*
8. Open your Bible if possible and let the person you are speaking to read Scripture pertaining to the conversation.
9. Be sensitive that you are in their home or on their property – Do not argue with them, just present the truth.
10. Be let of the SPIRIT (die to self) throughout. *“This I say then, walk in the SPIRIT, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16*

11. You may want to keep the door open for another visit by saying something like this, “We will leave you now, as we said we would be just a few moments, but would it be possible to speak to you again someday?”
12. Pray for those you saw.

GROUP EVANGELISM

1. Pray continually “*Pray without ceasing.*” **I Thessalonians 5:17**
2. Discern comprehension levels of those you are speaking to (young children, teens, adults, mixed, etc.)
3. Simplify your speech as much as needed to accommodate the group.
4. Try to avoid Christian “lingo” that the unsaved person may not understand (ie...sanctification, atonement) or explain it simply if you do.
5. Use scripture in you message. It is the Word GOD has promised to bless. “*So shall MY Word be that goeth forth out of MY mouth: it shall not return unto ME void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*” **Isaiah 55:11**
6. JESUS CHRIST and HIS work should always be the focal point of any evangelical message. “*Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*” **I Corinthians 6:1-2**
7. Ask the audience to make a decision before they go. “*And behold, this day I AM going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your GOD spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things*

are come upon you, which the LORD your GOD promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until HE has destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your GOD hath given you.”

Joshua 23:14-15

“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions, if the LORD be GOD, follow HIM: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.” **I Kings 18:21,**

“We then, as workers together with HIM, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of GOD in vain. (For HE saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)” **II Corinthians 6:1-2**

8. Allow yourself time to talk one-on-one after the meeting if the occasion arises.
9. Be let of the SPIRIT throughout meeting. **(I Corinthians 2:4)**

**CHAPTER 2 -
SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND
INNER-CITY MINISTRY**

SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND INNER-CITY MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION

Scriptures teach us that Satan has been defeated. Defeated when the LORD JESUS CHRIST shed HIS blood on the cross of Calvary. However, because HIS final judgment is yet to come, HE still has much power and influence in our world today. This is why the Scriptures tell us that . . .

“. . . we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” **Ephesians 6:12**

The Apostle Peter admonishes us to . . .

“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”
I Peter 5:8

Because Satan and his demons are angelic spirits, they have the unique power and ability to travel freely and quickly throughout the whole world to carry out their evil work. They are of course carrying out their evil work in many places around our world. Some of these places are the inner-cities of America (including Grand Rapids, Michigan). Indeed, it is very evident that they are now concentrating much of their effort and influence in our inner-cities. Rampant divorce leading to broken marriages and families, drunkenness and illegal drug abuse, youth gangs that rule whole neighborhoods, immorality of all kinds, and the list goes on.

This is why the need for CHRISTian witness and ministry is so great. In a day when local churches and individual CHRISTians are fleeing the inner-cities of America, how great the need and opportunity to make an impact for the glory of GOD and HIS eternal kingdom within these very strongholds of Satan and sin! JESUS said that we “. . . *are the light of the world*” (Matthew 5:14). How encouraging it is, though the darkness from Satan’s power and influence grows in our inner-cities of America, the brighter our “*light*” can shine in the midst of this darkness!

But if Satan and his emissaries are so strong in the inner-cities of America, and the LORD calls us to serve HIM in this most difficult mission field, how are we to do battle (i.e. - “*wrestle*”) against these evil forces? And not only do battle against them, but to have victory over them as well? The answers to these questions are found in the Scriptures of course, and it is in the answering of these questions that this study is dedicated to.

I. HOW DOES SATAN AND HIS EVIL FORCES WORK WITHIN THE INNER-CITY?

A. Through Principalities And Powers

“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.”

Ephesians 6:12

“A municipality is an area of land over which there is governmental jurisdiction. A principality is an evil ruler over an area of land. There are ‘*principalities*’ over nations, cities, and districts.” (Life Purpose, Volume 2 * Institute In Basic Life Principles, p.9)

A Biblical example of this is found in Daniel 10:13 . . .

“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 . . .”

This is why it is very important that we identify what “*principalities (and) powers*” might be over a city and neighborhood that we are ministering in (more on this later though).

Notice from the above Scripture, that we are also in a struggle against, “. . . *the rulers of the darkness of this world . . .*” (which speaks of the false philosophies and teachings of the world), and, “. . . *spiritual wickedness in high places.*” This refers to the warfare that is constantly taking place between spiritual powers.

B. Through Human Beings

“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the HOLY SPIRIT, and to keep back part of the price of the land?”

Acts 5:3 (see also Matthew 16:23; John 13:2)

Isn’t it both sad and frightening that Satan and his evil forces can work through CHRISTians as this Scripture gives testimony? This of course takes place within the inner-city and elsewhere.

However, as we think about the human beings that Satan uses to do his evil work through within the inner-city, we are reminded that he uses such individuals as prostitutes and their pimps, illegal drug “pushers” and users, and street gangs (who many times control whole neighborhoods), to name but a few.

The above illustrations are the extreme examples, but probably the most effective and devastating individuals he uses to expand his evil kingdom are parents who no longer live together as husband and wife. The “broken home” is by far the biggest cause of sin in the inner-city, even including the examples above!

C. Through Deception

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

Revelation 12:9

As one ministers within the inner-city, they soon discover that Satan has been very successful in deceiving the masses there. Illegal drug abuse, drunkenness, sexual immorality of all kinds and rampant divorce leading to broken marriages and families are all strong evidences of souls enchained to the bondage of deception!

D. Through Spiritual Blindness

“But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST, WHO is the image of GOD, should shine unto them” **II Corinthians 4:3-4**

Not only are the people of the inner-city deceived by the enemy, Satan, they are totally blinded by his evil schemes. This is very evident as one endeavors to minister to them, especially when it comes to sharing “. . . the glorious Gospel of CHRIST . . .”, that JESUS died on the cross for them, and they can receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life through faith in that finished work of CHRIST on the cross!

E. Through Surrendered Ground

“Neither give place to the Devil.” **Ephesians 4:27**

“place” (Greek: topos) = ground

According to this Scripture, Satan seeks to acquire “ground” in individuals’ lives. That is, he seeks to take more and more control over their soul (i.e. - mind, will and emotions). This takes place as the individual surrenders this ground through persistent sin in his life. From that surrendered ground Satan “attacks” the individual in their mind, will and emotions. Besides the overt

manifestations of drunkenness, sexual immorality, illegal drug abuse and rampant divorce that are so prevalent within the inner-city, bitterness and anger are two sins that Satan continues to use in a major way to expand his kingdom there!

II. HOW DO WE FIGHT SATAN AND HIS EVIL FORCES WITHIN THE INNER-CITY AND HAVE VICTORY?

A. By Remembering Our Position In CHRIST

“Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in CHRIST.” Ephesians 1:3

When it comes to being victorious over Satan and his evil forces within the inner-city, it begins with knowing who we are in CHRIST and all the power we have at our disposal because of our position in HIM. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he spoke of *“all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in CHRIST.”*

Satan is the originator of all deception (see John 8:44). One of the weapons he uses to attack us and the believers we are ministering to within the inner-city is doubt and confusion. If he cannot get us to doubt and question who we are in CHRIST, he will at least attempt to confuse us in understanding this important doctrine. However, as we remember who we are in CHRIST, we have that assurance of not only possessing eternal life, but also experiencing daily victory over this formidable enemy and his evil schemes!

B. By Maintaining A Close And Pure Relationship With The LORD

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath CHRIST with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of GOD with idols? For ye are the temple of the living GOD, as GOD hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their GOD, and they shall be MY people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be

ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a FATHER unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD ALMIGHTY. Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD.” II Corinthians 6:14-7:2

It is proclaimed throughout Scripture that it is only the righteous that GOD blesses and uses for HIS glory. Our Scripture above reaffirms this as well. The answer to all of these rhetorical questions above is of course a very emphatic “None!” Not only must we endeavor to keep ourselves pure for the sake of our personal relationship with the LORD, but also if we hope to make an impact for HIM within the dark wickedness of the inner-city. We can only do this as we continually “. . . *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD*”.

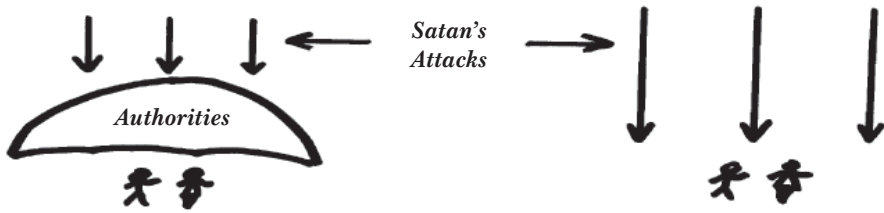
C. By Living Under GOD-given Authority

“Submit yourselves therefore to GOD. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you” James 4:7

All of us have various GOD-appointed authorities over us in our lives. For instance, we all are under government authority (see Romans 13:1-7); if we are an employee, we are under our employer (see Ephesians 6:5-8); if we have parents living yet, we are to honor and respect them (see Ephesians 6:2-3); if we are part of a local church, we are to submit to the spiritual leaders there (see Hebrews 13:17).

Because the above mentioned authorities are GOD-appointed, for us to rebel against them is to rebel against GOD HIMSELF! This is why the Scriptures give us the following warning . . .

“. . . rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft . . .” I Samuel 15:23a



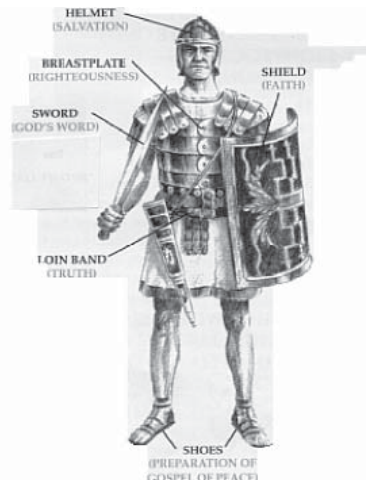
When we rebel against our GOD-appointed authorities, we open ourselves up to all kinds of Satanic attack which we will have no power to withstand. However, if we “*Submit (ourselves) therefore to GOD*” (including HIS Divinely-appointed human authorities), we then have the power to “*Resist the Devil*”, with the result being, “. . . he will flee from (us).”

D. By Wearing The “Armour Of GOD”

“Put on the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. 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 one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the SPIRIT, which is the Word of GOD.”

Ephesians 6:11, 14-17

“Each piece of armor and each weapon is designed to defend against or attack a particular aspect of Satan’s kingdom. Each part is put on by a specific Biblical discipline in the CHRISTian life.” (Life Purpose, Volume 2 - Institute In Basic Life Principles, p.11)



Piece Of Armor Or Weapon

- belt of “*Truth*”
- “*Breastplate of righteousness*”
- “*feet shod with the Gospel*”
- “*the shield of faith*”
- “*the helmet of salvation*”
- “*the sword of the SPIRIT*”

Biblical Discipline

daily Bible reading
memorizing GOD’s Word
meditating on Scripture
fasting regularly
rising early
using “*Rhemas*” in warfare

Satan and his evil forces are out to attack and defeat us as we minister within the inner-city. However, as we avail ourselves of these powerful pieces of armor and weapons, this Scripture promises us victory as we, “. . . *stand against the wiles of the Devil.*”

E. By Knowing and Using The Word of God

In Matthew 4:1-11, we have the record of the LORD JESUS CHRIST being tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Three times the Devil came to HIM, seeking to get HIM to sin by doing something out of the FATHER’s will (see vv. 3,6, &9). Instead of yielding to these temptations, JESUS answers each of these attacks by quoting the Scriptures (see vv. 4,7, &10). This strategy works, for the Scripture declares . . .

“Then the Devil leaveth HIM, and behold, angels came and ministered unto HIM.” (v.11).

Of all the pieces of armor and weapons given us in Ephesians 6:14-17 to fight Satan and his evil forces, only one is “offensive” in nature, “. . . *the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD*” (v.17b). JESUS, the SON of GOD HIMSELF, understood the importance of knowing the Word of GOD and using the Word of GOD to fight off these personal attacks from the wicked one. The more we get involved in ministry within the inner-city, the more we can expect intense attack from Satan and his hosts. If we hope to have victory in this spiritual battlefield, we too must get to know and use the Word of GOD more and more as well!

F. By Identifying Specific Principalities And Powers In An Area

“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.”

Ephesians 6:12

“A municipality is an area of land over which there is governmental jurisdiction. A principality is an evil ruler over an area of land. There are “*principalities*” over nations, cities, and districts. As we overpower these “*principalities*”, there is freedom for the Gospel to reach the people and to bring about a marvelous turning to GOD. If, on the other hand, we fail to deal with these “*principalities*” effectively, the Gospel is hindered and people in that jurisdiction coldly reject it. Jurisdiction is directly related to ground and authority over that ground. The history of revival confirms that both GOD and Satan operate within human governmental jurisdictions. It is also on this basis that nations are judged.” (Life Purpose, Volume 2 * Institute In Basic Life Principles, p.9)

There may be others that we do not know of yet, but following are twenty-two evil “principalities” that we have identified over the years within the inner-city of Grand Rapids . . .

- Pride
- Hard-heartedness
- Addiction (alcohol/illegal drugs)
- Immorality
- Rebellion
- Depression
- Mental confusion
- Bitterness
- Anger
- Apathy/Slothfulness
- Religiosity/False religions
- Discouragement that leads to fatigue and burnout
- Fear
- Doubt
- Fatigue
- Theft, esp. in South Africa
- Strife/Division
- Violence
- Anxiety
- Evil music
- Discontentment
- Unbelief

G. By Engaging In Warfare Prayer

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the SPIRIT . . .”

Ephesians 6:18a

Warfare prayer is another powerful weapon at our disposal as we fight against evil within the inner-city. Following are two types of warfare prayer that have proven to be very effective. One defensive in nature and the other offensive.

1. The “Hedge of thorns” prayer

This defensive type prayer is based on the principle found in Job 1:6-12. Here we have the record of Satan’s conversation with GOD concerning Job and his righteous lifestyle. Satan comments that he would like to “attack” Job, but he cannot get at him because the LORD has “*. . . made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side . . .*” (v. 10a)

Satan desires to “attack” us and those we are ministering to as well. But we have this powerful weapon of protection that we can use to defend ourselves and those we are ministering to. To illustrate how this prayer can be used in inner-city spiritual warfare, following is an example as to how we use this prayer before we conduct one of our regular worship services . . .

“Dear heavenly FATHER, in the Name and through the blood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST (see Jude 9 and Revelation 12:11), we ask YOU to rebuke Satan, his demons, all of his evil principalities and powers (including those you have identified specifically), and his evil forces here on earth in the surrounding neighborhood, the surrounding block, on the street out front, within the whole church, and within the lives of each individual that will come to this service today, including the physical, emotional and spiritual realms. Secondly heavenly FATHER we ask YOU to bind Satan, his demons, all of his evil principalities and powers (including those you have identified specifically), and his evil forces here on earth in the surrounding neighborhood, the surrounding block, on the street out front, within the whole church and within

the lives of each individual that will come to this service today, including the physical, emotional and spiritual realms (see Matthew 12:29). Lastly heavenly FATHER, we ask YOU to put up the “hedge of thorns” around the surrounding neighborhood, the surrounding block, around the street out front, around the church building itself, and around each individual that will come into this church today, including around them physically, emotionally and spiritually. In the Name of JESUS CHRIST, Amen.”

2. The “prayer target” prayer

This warfare prayer is offensive in nature and is based on the principle found in Ephesians 6:18-19.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the SPIRIT, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for me (the Apostle Paul), that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel.”

Notice the two-fold thrust in the Apostle Paul’s prayer here in Ephesians 6. First of all he admonishes us to pray for other “saints”, secondly to pray that unbelievers would come to know “. . . the mystery of the Gospel.” As we pray for the “saints” to grow in their walk with the LORD and for the lost to be saved, Satan’s kingdom suffers damage!

This is what “prayer targets” will do. A “prayer target” is someone we pray for (whether a CHRISTian or non-CHRISTian), when we or someone we’re ministering to is being attacked by Satan and his evil forces. As we continue to do this on a regular basis, Satan soon stops his assault, because he certainly doesn’t want his evil causes to be thwarted! The wise inner-city worker will compile his own list of “prayer targets” for future use!

H. By Utilizing GODly Music

“And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from GOD was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand, so Saul

was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

I Samuel 16:23

GODly, melodious music is a powerful weapon at our disposal for our fight against Satan and his evil forces within the inner-city. Satan and his emissaries hate this kind of music, and as the above Scripture declares, they must flee when it is played!

Martin Luther (who knew what spiritual warfare was all about), once said, “Come, let us sing a psalm and drive away the Devil.”

CONCLUSION

The need for CHRISTian witness and ministry within the inner-cities of America is indeed great. Even though these neighborhoods are powerful strongholds of Satan and sin, we as CHRISTians have great opportunities to make an impact for the glory of GOD and HIS eternal kingdom! GOD has not left us to carry out this struggle alone. HE has given us HIS HOLY SPIRIT and this powerful arsenal of spiritual weapons discussed earlier in this study. As GOD leads us into this evil but desperately needy mission field, may we claim the following promise from HIS Word . . .

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through GOD to the pulling down of strong holds.”

II Corinthians 10:4

**CHAPTER 3 -
HOW TO PREPARE AND PRESENT
AN EFFECTIVE BIBLE STUDY OR
MESSAGE**

HOW TO PREPARE AND PRESENT AN EFFECTIVE BIBLE STUDY OR MESSAGE

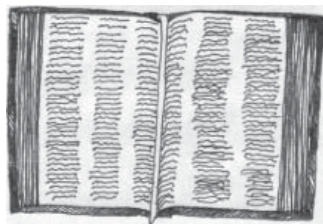
INTRODUCTION

There are many aspects to the CHRISTian ministry. Prayer, fasting, counseling, listening, serving, loving, etc. All are important and all are needed. This study is dedicated to that very important aspect of communicating GOD's Word to others. Not only communicating GOD's Word however, but also how to prepare to do so.

The LORD has given us a wonderful promise as we learn to share HIS Word with a very needy world . . .

“For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater. So shall MY Word be that goeth forth out of MY mouth, it shall not return unto ME void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

Isaiah 55:10-11



May this study be a means in helping us to become better communicators of GOD's precious Scriptures.

I. How To Prepare An Effective Bible Study Or Sermon

A. The Importance Of Prayer

Whenever we pray, we are acknowledging that we need GOD. As we prepare to communicate the Word of GOD to others, we certainly need HIM to give us the Scriptures, the interpretation of those Scriptures, the applications and the illustrations to use for us to be effective. The LORD promises us that . . .

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of GOD, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.”

James 1:5 (see also Matthew 7:7-8)

B. Get To Know Your Students



As we get to know the people we are ministering to, we will be able to discern their needs, their desires, their struggles, etc., and thus prepare relevant studies and messages. The Apostle Paul knew the Thessalonian CHRISTians, “. . . as a father doth his children . . .” (see I Thessalonians 2:11b). Because of this, he could later say . . .

“. . . we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the LORD JESUS, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please GOD, so ye would abound more and more.”

I Thessalonians 4:1

C. Use The Resources Available

Obviously, the Scriptures are to be our main resource as we seek to minister GOD’s Word to others. However, GOD has raised up GODly men throughout Church history, who have been especially gifted by the HOLY SPIRIT to compile valuable insights that can help us understand the Scriptures in a more thorough way. Listed below are some of these resources . . .

- Concordance
- Word study books
- Bible dictionary/maps
- Different Bible translations
- Webster's dictionary
- Biographies
- Study books
- Commentaries

“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures. Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of GOD. For the LORD giveth wisdom, out of HIS mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”

Proverbs 2:3-6



Coal Miners

D. The Value Of Outlining

Because “. . . GOD is not the author of confusion, but of peace . . .” (I Corinthians 14:33a), there is an order and a pattern to everything HE does. GOD desires that we have a “*peace*” and order in our lives and ministries as well, including the way we prepare and present the truths of HIS Word. As we learn to outline a particular portion of Scripture, or a particular Biblical subject we are burdened to share with others, it not only helps us organize the information in our own minds, but helps us to present that information to our listeners in an orderly way as well. Following is an example of an outline used to present a particular Biblical subject to a group of people. It is just the outline itself, with the commentary, applications, and illustrations removed.

THE DANGER OF LEAVING OUR FIRST LOVE (Title)

Introduction

- I. Who Or What Is Our “First Love”?
- II. How We Leave Our “First Love”

III. How We Keep Our “First Love”

A. Remember WHO Our “First Love” Is.

1. Review WHO the LORD is.
2. Review what HE has done for us.

B. Repent If We Are Starting To Leave Our “First Love”

C. Demonstrate Our Devotion To Our “First Love”

1. A daily time alone with the LORD.
 - a. Bible study, memorization, and meditation in GOD’s Word
 - b. Prayer
2. Times of periodic fasting.
3. Having a “Sabbath Day” one day each week.

Conclusion

“Let all things be done decently and in order.”

I Corinthians 14:40

II. How To Present An Effective Bible Study or Sermon

A. The Power Of Scripture

We should never forget that it is GOD’s Word that is the most important thing we can communicate to others. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* (II Timothy 3:16-17). As we share the Word of GOD with others, the HOLY SPIRIT is able to bring *“doctrine . . . reproof . . . correction . . . (and) instruction . . .”* to our listeners.



“For the Word of GOD is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” **Hebrews 4:12**

B. The Value of Illustrations And Analogies

Next to Scripture, the most powerful tools we have to communicate truth to our listeners are illustrations and analogies.

“illustration” (Webster) = to make clear, explain by examples.

“analogy” (Webster) = agreement, resemblance or correspondence in relations between different objects.

These illustrations and analogies can be directly from the Scriptures, everyday life around us, or our own personal experiences. This is why we should be especially recording incidents in our own lives, but also collecting articles from newspapers, magazines and other publications that might prove helpful to our listeners. Just notice sometime how your listeners grow quiet and really listen whenever you use these!



The Sermon On The Mount

JESUS of course was the greatest communicator in all of history. Just notice how many times during HIS teaching ministry HE used illustrations and /or analogies (the Bible calls them “*parables*”). Following is but one example . . .

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of MINE, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of MINE, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when JESUS had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at HIS Doctrine, for HE taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

Matthew 7:24-29

C. The Importance Of Making Applications To Your Students

A very important aspect of communicating truth to our listeners is helping them to apply that truth to their lives! We must communicate truth in such a way so that our students will be compelled to do this. Following are some powerful principles to implement so as to accomplish this end . . .

- * Do not just teach or preach facts, but teach or preach messages that will change lives. Give the steps of action for them to accomplish this.
- * Teach and preach messages that bring conviction and repentance to your students. That is, a change of thinking, desires and actions (see II Corinthians 7:8-10). “The calling of a New Testament worker is to uncover sin and to reveal JESUS CHRIST as SAVIOUR, consequently he cannot be practical, he must be sternly surgical.” Oswald Chambers
- * Teach and preach messages that show GOD is alive and working in your life, so as to encourage them to let HIM do the same in theirs. (see I Corinthians 2:4-5) “A message prepared in your mind will only reach another mind. A message prepared in your life will reach another life.” Bill Gothard
- * Regularly ask your students to make commitments in response to your messages. (see Psalm 66:13-14)



Oswald Chambers

JESUS once said, “And why call ye ME LORD, LORD, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to ME and heareth MY sayings and doeth them . . .” **Luke 6:46-47a**

III. Other Ingredients Of An Effective Bible Study Or Sermon

A. Speak The Truth With *“love”* (see Ephesians 4:15)

If our motivation to communicate GOD’s Word is not based on genuine *“love”*, it will be in vain. (see I Corinthians 13:1)

B. Speak The Truth With *boldness*” (see Ephesians 6:19-20)

The more we learn and understand GOD’s will and ways through HIS Word, the more confident we will be that what we are teaching others is truth.



John The Baptist

C. Speak The Truth With *“a good conscience”* (see I Timothy 1:19)

To have *“a good conscience”* means that though we offend either GOD or man, we quickly make it right by asking for forgiveness and making restitution if needed. (see Acts 24:16)

D. Speak The Truth With *“grace, seasoned with salt”* (see Colossians 4:6)

“Grace” motivates your listeners to do GOD’s will, while *“salt”* creates curiosity for them to know GOD’s Word. Making wisdom *“attractive”* will motivate your listeners to do GOD’s will, while asking questions will create curiosity in them to know GOD’s Word.

IV. Some Concluding Thoughts

A. Use Visuals As Much As Possible

Studies have shown that people remember 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, but 50% of what they see and hear.

B. Learn From The Great Communicators Throughout Church History

- Apostle Paul
- George Whitefield
- Charles Spurgeon
- George Muller
- Hudson Taylor
- John McArther
- Charles Stanley
- Bill Gothard



Charles Spurgeon

C. Use Humor Occasionally

Do not do this in excess, but well placed anecdotes, especially from our own lives, really adds “flavor” to our teachings.

CONCLUSION

If the LORD calls and commissions us to communicate HIS holy Word to others, we are entrusted with a most glorious privilege. GOD gives us HIS HOLY SPIRIT and HIS grace for this great task, but also expects us to do our part by spending the needed time and energy in preparation and presentation to accomplish this. May we desire to become the most effective communicators possible!

“I will delight myself in THY STATUTES, I will not forget THY Word.”

“Open THOU mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of THY Law.”

“Make me to understand the way of THY Precepts, so shall I talk of THY wondrous works.” **Psalm 119: 16, 18, 27**

**CHAPTER 4 -
BURNOUT IN THE CHRISTIAN
MINISTRY**

BURNOUT IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION

“Burnout” is not a term that you will find in the Scriptures. Yet it is a “condition” that is referred to directly and indirectly many times. Because of this, the LORD obviously considers it an important issue to understand and learn of.

“Burnout” is not prejudice. It afflicts whether we’re male or female, young or old, rich or poor, educated or not, and whatever our occupation. The purpose of this study however, is to discover what it is in relationship to the CHRISTian ministry. May the LORD grant us HIS wisdom and grace to understand this powerful threat so we need not experience it, and so we can be that much more effective for HIS glory and the furtherance of HIS eternal kingdom!

What Is Burnout In The CHRISTian Ministry?

Following are two “secular” definitions that help us answer this question . . .

“Being weary in well-doing, losing hope, being dismayed and giving up.” Bill Gothard

“A loss of enthusiasm, energy, idealism, perspective, and purpose. It can be viewed as a state of mental, physical, and spiritual exhaustion brought on by continued stress.” Frank Minirth and Don Hawkins

Following are two portions of Scripture that describe burnout very well . . .

"I cried unto GOD with my voice, even unto GOD with my voice; and HE gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the LORD: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered GOD, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah. THOU holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the LORD cast off forever? And will HE be favourable no more? Is HIS mercy clean gone forever? Doth HIS promise fail for evermore? Hath GOD forgotten to be gracious? Hath HE in anger shut up HIS tender mercies? Selah." **Psalms 77:1-9**



Asaph Knew What Burnout Was

"I AM the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. HE hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is HE turned; HE turneth HIS hand against me all the day. My flesh and my skin hath HE made old: HE hath broken my bones. HE hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail. HE hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old. HE hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: HE hath made my chain heavy. Also when I cry and shout, HE shutteth out my prayer. HE hath enclosed my ways with hewn stone, HE hath made my paths crooked. HE was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places. HE hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: HE hath made me desolate. HE hath bent HIS bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. HE hath caused the arrows of HIS quiver to enter into my reins. I was a



Jeremiah Experienced Burnout

derision to all my people; and their song all the day. HE hath filled me with bitterness, HE hath made me drunken with wormwood. HE hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes. And THOU hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD: Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.” Lamentations 3:1-19

It was during a two-year period (1985-1987), that I was privileged to experience the “affliction” of burnout. There were several symptoms that were greatly manifested. Listing them here with accompanying Scriptures, helps illustrate what burnout is . . .

A. Physical Exhaustion

During those two years, there was an increasing weakness physically. I was physically exhausted twenty-four hours a day.

“I am counted with these that go down into the pit, I am as a man that hath no strength.” Psalm 88:4

B. Mental Fatigue

What I mean by this was an increasing difficulty in concentration and ability to reason clearly. This was true in every area of my life.

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul (i.e. – mind, will, emotions)? And why art thou disquieted in me?” Psalm 42:5a

C. Spiritually Weak

This meant not only a severe “tiredness” in my own spirit, but a real inability to minister to others as well. My “ministry tank” was on empty.

“I remembered GOD, and was troubled, I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.” Psalm 77:3

D. GOD Seemed Far Away

Another symptom of my burnout was a seemingly distancing of the LORD from me. It seemed as if HE did not care for my plight nor heed my cries for HIS help.

“Also when I cry and shout, (the LORD) shutteth out my prayer. THOU hast covered THYSELF with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.” Lamentations 3:8, 44

E. Severe, Prolonged Depression

We all experience a little depression from time to time. This is a normal part of life. However, if the depression is severe and prolonged, this is serious and may indicate burnout.

“My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, where is thy GOD?” Psalm 42:3



One Of The Sons Of Korah

F. Lack Of Interest In Ministry

This is a very significant symptom of burnout. Where once there was a great joy and love for the ministry, now there was a disdain and even hatred of it . . . especially for the people GOD had called me to serve.

“Lover and friend hast THOU (O GOD) put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.” Psalm 88:18

We close this section of our study with Psalm 88. Another portion of Scripture that describes burnout in detail . . .

“O LORD GOD of my salvation, I have cried day and night before THEE: Let my prayer come before THEE: incline THINE ear unto my cry; For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: Free among the dead, like

the slain that lie in the grave, whom THOU rememberest no more: and they are cut off from THY hand. THOU hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps,. THY wrath lieth hard upon me, and THOU hast afflicted me with all THY waves. Selah. THOU hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; THOU hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction:



Heman The Ezrahite

LORD, I have called daily upon THEE, I have stretched out my hands unto THEE. Wilt THOU shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise THEE? Selah. Shall THY lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or THY faithfulness in destruction? Shall THY wonders be known in the dark? And THY righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But unto THEE have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent THEE. LORD, why castest THOU off my soul? Why hidest THOU THY face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer THY terrors I am distracted. THY fierce wrath goeth over me; THY terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast THOU put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.” Psalm 88:1-18

II. How Does Burnout In The CHRISTian Ministry Develop?

If we desire to be safeguarded from burnout in the CHRISTian ministry, we must first understand the causes of it. Following are several,

A. Failure To Maintain A Close Relationship With The LORD

The CHRISTian worker that allows his daily walk with the LORD to “cool”, is allowing the very foundation of his life and ministry to crumble. An ongoing temptation of the CHRISTian worker is to put the ministry before CHRIST in our lives. This is idolatry, and is strictly forbidden in Scripture.

“I AM the LORD thy GOD . . . Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.” Exodus 20:2a, 3

Oswald Chambers had rich insight into this problem when he said, “If I am devoted to the cause of humanity only, I will soon be exhausted and come to the place where my love will falter. If we undertake work for GOD and get out of touch with HIM, the sense of responsibility will be overwhelmingly crushing. Many workers have gone out with high courage and fine impulses, but with no intimate fellowship with JESUS CHRIST, and before long they are crushed. They do not know what to do with the burden, it produces weariness, and people say – ‘What an embittered end to such a beginning!’”



Oswald Chambers

B. Failure To Look At The Ministry From GOD’s Perspective

The CHRISTian worker who is serving the LORD and others from just a human perspective, is a worker who is destined for certain burnout.

“For MY thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways MY ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are MY ways higher than your ways, and MY thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9

C. Taking On Responsibilities That Are GOD’s, Not Ours

We as CHRISTian workers have the tendency to forget that we are but *“flesh and blood”*, just as the people we are ministering to are. If we attempt to “play the HOLY SPIRIT”, and take on responsibilities that only GOD can fulfill, burnout is a certainty.

“Commit thy way unto the LORD, trust also in HIM, and HE shall bring it to pass.” Psalm 37:5

D. Relentless Attacks From Satan And His Evil Forces

When the servant of JESUS CHRIST gets involved in CHRISTian ministry, he enters into a spiritual war where the enemy is strong and formidable. He is vicious and wants to destroy us and the work we're attempting to do for the LORD. One of his greatest weapons is discouragement. If we are not alert to this, and do not take the proper steps of defense against it, burnout is inevitable.

"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."

Ephesians 6:12

E. Failure To Take "Time Away" From The Ministry

GOD created us in such a way that we all need regular rest. This would include physical, emotional, and spiritual. If we fail to get this regular refreshment, we will soon experience devastating fatigue and burnout.

"My zeal hath consumed me . . ." **Psalm 119:139a**

III. How Do We Recover From Burnout In The CHRISTian Ministry?

The LORD may choose to allow us to experience burnout in the CHRISTian ministry. If so, we must know what principles are essential for deliverance and healing. Following are several . . .

A. We Must Nurture Our Personal Relationship With The LORD

We learned earlier in our study that Asaph was a man who knew what burnout was. He shares the importance of seeking the LORD at this time by writing . . .

"My flesh and my heart faileth, but GOD is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."
Psalm 73:26



Asaph

Jeremiah adds his witness to this truth when he writes . . .

“Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.”

Lamentations 3:40

Following are the two means given to us to maintain and strengthen our personal relationship with the LORD.

1. Read and meditate in the Scriptures

“My son, attend to MY Words, incline thine ear unto MY Sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes, keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.”

Proverbs 4:20-22



GOD's Word Is Life To Us

Seeking the LORD through HIS Word is not only the single most important “ingredient” to a personal relationship with the LORD, but is also the key to healing and recovery from burnout. This would especially be true concerning the book of Psalms. This is so, because so many of the Psalms were written for our benefit in this area of burnout. Notice the pattern that many of the Psalms were written in . . .

- Despair, defeat and “burnout”
- The cry for help from the LORD
- Deliverance and rejoicing

(See Psalms 3, 4, 18, 27, 28, 30, 31, 34, 35, 77 and many others)



We Must Learn To Cry Out To The Lord For Help

2. Spend much time in secret prayer

“I called upon THY Name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon. THOU hast heard my voice, hide not THINE ear at my breathing, at my cry. THOU drewest near in the day that I called upon THEE, THOU saidst, Fear not. O LORD, THOU hast pleaded the causes of my soul, THOU hast redeemed my life.”

Lamentations 3:55-58

Prayer is the other key to developing our personal relationship with the LORD and receiving healing and recovery from burnout. Whenever we spend time in prayer with the LORD, we’re acknowledging that we need HIM, and O how we need HIM in the midst of burnout! These times of prayer would not only be characterized by our crying out to HIM for healing and recovery, but also being silent before HIM, seeking to discern HIS will and HIS purposes for allowing the burnout. (see I Kings 19:11-12)



*Prayer Can Bring
Deliverance*

B. We Must Look At The Ministry From GOD’s Perspective

We learned earlier in our study that looking at the ministry from a human perspective is a major cause of burnout. Thus if we are to experience deliverance from burnout, we must view the ministry from GOD’s perspective.

“For MY thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways MY ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are MY ways higher than your ways, and MY thoughts than your thoughts.” **Isaiah 55:8-9**

C. We Must Remember And Meditate On The LORD's Past Workings

This principle is important, because in the midst of burnout, we tend to forget the LORD's goodness to us in the past. As we follow this principle, we receive encouragement and strength to continue serving the LORD and others.

"And I said, This is my infirmity (i.e. – burnout), but I will remember the years of the right hand of the MOST HIGH. I will remember the works of the LORD, surely I will remember THY wonders of old. I will meditate also of all THY work, and talk of THY doings." **Psalm 77:10-12**

This is why "hope" is so important to the CHRISTian worker in the midst of burnout. To have "hope" means to have assurance that GOD is in control. Even more than this however, it means that we have faith that the LORD is walking through the burnout with us!



Oswald Chambers

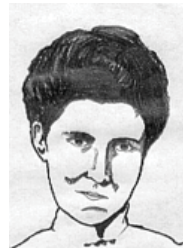


George Muller

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in GOD, for I shall yet praise HIM, WHO is the health of my countenance, and my GOD." **Psalm 42:11**



Charles Spurgeon



Amy Carmichael

"The LORD is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in HIM." **Lamentations 3:24**

Isn't it significant that Scripture teaches that afflictions (including burnout), can actually produce "hope".

"... but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience, hope ..." **Romans 5:3b-4**

“Now the GOD of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the HOLY SPIRIT.” **Romans 15:13**

D. We Must Fellowship With CHRISTians That Can Minister To Us

Certainly one of the primary aspects of CHRISTian ministry is giving. Giving of one’s self physically, emotionally, and especially spiritually. But there is only so much we can give before we feel “emptied” and burned out. This is why it is so important that we be continually ministered to and encouraged by other GODly saints. Following are several areas for this to be accomplished . . .

- attend another church
- be part of a small group
- one-to-one fellowship
- couple-to-couple fellowship
- attend seminars
- view encouraging videos
- read CHRISTian biographies

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even CHRIST pleased not HIMSELF, but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached THEE fell on ME.” **Romans 15:1-3**

E. We Must Listen TO GODly, Melodious Music

Bright, melodious music is a powerful means whereby we can receive much encouragement in the midst of burnout. This has been the testimony of many saints throughout the years.

“THOU art my hiding place, THOU shalt preserve me from trouble, THOU shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah” **Psalms 32:7**

“Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds.”

Psalm 149:5 (see also Psalm 42:8; 43:4; Colossians 3:16)

F. We Must Take Time Away To Rest

This would include our daily times of regular sleep, our weekly “Sabbath day” times of rest, and our yearly times of “furlough”. Scripture teaches very clearly the importance of these times away.

It is said of GOD HIMSELF, that after HE finished creating “. . . *the heavens and the earth* . . .”,

“(HE) ended HIS work which HE had made, and HE rested on the seventh day from all HIS work which HE had made.”

Genesis 2:2

The LORD later commanded HIS people that . . .

“Six days shalt thou labour; and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy GOD, in it thou shalt not do any work . . .” **Exodus 20:9-10a**

After the apostles returned from a very busy missionary tour, Scripture tells us . . .

“(JESUS) said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while, for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.”

Mark 6:31



Jesus And His Disciples

We conclude this portion of our study with Psalm 30.
We could very well entitle it . . .

“The Psalm Of Recovery From Burnout”

“I will extol thee, O LORD; for THOU hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. O LORD my GOD, I cried unto THEE, and THOU hast healed me. O LORD, THOU hast brought up my soul from the grave; THOU hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of HIS, and give thanks at the remembrance of HIS holiness. For HIS anger endureth but a moment; in HIS favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. LORD, by THY favour THOU hast made my mountain to stand strong; THOU didst hide THY face, and I was troubled. I cried to THEE, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise THEE? Shall it declare THY Truth? Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me; LORD, be THOU my helper. THOU hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; THOU hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; To the end that my glory may sing praise to THEE, and not be silent. O LORD my GOD, I will give thanks unto THEE for ever.” Psalm 30:1-12

IV. How Do We Prevent Burnout In The CHRISTian Ministry?

Now that we have learned what burnout is, how it develops, and how we recover from it, we can discover the important principles of how to prevent it from occurring in our life and ministry. Following are several . . .

A. We Must Keep Our Personal Relationship With The LORD Strong



***The Word Of God Will
Keep Us From Burnout***

We learned earlier in our study that this is the most important aspect of recovery from burnout. It is also the most important aspect of preventing burnout.



***Daily Prayer Will Keep
Us Spiritually Strong***

Again the LORD has given us two powerful means to maintain and strengthen our personal relationship with HIM . . . daily times of Bible study and prayer. As we spend time in these two disciplines daily, our spirit, soul and body is nourished and strengthened against burnout.

“As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after THEE, O GOD. My soul thirsteth for GOD, for the Living GOD, when shall I come and appear before GOD?” Psalm 42:1-2

B. We Must Remember To Look At The Ministry From GOD’s Perspective

We also learned from our study earlier, how important it is to look at the ministry from GOD’s perspective, not ours. We must remember that the ministry is not ours, but HIS work. We must view the many struggles, disappointments and heartaches that accompany the CHRISTian ministry from the LORD’s sovereign and eternal point of view. As we remember these important truths, we are spared from the destructive forces of burnout.

“For MY thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways MY ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are MY ways higher than your ways, and MY thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9

C. We Must Understand The Difference Between GOD’s And Our Responsibilities

The Scriptures are clear in proclaiming that in the CHRISTian ministry, the LORD has HIS responsibilities and we have ours. As we understand this, we will not expend our physical, emotional and spiritual energies on responsibilities that are not ours, but will instead be able to focus all of them on what the LORD gives us the grace to accomplish. This will keep us from burnout.

Psalm 37:1-5 is just one portion of Scripture that illustrates this principle . . .

<u>MY RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	<u>GOD'S RESPONSIBILITIES</u>
• <i>“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity” (v.1)</i>	• <i>“For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.” (v.2)</i>
• <i>“Trust in the LORD and do good . . .” (v.3a)</i>	• <i>“. . . so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed.” (v.3b)</i>
• <i>“Delight thyself also in the LORD . . .” (v.4a)</i>	• <i>“. . . and HE shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” (v.4b)</i>
• <i>“Commit thy way unto the LORD, trust also in HIM . . .” (v.5a)</i>	• <i>“. . . and HE shall bring it to pass.” (v.5b)</i>

D. We Must Learn To Wait On The LORD

Over thirty-five times in Scripture, we are commanded to “wait on” or “wait for” the LORD. As we study and meditate on several of these Scriptures, we learn just how important this principle is in relationship to being kept from burnout in the ministry.

“Wait on the LORD, be of good courage, and HE shall strengthen thine heart, wait I say, on the LORD.” Psalm 27:14 (see also Psalm 62:5)

The Hebrew word for “wait” here is “qavah”, which means “to expect”. As we place our expectations in ministry only on the LORD, we are kept from burnout because the LORD never disappoints. However, expecting certain results from fellow-workers, programs, and even the world we’re seeking to lead to the LORD can lead to burnout when they are not fulfilled.

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for HIM . . .”
Psalm 37:7a

Not only do we have to learn to “*wait on the LORD . . .*”, but we must learn to “*wait patiently for HIM . . .*” This is a virtue that is needed for the CHRISTian worker, because much of the

CHRISTian ministry is just waiting for GOD to work in the people’s lives we’re ministering to, or through the particular programs we’re serving in. Learning to “*wait patiently*” for the LORD will keep us from burnout.



People Will Always Disappoint Us

“The LORD is good unto them that wait for HIM, to the soul that seeketh HIM. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.” **Lamentations 3:25-26**

We have studied earlier that Jeremiah was a man who experienced “burnout”. But it is also his personal testimony that as he learned to “*quietly wait . . .*” “for the LORD, he received “*salvation*” too . . . “*salvation*” from burnout.

E. We Must Allow The LORD To Be Our Strength

As we consider this practical doctrine of how to prevent burnout in the CHRISTian ministry, this principle is very important as well. Learning to allow the LORD to be our strength in ministry, will keep us from trusting in our own strength and the strength of others. These sources of strength are of course extremely inferior to the LORD.



*Asaph Knew The Power
Of God’s Strength*

“My flesh and my heart faileth, but GOD is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.”

Psalm 73:26 (see also Isaiah 40:29-31; Ephesians 6:10)

F. We Must Protect Ourselves With The Armor Of GOD

We should never forget that in the CHRISTian ministry, our fiercest enemy is Satan himself. His attacks are powerful and relentless. Yet GOD has given us HIS armour that will protect us from his onslaughts that can often lead to burnout.

“Put on the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.”

Ephesians 6:11



“Put On The Armour Of God...”

G. We Must Pray Against The Principality Of Discouragement

The Scriptures warn us that Satan is not our only enemy in the spiritual warfare that rages in CHRISTian ministry . . .

“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.”

Ephesians 6:12

“A municipality is an area of land over which there is governmental jurisdiction. A principality is an evil ruler over an area of land. There are “*principalities*” over nations, cities, and districts.” (Life Purpose, Volume 2; Institute In Basic Life Principles, p.9)

Over the years we have identified specific “*principalities*” that we “*wrestle*” against within the inner-city. One of them is “**discouragement**”, that stems from the CHRISTian worker not seeing more significant results from their labors. This **discouragement** thus breeds a disillusionment, that in turn leads to burnout. However, as we have learned to pray against this principality, the rate of burnout amongst our missionaries has decreased.

H. We Must Take Time Away To Rest

We have already seen earlier in our study, the importance of taking periodic times of rest away from the ministry. As we practice this important principle regularly, we not only receive our much needed rest, but also are shielded against burnout.



“Come Ye Yourselves Apart...And Rest A While...”

“(JESUS) said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while...” **Mark 6:31a**

(Note: Physical exercise is also a valuable component for our physical, emotional and spiritual health. This is why Scripture tells us that, “. . .*bodily exercise profiteth (a) little . . .*”
I Timothy 4:8a)

CONCLUSION

The CHRISTian ministry has many challenges. At times it can be full of struggles, disappointments and discouragements. These can easily lead to “burnout”. But this need not be. The purpose of this study has been to give us the wisdom to not only understand the characteristics of burnout, but more importantly to give us the principles that will keep us from it. So we can for many, many years be at maximum effectiveness for the LORD’s glory and the furtherance of HIS eternal kingdom!

“Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting GOD, the LORD, the CREATOR of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? HE giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might HE increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint.” **Isaiah 40:28-3**



**CHAPTER 5 -
HOW TO HAVE AN EXTENDED TIME
OF PRAYER**

HOW TO HAVE AN EXTENDED TIME OF PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to being effective in ministry, whether it be inner-city or otherwise, prayer of course is very important. Scripture reminds us that . . .

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”.

James 5:16

When we as ministers of the Gospel pray, we’re acknowledging that we need GOD. The extent of our effectiveness in ministry will be in direct relationship to the amount of time we spend in prayer. Perhaps this is what JESUS meant when HE promised . . .

“. . . pray to thy FATHER which is in secret, and thy FATHER which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” **Matthew 6:6b**

The Scriptures give testimony of many great men and women of GOD who had powerful ministries, and made significant impacts on the societies around them. One major contributing factor for all of them was their extended prayer times. Following are just a few examples . . .

- David (see Psalm 55:17)
- Daniel (see Daniel 6:10)
- Anna (see Luke 2:36-37)
- JESUS (see Luke 6:12)



King David

Besides the Scriptures, Church history records many examples of men and women of GOD who were also people of prayer. They were SPIRIT-filled men and women who spent much time in prayer, and thus had powerful ministries which had significant impacts during their day. Following are some examples . . .

* George Muller
* Martin Luther

* David Brainard
* Dr. K.A. Paul's mother

The Scriptures and Church history reminds us of the need for prayer if we desire to be successful in ministry. Times of extended, fervent prayer and calling upon GOD to work on our behalf and for HIS glory. As we follow the examples of these great men and women of GOD noted above, may we too experience the joy of seeing the LORD work in a mighty way in the days in which we live!

I. A Time Of Preparation

- A. Praise And Thanksgiving To The LORD For Drawing Me To Another Time Of Extended Prayer With HIM.
- B. Ask The LORD To Get My Spirit And Soul (i.e. - mind, will and emotions), Into A Worshipful, Reverent, Prayerful State. Asking HIM To Help Me Concentrate On HIM And To Listen To HIM.
- C. Read A Psalm Or Portions From Several Psalms.

II. A Time Of Confession

- A. Begin By Reading A Psalm Of Confession Back To The LORD. (A few suggestions: Psalm 25, 32, 51)
- B. Confess Specific Sins That The LORD Brings To Your Remembrance. For Example . . .



- 1. Pride . . . asking GOD to give me a passion for HIS reputation, not mine.

“ . . . be clothed with humility, for GOD resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” I Peter 5:5b

2. Self-will . . . asking GOD to do things in HIS way and time, not mine. And to show me the difference between HOLY SPIRIT-led effort and human-led effort. And for me to let GOD take care of HIS responsibilities, and I mine. (i.e. - getting to know HIM better as a PERSON.

“ . . . Nevertheless not MY will, But THINE Be done.”

Luke 22:42b

3. Idolatry of the ministry . . . asking GOD to help me to delight in HIM only, and not to lose my first love for HIM.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.” Exodus 20:3

4. Anxiety . . . asking GOD to help me to rest in HIM.

“Be careful for nothing, but in everything be prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto GOD.” Philippians 4:6

5. Jealousy and covetousness of other ministries . . . asking GOD to pour out HIS blessings upon these works, as they are conducted according to HIS Word and will.

“Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbors’.”

Exodus 20:17

6. Reacting wrongly to my attackers . . . asking GOD to pour out HIS blessings upon them, as they conduct their lives and ministries according to HIS Word and will.

“CHRIST . . . WHO when HE was reviled, reviled not again, when HE suffered, HE threatened not, but committed HIMSELF to HIM that judgeth righteously.” I Peter 2:23

7. Lack of love for GOD and others . . . asking GOD to help me to love HIM and others more.

“JESUS said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self . On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 22:37-40



C. Dedicate Everything In (And Concerning) My Life To The LORD. (see Psalm 37:3-7a; Proverbs 16:3)

- Myself
- Family
- Ministry
- Possessions
- Future
- Plans
- Dreams
- Expectations
- Sins
- This prayer list

III. A Time Of Remembrance

A. I must come in the Name of JESUS CHRIST.

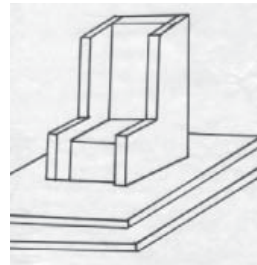
“Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the FATHER in MY Name, HE will give it to you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in MY Name, ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” **John 16:23b-24**

B. I must come in faith believing.

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” **Matthew 21:21**

C. I must come boldly.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” **Hebrews 4:16**



D. I must be specific.

Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

Matthew 7:7-8

E. I must be persistent.

“And will not GOD bring about justice for HIS chosen ones, who cry out to HIM day and night? Will HE keep putting them off?”

Luke 18:7

F. I must be patient.

“I waited patiently for the LORD, and HE inclined unto me, and heard my cry.” **Psalms 40:1**

G. I must be fervent.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

James 5:16b

H. I must pray according to GOD’s will.

“And this is the confidence that we have in HIM, that, if we ask anything according to HIS will, HE heareth us, and if we know that HE hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of HIM.”

I John 5:14-15

I. I must pray for GOD alone to be glorified in all things.

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in MY Name, that will I do, that the FATHER may be glorified in the SON. If ye shall ask anything in MY Name, I will do it.”

John 14:13-14



1. Pray that the wicked and the saints would see that their “gods” are not “gods” . . . but merely idols, and this would be so by them seeing the LORD do mighty things for and through us, like HE did for Israel! (see Nehemiah 6:16; Jeremiah 32:20-21; I Chronicles 16:26)
2. Pray that The I.C.P.M. would be a ministry that will cause both the wicked and the saints (especially the I.C.P.M. leaders and families), to glorify GOD and see that GOD is alive and HE is mighty and HE is powerful . . . and that HE does answer prayer, and that HE will honor HIS Word if followed! (see Psalm 96:3-10a)

IV. A Time Of Petition

A. More love for the LORD and others.

“JESUS said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 22:37-40 (see also I Corinthians 13:4-8a)

B. My wife, our children’s and my personal (and corporate) walk with the LORD. My wife and I to have strong and growing CHRIST-centered marriage. For us to give all our expectations of each other to the LORD

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband, as unto the LORD. Husbands, love your wives, even as CHRIST also loved the church and gave HIMSELF for it. Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right.” **Ephesians 5:22, 25; 6:1**

C. My personal strength and grace to rise early.

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” **Isaiah 40:31**

D. For me and this ministry to have a servant's spirit. A spirit that would contribute to the success of others . . . especially my family and the leaders in our ministry.

1. "LORD, show us who, how and when".
2. Not to look at them as just "workers", but as people with needs.
3. Give them a "vision" and allow them to carry it out within the I.C.P.M.
4. Allow them to discover and exercise their spiritual gift.
5. Give them biographies to read.
6. Teaching them GOD's Word
7. Praying for them
8. B.S.F. School; Health clinics at both Clinic locations; public school work; etc.



Dr. Presley In B.S.F.

"CHRIST in you, the hope of glory, WHOM we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in CHRIST JESUS, whereunto I also labor, striving according to HIS working, which worketh in me mightily." **Colossians 1:27b-29**

E. More wisdom. Especially to know the direction of the ministry.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of GOD, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

James 1:5 (see also Proverbs 9:10)

F. Finances.

1. \$_____ needed yet for this month
2. Appeal to the LORD like Moses and Muller did, "reminding" the LORD that it is HIS ministry, HIS reputation, HIS people, and for HIM to be glorified by providing!
3. May the leaders especially grow in their faith in this area, to "step out in faith" for non-guaranteed support.

4. Wisdom to know how to spend the finances.
5. Finances to pay more staff.
6. May I not look at certain people as financial sources.

“ . . . silence YOUR enemies, (who say YOU cannot provide without borrowing or begging), destroy all (YOUR) foes, for I am your servant.” Psalm 143:12b

“Call unto ME and I will answer thee and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.” Jeremiah 33:3

“But my GOD shall supply all your need according to HIS riches in glory by CHRIST JESUS.” Philippians 4:19

G. I.C.P.M. Resources. For GOD to be glorified, the saints to be edified and the lost to be saved.

1. Newsletters	7. Teachings
2. Financial reports	8. Cassettes
3. Handbooks	9. Music tapes
4. Tracts	10. Beauty For Ashes
5. Videos	11. Biographies
6. Catalogs	12. Correspondence
	13. Different fliers

May these truly be read, viewed and listened to . . . and passed on to others to read, view and listen to.

H. More leaders and laborers.

“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few, pray ye therefore the LORD of the harvest, that HE will send forth laborers into HIS harvest.”

Matthew 9:37-38

1. Qualifications . . .
 - a. GODly, holy and spiritually mature
 - b. responsible, diligent, hard working, self-starters, creative, with initiative



- c. committed long-term to the inner-city, with a genuine love for the people
 - d. committed long-term to the I.C.P.M.
 - e. men that could be pastor. i.e. - non-divorced and non-remarried
 - f. able to live by faith . . . with no guaranteed salary
 - g. financially free (i.e. - no debt) or at least working toward that
 - h. committed to no “CHRISTian” rock
 - i. committed to no divorce
 - j. if married, spouse is walking with the LORD and in full agreement with their involvement
 - k. if children, they are walking with the LORD
 - l. they are submissive to authority
 - m. past hurts and bitterness is resolved
 - n. they have a clear conscience
 - o. one with us doctrinally
 - p. unified with us in a general way, a real bonding
 - q. pioneers / church planters
2. Specific workers needed . . .
- a. Black man or couple / Hispanic man or couple / Indian man or couple
 - b. treasurer / piano player for B.S.F. / mechanic-maintenance man / B.S.F. nursery help / older, GODly couple to attend each fellowship / two doctors for D.S.F. clinic / more apprenticeship teachers (i.e. - carpentry, auto mechanics) / public school tutors / Newsletter-publications expert
3. Potential workers . . .
4. Wisdom to know who to delegate and give responsibility to
5. More of the seven spiritual gifts represented, especially administrator
6. Spend extra time in praying for present leaders / spouses and their needs (see acc. sheets)

7. Unity and bonding throughout the ministry, especially starting with leaders. May we all learn and practice Philippians 2:1-8

I. Schutte house.

1. Our ministry there (what / when / how)
2. To get to know neighbors better
3. Plant a church there?



Schutte House On Hovey Street

J. Discipleship homes for men and women.

K. Saturday ministries

1. D.S.F. Coffee-house
2. B.S.F. Kid's Club
3. D.S.F. and B.S.F. health centers

L. Children's ministries

1. B.S.F. junior church
2. B.S.F. School (Wednesday and Thursday nights)
3. Apprenticeship classes
4. Public school work at Alexander and Sigsbee
5. Camp Promise
6. B.S.F. Kid's Club
7. Concerning the children in a general way . . .
 - a. parent(s) to get more concerned and involved
 - b. us to be able to work with parent(s) more
 - c. a spirit of cooperation and submission in children towards GOD, leaders, each other and church property



M. Follow-up and one-on-one work

1. Robera W.'s ministry
2. Diane B.'s ministry
3. Rob W.'s ministry
4. John H.'s ministry
5. Jose' G. and Ralph K.'s ministry
6. Jim M.'s ministry
7. Amy B.'s ministry
8. Eileene S. w/ Amy J.
9. Rich J. w/ Eric B.
10. More workers to be raised up

N. Evangelism Training Institute

1. Street evangelism
2. Campus evangelism
3. Ron P., Gene L., Ken M., Hildegard K., and others who do this regularly to be strengthened and encouraged
4. More evangelists to be raised up



*Hildegard Krusch Ministering
On The Streets*

O. Speaking at other places

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

P. Helping out other ministries

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q. Equipment and supplies needed

1. Muller, Taylor, Carmichael biographies
2. Copy machine for Hovey Street
3. Fax machine for Hovey Street
- 4.
- 5.

R. Women's ministries

1. Monthly prayer meetings and fellowships
2. More women to get involved
- 3.



S. My priorities

1. To know the best things to do first, then the good
2. My daily times with the LORD first . . . then time with wife and children
3. Wisdom to know how I can minister to the most people with the time I have
4. Saturday night communion with the LORD; extended prayer; contemplating; planning; organizing; oversight; delegating

T. New resources to be developed

1. "Beauty For Ashes" #3
2. Counseling handbook
3. Existing teachings into handbooks
- 4.

U. Discipleship class

1. A training place for those learning to teach
2. Other men to teach
3. Other men to be disciplined

V. Tuesday morning prayer meeting

1. A SPIRIT-filled, SPIRIT-led, SPIRIT-controlled time
2. May this be a time of discipleship as well
3. Other men to come (i.e. - Ron P., Eric B., Rich J., Kevin R., etc.)

W. The next S.L.F., S.L.C.
or special I.C.P.M
seminar

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



X. Gothard Basic,
Advanced or Pastor's
Seminar (see acc. lists)

Y. Festival _____ Outreach.

1. The LORD to bring the evangelists HE would have help us
2. These evangelists to be trained and The Festival In 1993
disciple / weather to be perfect / tracts distributed

Z. The next S.L., Executive Board or Children's Leader meeting.

- 1.
- 2.

AA. Place to send people who want to work.

1. With Chuck E.?
2. With John H.?

BB. Future teachings and sermons at I.C.P.M. meetings and the
_____ calendar

1. What to teach and preach about
2. Scheduling of others

CC. Next newsletter

1. All those writing reports
2. Wisdom and skill for typist
3. Wisdom and skill for printer
4. Wisdom as I put it together
5. Finances for it

DD. I.C.P.M. S.L. Training School for spring and fall

1. The LORD's choosing of students
2. Students to be trained and disciplined

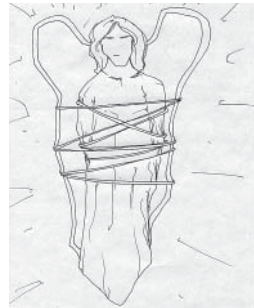
EE. Other requests

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

FF. Spiritual warfare

1. Satan and his evil principalities and powers to be rebuked, bound and defeated in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and through HIS blood

- pride
- mental confusion
- hard-heartedness
- bitterness
- addiction (alcohol / illegal drugs)
- anger
- immorality
- apathy / slothfulness
- rebellion
- religiosity



*We Can Pray That
Satan Will Be Bound*

2. "Hedge of Thorns" to be put up wherever we live and minister
3. HOLY SPIRIT to really move and work
4. The LORD JESUS CHRIST to be preached and exalted
5. False teachers, prostitutes, criminals, gang members to be converted, and bars, pornography shops, crack-houses to be shut down. People and places of righteousness to be raised up.

**CHAPTER 6 -
THE POWER OF THE FIRST
CENTURY CHURCH**

THE POWER OF THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH

Introduction

As one studies the New Testament Scriptures, and especially the Book of Acts, it is soon discovered that the followers of CHRIST in that first century were a special people...special because it is evident that they had a unique **power** working in, through, and about them. A **power** that was certainly Supernatural and Divine! They were the CHRISTians of the first century Church. The “ekklesia” (called out and separated ones), of GOD. They were CHRISTians that made up local assemblies (i.e. - “... *the church that was at Antioch...*” [Acts 13:1]; “...*the church of GOD which is at Corinth...*” [1 Corinthians 1:2]), that were part of the larger, universal Church worldwide (See Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22; 5:23).

What made that first century Church such a Church of **power**? How could that Church have such an eternal impact on the society of her day? Why isn't our present, modern-day Church experiencing that same **power** and having that same eternal impact? This is the purpose of this study...

to discover the answers to these questions. To also discover the Biblical principles that made that first century Church such a Church of **power** and impact. And most importantly, how can we



Paul Preaching In Antioch

apply those same principles to our local churches today, and thus see that same great GOD working in, through, and about us, just as HE did over two thousand years ago!

Then we will be able to confirm with the great first century Apostle Paul when he wrote...

“Now unto HIM that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto HIM be glory in the Church by JESUS CHRIST throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” **Ephesians 3:20-21**

I. It Was A Church Built By JESUS CHRIST

“And JESUS answered and said...upon this rock I will build MY Church...” **Matthew 16:17a, 18a**

This is the first mention of the word “*church*” in the Scriptures. It is significant that this would be the first point of our study as well because we must remember that it is the LORD WHO is to build the Church, not us!

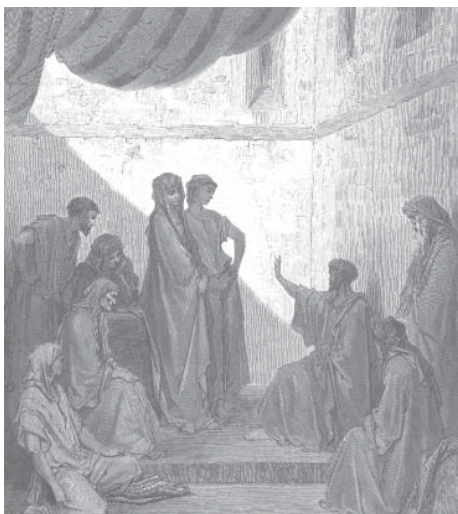


“...I will build MY church...”

We so often are mistaken and believe that we must build our local churches. Thus, we see the proliferation of “church growth” books and seminars today. Therefore we see the use of worldly, fleshly means to “attract” people to attend our local churches. “Christian” rock concerts, liturgical dancing, potluck dinners, ice cream socials, dramas, and “fun nights” for the youth just to name a few. Indeed, so much of what we call “revival” and church growth in our American churches is just people moving from one church to another.

Contrast our present day local churches and these worldly means to help them “grow”, with the first century Church and the power of GOD that was displayed through her real, dynamic and spiritual growth...

“And they (the CHRISTians), continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising GOD, and having favor with all the people. And the LORD added to the Church daily such as should be saved.” Acts 2:46-47



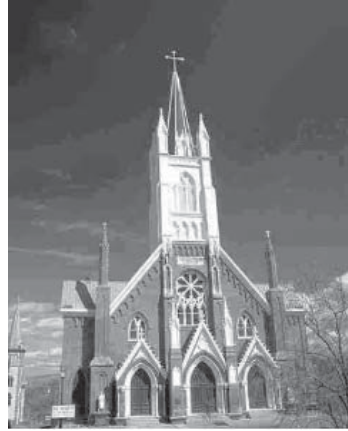
Peter Teaching In A First Century House

Notice from the Scripture above that it wasn't some “slick” outreach program that brought the wicked to salvation. It wasn't a worldly “marketing” scheme. Nor was it entertainment at the church that brought them in. It was “...the LORD (WHO) added to the Church daily such as should be saved.”

“The Apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people.” Acts 5:12-13 (NIV)

Isn't the above Scripture interesting? Notice, as “*The Apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people*”, and as “...*all the believers (were meeting) together in Solomon's Colonnade*”, “*No one else (that is the unbelievers), dared join them...*” This was the **power** of the first century Church, and that **power** is what is lacking in so many of our local churches today! The unbeliever realized beyond any doubt that the CHRISTians of the first century were different. And “...*even though (the CHRISTians) were highly regarded by the (unbelievers)*”, those same unbelievers didn't want anything to do with them!

This should be the same power and testimony of our local churches today as well. Instead of making our churches “seeker friendly” so that the wicked can feel “comfortable” in them, the ungodly should feel so uncomfortable, that either they repent of their sins and become CHRISTians themselves...or they never come back! Our local churches are for the saints, not the wicked. It’s a place for worship, discipleship and fellowship. The wicked cannot and should not participate in these!



*The Wicked Should Not Feel
“Comfortable” In Our Churches*

So if it is the LORD’s responsibility to “...build (HIS) church...”, what is our responsibility in relationship to all of this? According to the Scriptures, there are many. Following are only a few...

A. We Are To Be A Light To The World And Bring Glory To GOD

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your FATHER WHO is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

B. We Are To Share The Gospel With The Lost

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...” **Matthew 28:19a**

C. We Are To Disciple Other Believers

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” **Matthew 28:20a**

D. We Are To Minister To All People

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

Galatians 6:10

Finally, notice from our original Scripture, that our LORD said that the Church was HIS Church. We must remember this, for as we do so, we will be free from the pressure and anxiety of trying to “*build*” HIS Church in and through the flesh.



We Are To Minister To All People

“And HE (CHRIST) is the Head of the body, the Church, WHO is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things HE might have the preeminence.” **Colossians 1:18**

A Prayer Of Commitment For Our Church

*“Dear Heavenly FATHER, please forgive us, if we as a body of believers have endeavored to build our church through worldly ways. We now see the terrible destruction that comes when we seek to minister through our own, fleshly means. We have learned from the study of YOUR Word, that if we just concentrate on obeying YOU in carrying out our responsibilities, it is YOU WHO “...will build (YOUR) church...”, and make it a church of **power** and impact in the community around us. Please give us YOUR grace so that YOU will be able to do this through us. In the Name of JESUS, Amen.”*



II. It Was A Church More Powerful Than Hell

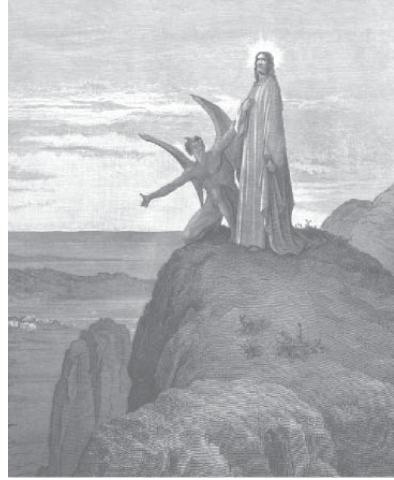
“...and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Matthew 16:18b

This Scripture of course is the completion of the verses that we previously studied under Section I. There JESUS said, “...*I will build MY Church...*”

HE concludes that declaration by proclaiming, “...*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” The implication here is, if CHRIST is the ONE building HIS Church, it will be a Church more powerful than Satan and all the forces of evil!

As one studies the history of the first century Church, it is evident that the forces of evil were active and strong against her. Yet the Scriptures reveal the great **power** that GOD gave her to overcome and defeat them. Following are just a few examples...



The Temptation Of JESUS

“There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one.” Acts 5:16

Notice how active these “...*unclean spirits*...” were in afflicting and tormenting the populace. Yet through the Church and healing, deliverance was brought to “...*every one*.”

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached CHRIST unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voices, came out of many that were possessed with them, and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city.” Acts 8:5-8



The Healing Of A Lame Man

Once again we see the activity of “...*unclean spirits*...”, and their power to bring destruction to these suffering people. However, we see a greater **power** at work. We see the **power** of GOD bringing wonderful deliverance and healing through HIS first century Church...as they simply “...*preached CHRST unto them.*”

“And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, ‘These men are the servants of the Most High GOD, which show unto us the way of salvation.’ And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command thee in the Name of JESUS CHRIST to come out of her.’ And he came out the same hour.” Acts 16:16-18

It is here that we learn of the power of just one evil “*spirit*” working through one woman. But again the LORD uses the first century Church, in this case the Apostle Paul, to display HIS **power** and defeat this force from hell.



The Apostle Paul

Jesus proclaimed in our original Scripture that “...*the gates of hell (would) not prevail against (HIS Church).*” This implies that the Church was to be offensive in nature and aggressively attacking the forces of evil. We have learned from our study in the book of Acts that the first century Church definitely had this mentality.

But what about the Church today...especially in North America? In contrast to the first century Church, today we see the local church largely ignorant of “spiritual warfare”. Instead, we actually see our local churches allowing these evil forces to subtly creep in through our compromising of GOD’s standards and adopting the ways of the world in conducting the ministry!

Just as the Church in the first century, we must acquire and maintain a warfare mentality towards Satan and the forces of darkness. The Apostle Paul reminds us in Ephesians 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.”



Paul In Prison Writing His Epistle To The Ephesians

Scripture teaches us of many “weapons” that we have at our disposal, so as to give each local church (and each CHRISTian within each local church), the resources to not only do battle with Satan and his evil forces, but to have complete victory over them as well. We will not take the time or space to discuss all of them here (please see the I.C.P.M. teaching entitled, “*Our Spiritual Warfare with Satan And His Evil Forces*” to study this subject in more detail); however, let’s highlight one of these “weapons” which we will call “Warfare Prayer”.

There are two types of “warfare prayer” given to us in Scripture that have proven to be very effective in this struggle. One is defensive in nature, while the other is offensive.

1. The “hedge of thorns” prayer.

This defensive type of prayer is based on the principle found in Job 1:6-12. Here we have the record of Satan’s conversation with GOD concerning Job’s righteous lifestyle. Satan comments that he would like to “attack” Job, but he cannot get at him because the LORD has...



The Hedge Is A Weapon Of Protection

“...made an hedge about him and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side...” (v. 10a)

Satan desires to destroy us, our families, and our possessions, but we have this powerful weapon of protection that we can use to defend ourselves. To illustrate how this prayer can be used to accomplish this, following is a model prayer...

“Heavenly FATHER, in the name and through the blood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST (see John 14:13-14 and Revelation 12:11), I pray that YOU would bind Satan (see Matthew 12:29), right now in the life of (name of person), or, in the area of (name of place or thing). I ask YOU to build a hedge of thorns high and deep around (name of person, place, or thing). I pray this so YOU can keep Satan his evil influences from (name of person, place or thing). Heavenly FATHER, I pray all this in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, Amen.”

In light of other Scripture, there are three important elements that must be part of this prayer...

- a. We must pray that Satan and his evil forces will be bound

*“Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house (i.e. – territory), and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house” (i.e. – territory) **Matthew 12:29***

Much of the world is under Satan’s power. He is the “strong man” that is in control. As we live in this world and engage in this spiritual warfare, we need the LORD to “...bind the strong man...”, so in a sense, we can take over his kingdom (i.e. – his “house”), and “...spoil his goods...”



*The “Binding” Of Satan
Renders Him Powerless*

- b. We must pray in the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in MY (JESUS’) Name, that will I do, that the FATHER may be glorified in the SON. If ye shall ask anything in MY (JESUS’) Name, I will do it.”
John 14:13-14.

In the Scripture above, JESUS gives us this wonderful promise of receiving anything we ask if it is done in HIS “Name”. Surely the LORD wants us to have victory over Satan and his evil forces, thus we can be assured that HE will give us this victory as we pray for it in HIS “Name”!



*There Is Much Power In The
Name Of JESUS*

Following are two Biblical illustrations of the power of JESUS' Name in giving victory over Satan and his evil forces...

“And the seventy (disciples) returned again with joy saying, LORD, even the devils are subject unto us through THY Name. And (JESUS) said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” **Luke 10:17-18**

“And it came to pass, as we (Paul and Silas) went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same followed Paul and us, and cried saying, ‘These men are the servant of the MOST HIGH GOD, which show unto us the way of salvation.’ And this she did many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command thee in the Name of JESUS CHRIST to come out of her.’ And he came out the same hour.”

Acts 16:16-18



*Satan Was Defeated For All
Eternity By CHRIST's Shed
Blood*

- c. We must pray through the blood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST

“And they (the saints) overcome him (the Devil) by the blood of the Lamb...” **Revelation 12:11a**

Satan and his evil forces hate the blood of CHRIST, for it was HIS blood shed at Calvary that defeated them once for all, and eternally stripped them of their spiritual power. This is why as we claim the blood of CHRIST in our spiritual warfare, Satan and his evil forces must flee in retreat and defeat!

2. The “prayer target” prayer

This warfare prayer is offensive in nature and is based on the principle found in Ephesians 6:18-19.

“Praying always with all power and supplication in the SPIRIT, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for me (the Apostle Paul), that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel.”

Notice this two-fold thrust in the Apostle Paul’s prayer here in Ephesians 6. First of all, he admonishes us to pray for other “*saints*”, secondly to pray that unbelievers would come to know “...*the mystery of the Gospel.*” As we pray for the “*saints*” to grow in their walk with the LORD and for the lost to be saved, Satan’s kingdom suffers damage!



***We Must Consistently
Pray Against Satan And
His Evil Principalities
And Powers***

This is what “prayer targets” will do. A “prayer target” is someone we pray for (whether a CHRISTian or non-CHRISTian), when we or someone we’re ministering to is being attacked by Satan and his evil forces. As we continue to do this on a regular basis, Satan soon stops his assault, because he certainly does not want his evil causes thwarted!

There are two other methods that involve “warfare prayer” that local churches are using today and are proving to be very effective in attacking and literally tearing down “...*the gates of hell...*” in whole neighborhoods and cities around the world.

One method is based upon the Scripture we looked at earlier in Ephesians 6:12. Once again, it is here that we find the instruction of the Apostle Paul...

“...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.”

“A municipality is an area of land over which there is governmental jurisdiction. A principality is an evil ruler over an area of land. There are “*principalities*” over nations, cities and districts. As we overpower these “*principalities*” (in prayer), there is freedom for the Gospel to reach the people and to bring about a marvelous turning to GOD. If, on the other hand, we fail to deal with these “*principalities*” effectively, the Gospel is hindered and people in that jurisdiction coldly reject it. Jurisdiction is directly related to ground and authority over that ground. The history of revival confirms that both GOD and Satan operate within human governmental jurisdictions. It is also on this basis that nations are judged.” (*Life Purpose, Volume 2* Institute In Basic Life Principles, p. 9*)

There may be others that we do not know of yet, but following are twenty-two evil “*principalities*” that we have identified over the years, and are praying for the LORD to rebuke and defeat within the inner-cities of the world...

Twenty-Two Evil “Principalities”

➤ Pride	➤ Mental Confusion
➤ Unbelief	➤ Bitterness
➤ Hard-heartedness	➤ Anger
➤ Addiction (alcohol/illegal drugs)	➤ Apathy/Slothfulness
➤ Immorality	➤ Religiosity/False Religions
➤ Rebellion	➤ Discouragement that leads to burnout

➤ Depression	➤ Fear
➤ Fatigue	➤ Violence, especially in South Africa
➤ Strife/Division	➤ Theft, especially in South Africa
➤ Doubt	➤ Ancestral worship, esp. in South Africa
➤ Anxiety	➤ Evil music

As we as a ministry have prayed against these specific evil “*principalities*” (and) “*powers*”, we have witnessed first-hand GOD rebuking them and bringing about real significant change in individuals and whole neighborhoods for righteousness!

The second method that the LORD is using in a tremendous way is called “prayer walks”. This too is a very aggressive and offensive type of “warfare prayer”.

With this method, one or more CHRISTians literally walk down a street, pausing to pray in front of individual homes or businesses. A variety of requests can be prayed for depending on the people living in the home, or the type of business in the building.

For instance, if the residents of the home are known to be CHRISTians, prayer can be offered for them to grow in their spiritual walk with the LORD, and for them to be more of a “light” in that community. However, if they are known to be unbelievers, prayer is made for them to become CHRISTians. This method is being practiced on a weekly basis in some areas of India, resulting in the salvation of thousands of people and the planting of hundreds of churches!

Concerning businesses, the “prayer warriors” pause to pray in front of each place of business, for the owners, management and employees to become CHRISTians if they are not, or to grow in their walk with the LORD if they are. If the business is legitimate and honest, prayer is made for them to be blessed. However, if the business is illegal, immoral or wicked in any way, prayer is

made for that business to be shut down completely. Our churches in Grand Rapids have seen great success in this aspect, as we have seen pornographic stores, pawn shops, a house of prostitution and several taverns closed down in response to specific prayers!

In conclusion to this section of our study concerning spiritual warfare and prayer, we would be wise to remember that the LORD has given us another powerful weapon when combined with warfare prayer can bring us victory over Satan and his evil forces.



Jesus Healing The Lunatic

The weapon is “fasting”. Voluntarily going without food, so the LORD is free to unleash even greater spiritual power through us. In Matthew 17:14-21, we have the story where JESUS’ disciples are unable to deliver the “*lunatic*” boy from demon possession (v.16). However, JESUS rebukes the demon and the boy is made whole (v. 18). Later when the disciples ask JESUS why they could not cast out the demon, HE answers by saying, “*Because of your unbelief*” (v. 20). HE then concludes by teaching them, “*Howbeit this kind (of demon) goeth not out but by prayer and fasting*” (v. 21). Evidently this demon was extra powerful, and in order for it to be rebuked, extra righteous power was needed. Fasting combined with prayer brought that extra righteous power!

A Prayer Of Commitment For Our Church

Dear Heavenly FATHER, please forgive us, if we as a church have failed to use our God-given resources to be a church more powerful than Satan and his evil forces. Forgive us if we have allowed these evil forces to subtly creep in through our compromising of YOUR standards and adopting ways of the world in conducting our ministries. We have learned from the study of YOUR Word that we must acquire and



maintain a warfare mentality towards Satan and his forces of darkness. We have learned that if we do, YOU will make our church a church of power so that, "... the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Please give us YOUR grace so that YOU will be able to do this through us. In the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, Amen."

III. It Was A Church Bold Enough to Confront Sin

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go tell him his fault between thee and him, if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or more witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." **Matthew 18:15-17**



CHRIST Teaching The Disciples

Many people would say that these are rather harsh words spoken by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. For here HE is clearly and strongly instructing the local church how to deal with a fellow CHRISTian who insists on continuing in a particular sin (the example here of one CHRISTian refusing to forgive another CHRISTian). HE actually instructs the local church to eventually discipline this sinning brother by treating him "...as an heathen man (i.e. – unbeliever) ..." This of course implies that he is excommunicated from that local church!

As one studies the Scriptures, it is learned that this confronting of sin within the local church was taught and practiced regularly by the first century CHRISTians. That first century Church was a holy and pure Church, thus a Church of great **power** as well! Following are just two illustrations...

A. The Sin And Death Of Ananias And Sapphira, Acts 5:1-11

This of course is the story of a husband and wife, members of the first century Church, who decided to attempt to deceive both the LORD and the Apostles by lying about the sale of a possession of theirs. However, the Apostles, through the wisdom of the HOLY SPIRIT, discern this deception, expose it, and then confront the couple concerning it. Immediately their lives are required by the LORD in judgment. This testifies (with an “exclamation point”!), to the seriousness of this sin! Verse eleven gives us the clear purpose for this church discipline here...



Death Of Ananias

“And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things.”

B. The Sin And Discipline Of The Corinthian Fornicator, I Corinthians 5:1-13

This is the record of the professing CHRISTian man in the church of Corinth, who was committing immorality with “...his father’s wife” (v. 1). The Apostle Paul



Paul Ministering In Corinth

strongly rebukes the whole church for allowing this man to regularly follow this lifestyle, and not disciplining him by excommunicating him from their fellowship (v. 12). Paul then passes “judgment” (a concept that many CHRISTians today exclaim that we should refrain from), by commanding the church, “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that (his) spirit may be saved in the day of the LORD JESUS”

(v. 5). Why does the Apostle use such strong language here? Because, as he explains in verse six, “... *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*” In other words, a little sin allowed to continue in the local church will spread and “infect” the whole church! Thus, Paul concludes in verse thirteen...

“Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

According to the Apostle Paul’s second letter to this church, the Corinthian CHRISTians do indeed follow through with this discipline. And apparently the man repents and ceases to live in this sin, because Paul instructs the church...

“...to forgive him, and comfort him (and to) confirm (their) love toward him.” **II Corinthians 2:7b, 8b**

There was another significant aspect that gave the first century Church great **power** when it came to confronting sin. It preached repentance.

“repentance” (Greek – metanoeo) = Literally a change of mind. In relationship to sin, the act whereas an individual changes his mind about choosing to live a sinful lifestyle, and instead chooses to live a life of righteousness that pleases the LORD.

Following are just a few illustrations where repentance was preached through the first century Church...

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of JESUS CHRIST for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.” **Acts 2:38**

“But Peter said unto him...Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray GOD, of perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.” **Acts 8:20a, 22**



Peter The Apostle

“And when (the elders of the church) were come to him, (Paul) said unto them, Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after

what manner I have been with you at all seasons, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Gentiles, repentance toward GOD, and faith toward our LORD JESUS CHRIST.” Acts 20:18,21

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus (a local first century Church) ...These things saith HE (the LORD JESUS CHRIST)... Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”
Revelation 2:1a, 5

Contrast the boldness of the first century Church to confront sin, with the fear of the present, modern-day Church to do the same. It is significant what that great American pastor, A. W. Tozer, once said concerning this...

“As long as people can hear orthodoxy divorced from life, they will attend and support churches and institutions without objection. On the other hand, the man who preaches truth and applies it to the lives of his hearers will feel the nails and the thorns. He will lead a hard life, but a glorious one.”

Our local churches today refrain from confronting sin over fear of offending those attending, and perhaps losing their membership...especially the wealthy ones. The leaders themselves have sin in their lives, and thus are unable and unmotivated to confront the sins of others. This of course has a “trickle-down” effect, because if the leaders of a local church are living in sin, so will many of the attenders of that local church... especially the spiritually weaker ones.

There is a real lack of personal accountability. This is especially true in larger churches, because there are so many members to hold accountable. It is thus easy for members to be living in sin... even deep, gross sin, with no one able or willing to confront them concerning this sin. If by chance the sin is discovered and some confrontation does take place, very often that person will just leave that local church, find another one to attend, and begin the whole cycle of “infecting” their new local church with the same sin.

Another real flaw in our local churches today is the motivation to make them “seeker friendly”. That is, to make the church a place where the wicked can feel “comfortable” and unthreatened by the convicting work of the HOLY SPIRIT. But we forget that the ungodly should feel uncomfortable, spiritually



The Local Church Is Only For The Saints

“threatened” and convicted when they come into the church. So much so, that either they believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST for salvation and repent of their sins...or they never return. We must remember that the local church is for the saints...a place for them to participate in worship, discipleship and fellowship. The wicked cannot and should not enjoy such involvement. This would also apply to the CHRISTian who is choosing to live in habitual sin.

If our local churches truly wish to possess and display the real **power** of GOD, we must begin to actively and thoroughly confront sin. The Scriptures of course give us very clear direction as how to carry this out.

First of all, notice from our original Scripture under this section (Matthew 18:15-18), that CHRIST HIMSELF gives us an orderly, four-step procedure in dealing with a sinning CHRISTian within the local church. To begin with, JESUS teaches us to deal with him alone (v. 15). If he doesn’t respond, he is to be confronted by “...two or three witnesses...” (v. 16). If he refuses to listen to them, “...tell it unto the church...” (vs. 17a). Finally, “... if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (vs. 17b).

Secondly, concerning leaders of a church who insist on living in habitual sin, Scripture commands us to publicly rebuke them only after two or three witnesses are able to confirm their sin. No preferential treatment is to be given to any leader who sins.

“Against an elder (applicable to anyone in church leadership), receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I (Paul) charge thee before GOD, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.”

I Timothy 5:19-21



“Pastor” Timothy

Notice from this Scripture that when a church leader is publicly reproved, this naturally compels the rest of that local church to examine their own lives to determine whether there is any sin in their life that must be confessed and repented of. This should also motivate a local church to carefully research the past of any prospective leader to discover whether there have been moral failures or other types of serious sin.



Bill Gothard

(From The Institute Of
Basic Life Principles)

Thirdly, as noted earlier...“GOD never intended unconverted people or carnal CHRISTians to feel comfortable in HIS church(es). In the (first century) Church, no man dared to join himself to the believers, even though all the people held them in high esteem because of the good works that they were doing in the community (see Acts 5:13). It is vital that the highest possible standards be reinforced and encouraged by all those within the (local) church. Those who do not live by these standards will feel very uncomfortable because they will be judged by those within and without the (local) church on the basis of these standards. We (must) be committed to maintaining a pure church, rather than a popular church. Our goal will not be to evangelize sinners in our church, but to build up and equip the saints to be effective in evangelizing...first their own children and then those in the community. We (must) not compromise GODly standards or the requirements of worship in order to attract non-CHRISTians to our meetings. Instead, we will maintain the highest levels of spirituality by exhorting, “... one another daily ...lest any ... be hardened through the deceitfulness of

sin” (Hebrews 3:13). Note: the preceding quote was taken from Page 12 **“The Power of the Living Church”** Institute of Basic Life Principles.

Next, as also explained earlier in our study, our local churches need to preach “repentance” more. We learned that this was a common theme in the messages of the first century Church. Because of this, the saints and unbelievers alike were constantly being confronted with the need to confess and forsake their sins.

Finally, our local churches need to regularly remember the LORD’s Supper together. One of the main purposes of the LORD’s Supper is for self-examination. Proper self-examination will compel believers to strive for true holiness of life. Within the definitive passage of Scripture where the LORD’s Supper is explained, the Apostle Paul writes...

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

I Corinthians 11:28, 31-32

The Apostle Paul, when writing to the local church in Ephesus, explained that someday JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF would completely sanctify HIS universal Church. May we today allow HIM to continue that work in our local churches!

“...CHRIST also loved the Church, and gave HIMSELF for it, that HE might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that HE might present it to HIMSELF a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” **Ephesians 5:25-27**

A Prayer Of Commitment For Our Church

“Dear Heavenly FATHER, we have learned from the study of Your Word, that it is YOUR Divine will that our church be a holy and pure church. A church that regularly addresses and confronts sin. Please forgive us if we have been more concerned with large numbers attending our church rather



*than promoting a holy and pure church. We now realize that a pure and holy church will be a church of **power** that will have a great, eternal impact on the world around us for YOUR glory! We humbly ask for YOUR grace so that YOU will be able to do this through us. We pray this in JESUS' Name, Amen."*



**CHRIST Gave HIMSELF
For The Church**

IV. It Was A Church The HOLY SPIRIT Moved In Regularly

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST, and began to speak with other tongues, as the SPIRIT gave them utterance."

Acts 2:1-4



**The Descent Of The HOLY
SPIRIT**

Stop and meditate for a moment on what made the first century Church so influential in its community. Why did GOD so clearly bless it and use it for HIS glory? Why was the **power of GOD** so evident in and through it?

The answer is very clear as one studies the history of that Church throughout the book of Acts. It was a Church the HOLY SPIRIT moved in and through on a regular basis!

The Scripture above is often referred to as the beginning of the Church. Notice the HOLY SPIRIT's unique and prominent role.

There they were, that small band of believers, waiting for the promised “COMFORTER... *the SPIRIT of TRUTH...*”, WHOM JESUS said would come to help them be witnesses for HIM (see John 15:26-27). It was then that HE “*filled*” them, and “...*gave them utterance*” to be a vocal church of **power** for the LORD’s glory.



JESUS Sending Forth The Apostles

O how our local churches in America today need this same filling of the HOLY SPIRIT. So often we seek to do the work of the LORD and the church in our own flesh and strength, instead of waiting for the SPIRIT to fill us and empower us. No wonder we do not witness the same moving of the SPIRIT as those first century CHRISTians did!

Following are several other Scriptures from the book of Acts that illustrate the powerful moving of the HOLY SPIRIT in and through that first century Church. As we study each one, we will give a brief commentary and then make application to our local churches today.

A. Acts 4:31, 33

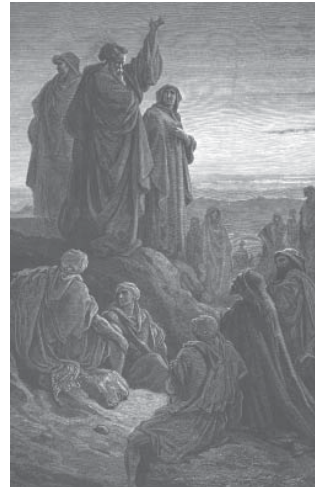
“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, and they spake the Word of GOD with boldness. And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the LORD JESUS, and great grace was upon them all.”

The Apostles have just been told by the Jewish leaders that they must cease to teach in the Name of JESUS (see v. 18). The Apostles then report to the other Jerusalem CHRISTians of this persecution (see v. 23). It is then that they all pray, asking the LORD to give them boldness to continue to speak HIS Word, and to continue to miraculously heal the sick through them (see vv. 24-30). The LORD then answers their

prayer in this mighty and powerful way recorded above, by literally shaking the place they have gathered in, filling them with HIS SPIRIT to speak HIS Word “*with boldness*”, and giving them “... *great power ... and great grace...*” to be witnesses for HIM.

Application:

The LORD still desires to manifest HIMSELF through our local churches today. Perhaps not in the same ways described above, but HE will fill us with HIS SPIRIT and enable us to make an impact in our communities for HIM, if we cry out in true humility and sincerity!



The Apostles Preaching The Gospel

B. Acts 8:29

“Then the SPIRIT said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.”

Philip is one of the early first century evangelists. He has had a successful ministry in the city of Samaria (see vv. 5-13), and now the LORD leads him into the desert area of Gaza (see v. 26). As he is there, an authority from the country of Ethiopia



Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

is traveling through, “... *sitting in his chariot ...*” and reading from the book of Isaiah (see vv. 27-28). It is then that the HOLY SPIRIT literally speaks to Philip to go and minister CHRIST unto him (see vv. 29-35). In verses 36-38, we see the wonderful result of that ministry

Application:

The LORD still greatly desires to “speak” to our local churches and their individual saints today. However, we are so often guilty of not listening. We are too busy with our programs and own agendas that we cannot hear HIM when HE tries to guide, instruct and lead us. If we do learn to discern HIS “voice” and HIS leading, we too will begin to see HIM work in powerful ways that we never have imagined!



Peter The Apostle

C. Acts 10:44-45

“While Peter yet spake those words, the HOLY SPIRIT fell on all them which heard the Word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.”

The Apostle Peter had a powerful, first century ministry, especially to the nation of Israel. But now GOD sends him to minister to the Gentiles (see vv.1-22). Peter immediately obeys, and preaches the Gospel to Cornelius and his household (see vv. 34-43). As recorded above, the HOLY SPIRIT moves in a wonderful way...even while Peter is preaching.



Many Of Our Churches Have Become Entertainment Centers

Application:

The Word of GOD is just as powerful today as it was in Peter’s day. Many of our local churches tend to depart from sharing it. Rather, the emphasis is placed upon the music, drama or entertainment of the people. Social programs, building programs, etc. take priority over preaching the Scriptures. We must return to preaching GOD’s Word, if we hope to

experience the real moving of the HOLY SPIRIT in our churches!

D. Acts 13: 2, 4a

“As they ministered to the LORD and fasted, the HOLY SPIRIT said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. So they, being sent forth by the HOLY SPIRIT...”

This is the story of two prominent, first century Church missionaries, Barnabas and Saul. It’s the story of their “call” and their going “forth” to minister. Notice the important role of the HOLY SPIRIT in this process. HE both separates and sends them out. One can study the rest of the book of Acts, and discover the powerful ministry both of these men had in spreading the Gospel of the LORD JESUS CHRIST throughout their first century world.

Application:

Our local churches today need their different spiritual leaders. Pastors, elders, teachers, missionaries, etc. We too need the HOLY SPIRIT to “separate” and send them “forth”. If we allow HIM to do this, they will also have a powerful impact on their communities around them!

E. Acts 16:6-7

“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the HOLY SPIRIT to preach the Word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the SPIRIT suffered them not.”

The Scripture above is the record of one of the Apostle Paul’s missionary journeys. As this Scripture asserts, Paul and his party, “...were forbidden of the HOLY SPIRIT to preach the Word in Asia...(and) Bithynia...” They are sensitive to the SPIRIT’s leading here, and instead take the Gospel into Europe (study the rest of the book of Acts). They of course have a very productive ministry there!

Application:

The LORD desires to guide HIS church in these days, just as HE did in Paul's. However, our local churches today tend to implement their own plans, then ask GOD to bless

them. This is the opposite of GOD's way. Instead, we need to humbly and diligently discern what the LORD wants to do, then work with HIM. Just as with Paul and the first century Church, HE has given us HIS HOLY SPIRIT to help us!



We Need To Humbly Seek GOD's Will

A Prayer Of Commitment For Our Church

*"Dear Heavenly FATHER, we thank YOU for YOUR Word and the record within it of how YOUR HOLY SPIRIT moved regularly through the first century Church. Please forgive us LORD if we have hindered HIM from moving within our church. We have learned that if we allow YOUR HOLY SPIRIT to move in and through our church, our church will be a church of **power** that will bring YOU glory and expand YOUR kingdom within our community. Please give us YOUR grace so that YOU will be able to accomplish this through us. In the Name of JESUS, Amen."*



V. It Was A Church Burdened To Preach The Gospel To The Lost

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words...it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the Name of the LORD, shall be saved. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even ad many as the LORD our GOD shall call.” Acts 2:14, 21, 39



The Apostles Preaching The Gospel

Here we have the very first sermon preached by the “infant,” first century Church. Notice one main theme was the need for the people to “repent” and be saved (see v. 38). We see the wonderful result of this powerful sermon, as Scripture records, *“Then they that gladly received (Peter’s) word, were baptized, and the same day there were added unto (the Church) about three thousand souls.”* (v. 41)

We in our local churches today, often neglect to be concerned with a lost and dying world around us. Yes, we are able to care for the saints, to seek to nurture and disciple them all we can, but not to the point where many of our churches are today. They become so “introverted”, they have no burden and zeal to reach out to the lost. **We must never forget that the local church that is not reaching out to the lost is a church that is “dying” or “already dead”!**

We can study the New Testament and learn even more how the first century Church emphasized this important aspect of the ministry. First of all, by looking at their teachings; then secondly, by observing their lifestyles...

A. Teachings From The New Testament Emphasizing The Need To Reach The Lost

1. The LORD JESUS CHRIST

“But ye shall receive power, after that the HOLY SPIRIT is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto ME both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8



“...and ye shall be witnesses unto ME...”

Notice that this was CHRIST’s very last earthly commission to the leaders of the first century Church. This same commission is for our local churches today!

2. The Apostle Paul

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of GOD, I speak this to your shame.”

I Corinthians 15:34

“For from you sounded out the Word of the LORD not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to GOD-ward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything.

I Thessalonians 1:8

Two local first century Churches, the one in Thessalonica, Paul commend for spreading “...the Word of the LORD...” The other in Corinth, Paul rebukes because the lost living around them “...have not the knowledge of GOD...” May our local churches today seek to emulate the church in Thessalonica, rather than the one in Corinth.



St. Paul Preaching To The Thessalonians

3. The Apostle Peter

“But sanctify the LORD GOD in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” I Peter 3:15

Here Peter admonishes us to always be available to share “...the hope...” of salvation through the LORD JESUS CHRIST with “...every man...”. Are we willing to obey this command today?

B. Lifestyles From The New Testament Emphasizing The Need To Reach The Lost

1. The Apostle Peter

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the LORD.” Acts 3:19

This was Peter’s second recorded sermon to the unbelieving Jews.

2. The Persecuted Saints from Jerusalem

“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.” Acts 8:4



Ancient Jerusalem

Persecution had uprooted the Jerusalem Church from her home. This was GOD’s way of spreading HIS Gospel to, “...Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (see Acts 1:8).

3. The Evangelist Philip

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached CHRIST unto them.” Acts 8:5

The Samaritans were despised by the Jews of Philip's day. Yet this did not discourage the first century Church in reaching out to them with the Gospel of salvation.

4. The Apostle Paul

"And he (Paul) spake boldly in the Name of the LORD JESUS, and disputed against the Grecians, but they went about to slay him." **Acts 9:29**

Notice from the Scriptures that Paul "...spake boldly...". This boldness was indeed a characteristic of the first century Church. Unfortunately, many of our local churches today and most of the individual CHRISTians within them are afraid to confront the lost.

A Prayer Of Commitment For Our Church

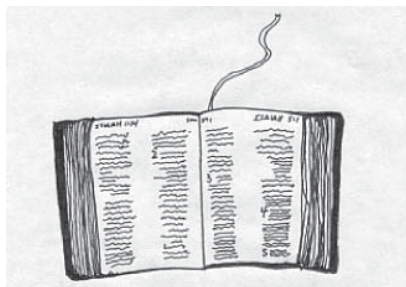
*"O LORD GOD in heaven, we praise YOU for the testimony of YOUR first century Church, and how she had a sincere burden to preach the Gospel to the lost. We have learned from the study of YOUR Word that if our church is not actively reaching out to the lost, it will eventually become weak and die. Therefore we cry out to YOU FATHER, to please give us a burden and sincere desire to share YOUR wonderful plan of salvation with the lost and dying world around us. We realize that if we allow YOU to do this through us, our church will be a church of **power**, used by YOU to bring YOU glory and enlarge YOUR kingdom within our community. We pray this in the Name of our LORD and SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST, Amen."*



VI. It Was A Church Committed To GOD's Word

"And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine..."
Acts 2:42a

Within this brief statement of Scripture above, we find a wealth of truth that testifies of the first century Church's devotion to the Word of GOD.



"And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine..."

We discover this by defining three key words...

“continued” = to persevere strongly in something

“steadfastly” = firmly and intently

“doctrine” = teaching

The “*Apostles’ doctrine*” (i.e. - teaching), was GOD’s Word of course. Whether it was Scripture that had already been revealed (the Old Testament), or Scripture that was now being given through them (the New Testament), it was in this teaching that the early saints firmly and intently persevered in through personal study and application. This of course was a key to their **power**. GOD’s Word was a central part of their lives!

Contrast this to our present-day local churches and most of the individuals within them. Scripture is not a very important part of their lives. Rather than the Word of GOD being the most important aspect of the worship service, more and more time and attention is given to “special music”, drama presentations, liturgical dancing, “fellowship dinners”, and the whole entertainment mentality. In relationship to individual CHRISTians, most will confess that they have very little time or interest for GOD’s Word in their everyday lives. Is it any surprise that so many individual CHRISTians and so many of our local churches are spiritually weak and “sick”?!



*Many Of Our Churches Have Become
Entertainment Centers*

The Scriptures clearly declare that those Apostles who were Divinely inspired to write the New Testament, emphasized to the first century Church the great importance of learning and living out those Scriptures in their everyday lives. Following are several examples...

A. The Apostle Paul

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” II Timothy 3:16-17

Here the great Apostle instructs Timothy, a first century pastor, that because “*all Scripture*” comes from GOD, it is “*profitable*” for every area of life. Thus it helps the follower of GOD to be “*perfect*” (i.e. – complete), and equipped to do “...*all good works.*” O how our local churches today need to instruct their people these very same truths!

Paul immediately proceeds to teach Pastor Timothy further, saying...

“I charge thee therefore before GOD, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO shall judge the quick and the dead at HIS appearing and HIS kingdom, preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned into fables.”

II Timothy 4:1-4



“Pastor” Timothy

“As long as people can hear orthodoxy divorced from life, they will attend and support churches and institutions without objection. On the other hand, the man who preaches truth and applies it to the lives of his hearers will feel the nails and the thorns. He will lead a hard life, but a glorious one.”

A.W. Tozer

Notice the great importance Paul places on communicating the Word of GOD to others (i.e. – “*preach the Word*”), by using “*doctrine*” (the same word in the original Greek used in Acts 2:42a), to “...*reprove, rebuke, (and) exhort...*”

One only has to study the book of Acts to discover how the first century Church boldly and consistently proclaimed the Word of GOD to the world around them. Following are but a few illustrations...

“...and they (the CHRISTians in Jerusalem), were all filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, and they spake the Word of GOD with boldness.” Acts 4:31b

“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.” Acts 8:4

“And the Word of the LORD was published throughout all the region.” Acts 13:49

Contrast this with many of our local churches today who are afraid to proclaim certain portions of the Scriptures, (i.e. - the doctrine of the blood of CHRIST, the sinfulness of man, the need for repentance and the judgment of hell, to name a few) fearing that they will offend those attending.

In II Timothy 4:3-4, Paul warns Timothy that,

“...the time will come when they (i.e. - professing CHRISTians in local churches), will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth and shall be turned into fables.”

Sadly, these two verses describe many of our modern-day churches today!

B. The Disciple James

“But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass, for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But shoos looketh into the perfect Law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” James 1:22-25



The Disciple James

James was a significant leader in the first century Church. First, he emphasizes the need to not only “...be a hearer of the Word...”, but “...doers of the Word...” as well. Then he admonishes his readers to “...continueth therein...” That is, to be someone who regularly spending time in studying, meditating and living out the Word of GOD in their life. He then reminds us that the follower of CHRIST who does this, “...shall be blessed in his deed.”

As noted earlier, most professing CHRISTians in our modern-day churches, if they were honest, would confess to having very little time for GOD’s Word. Is it any surprise that they are spiritually and emotionally weak...and thus our local churches are weak as well?!



“And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine...”

C. The Apostle Peter

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby...”

I Peter 2:1-2

Apparently, Peter is writing to recent converts to the LORD JESUS CHRIST because he refers to them “...*as newborn babes...*” Instead of continuing on in their old sinful lifestyles of “...*malice...guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and... evil speakings...*”, he admonishes them to “...*desire the sincere milk of the Word...*”

“***desire***” (Greek-epipotheo) = an earnest, intense longing for

CHRISTians within our local churches today desperately need the HOLY SPIRIT to move in their hearts and give them “an earnest (and) intense longing for” the Word of GOD. What a mighty display of GOD’s **power** we would then experience in our day!

D. The Apostle John

“And hereby we do know that we know HIM, if we keep HIS Commandments. He that saith, I know HIM, and keepeth not HIS Commandments, is a liar and the Truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth HIS Word, in him verily is the love of GOD perfected, hereby know we that we are in HIM.” I John 2:3-5

Here John clearly makes the connection to these first century followers of JESUS CHRIST, that if they profess to “*know*” CHRIST personally, they will prove this relationship by obedience to “...*HIS Commandments.*” John and these first century CHRISTians realized that they could not obey “...*HIS Commandments*” unless they spent time studying, “...*HIS Word...*” The wonderful result of all this was that “... *in* (them) *verily* (was) *the love of GOD perfected* (i.e. - completed) ...”

Obedience to CHRIST and “...*HIS Commandments...*” is not taught as much as it should be in our local churches. We should not be surprised then that so many of the saints today do not really “*know*” the LORD in a personal, intimate way!

A Prayer Of Commitment For Our Church

*“Precious FATHER in heaven, we humble ourselves before YOU, acknowledging our sin of neglecting the study and application of YOUR Word. We praise YOU for giving us the example of the first century Church, and their commitment to it. We sincerely ask YOU to give us a real hunger and desire to not only spend time in YOUR Word on a daily basis, but to also apply it to our lives by actively living it out through obedience. We have learned that as we allow YOU to develop this within us, our church will be a church of **power** and impact to the community around us. In the NAME of JESUS CHRIST, Amen.”*



VII. It Was A Church That Enjoyed True Fellowship

“And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’...fellowship...”
Acts 2:42b

Here we have another brief statement from Scripture, and again, much insight into what helped the first century Church to possess such **power**.

“fellowship” = a sharing in common

As one studies the first century Church in the book of Acts, it is discovered that this “sharing in common” was indeed a very important part of her life. Notice from the short passage in Acts 2:42-47, seven aspects of this “*fellowship*” that they enjoyed...

A. They Enjoyed Studying
GOD’s Word Together



**Early CHRISTians In Rome
Listening To A Reading Of The
Epistle Of Paul**

“And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine...” (v. 42a)

B. They Enjoyed Remembering The LORD's Supper Together

"And they continued steadfastly in (the)...breaking of bread..."
(v. 42c)

C. They Enjoyed Praying Together

"And they continued steadfastly...in prayers..." **(v. 42d)**

D. They Enjoyed Sharing Possessions Together

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." (vv. 44-45) See also Acts 4:32-35



The Macedonians Presenting Gifts To Paul

E. They Enjoyed Worshipping GOD Together

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple...praising GOD..." **(vv. 46a, 47a)**

F. They Enjoyed Eating Meals Together

"And they, continuing daily...breaking bread from house to house, did eat their food with gladness..." **(v.46)**

G. They Enjoyed Seeking Unity Together

"And they, continuing daily with one accord...and singleness of heart..." **(v.46) See also 4:32a**

Notice also from these verses, four wonderful results that these CHRISTians experienced because of this "fellowship"...

1. They Experienced Genuine Terror

“And fear came upon every soul...” (v. 43a)

“fear” (Greek-phobos) = dread, terror

It is amazing that as these first century CHRISTians enjoyed this “*fellowship*” together, a real “dread” and “terror” of GOD was realized. Apparently, they knew that the moving of GOD they were experiencing was genuine!

2. They Experienced Genuine Miracles

“...and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles.”

Acts 2:43b

We of course hear so much today about so called “miracles” within professing CHRISTianity. Physical “healings” and “deliverances” from demons to name but two. There is no doubt that some of these are genuine, but so many are insignificant and difficult to document and prove (i.e. - migraine headaches, sore backs, arthritis, etc.).



Peter Healing The Lam Man

But study the book of Acts, and discover “...*many wonders and signs...*” that were genuinely powerful and Divine. Following are but a few...

a. The healing of the “...*man lame from his mother’s womb...*”

Acts 3:1-9

b. The raising from the dead of “...*a certain disciple named Tabitha...*” **Acts 9:36-41**

c. The deliverance of Peter from prison. **Acts 12:5-16**

3. They Experienced Genuine Acceptance

“...and having favour with all the people.” Acts 2:47a

What a testimony to the LORD moving within the early Church, and her influence amongst the surrounding community, that “...all the people” would hold her in such high esteem!

4. They Experienced Genuine Conversions

“And the LORD added to the Church daily such as should be saved.” Acts 2:47b

It is significant that the Scriptures record here that “...the LORD added to the Church daily such as should be saved.” This means that these were genuine conversions, and that this was genuine Church growth.

Contrast these truths with our local churches today. Much of what we call “church growth” and “professing CHRISTianity” is simply people moving from one church to another and false professions of salvation.



The Apostles Preaching The Gospel

We live in a society today that encourages individualism and a “looking out for oneself”.

Unfortunately, this same thinking has invaded many of our local churches today. Because of this, we as followers of the LORD JESUS CHRIST are missing out on many of the rich benefits that accompany true “*fellowship*”.

A Prayer Of Commitment For Our Church

*“Dear Heavenly FATHER, we have learned from the study of YOUR Word, that it is very important that we as a local church regularly practice a Biblical “fellowship” together. We have learned that as we do, we will experience a Divine and dynamic **power** that will benefit us, and bring YOU the glory YOU deserve. So once again, we cry out to YOU to please help us in carrying out this aspect of the ministry. We ask for these things in the Name of our LORD and SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST, Amen.”*



VIII. It Was A Church Devoted To Prayer

“And they continued steadfastly...in prayers.” Acts 2:42c

Prayer is acknowledging one’s need for the LORD. Herein lies another testimony as to why these first century believers experienced such **power** in their midst. They were a people dedicated to acknowledging their need for the LORD by spending time in prayer.

Remember two word studies we conducted earlier in our study...

“continued” = to persevere strongly in something

“steadfastly” = firmly and intently

For the first century Church, prayer was not some religious routine or ministry afterthought, but was obviously a discipline that was a central part of their corporate life. It was a part of their ministry that they “firmly and intently persevered strongly in”.

We know that this was so because of two reasons. First of all by studying their teachings, then secondly by observing their lifestyles...

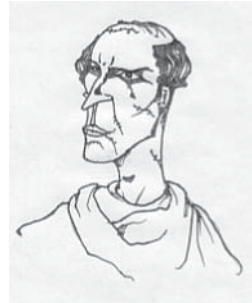
A. Teachings From The New Testament Emphasizing The Need To Pray

1. The Apostle Paul

“Praying always with all prayer and supplications in the SPIRIT, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplications...” **Ephesians 6:18a**

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.” **Colossians 4:2**

“Pray without ceasing.” **I Thessalonians 5:17**



Paul The Apostle

With the definitions of “*continued*” and “*steadfastly*” from Acts 2:42 in our thinking, we see how Paul emphasizes to those first century CHRISTians the importance of “*Praying always...*”; “*... watching...with all perseverance...*”; to “*Continue in prayer...*”; and “*Pray without ceasing.*”

Oh how our local churches today need to heed these same admonitions! Unfortunately, this is a discipline greatly lacking in modern CHRISTianity. Indeed, this is a discipline very few followers of JESUS CHRIST and even fewer local churches enter into!

All one has to do to witness this is attend the typical “mid-week prayer meeting”. Notice that the actual prayer time is relatively brief (15-30 minutes), and the number of people participating is almost always a very small percentage of the total church body. If a local church was to call for a time of both prayer and fasting, you would see the percentage drop even further. But if that same local church was to have a “potluck dinner”, you could expect almost 100 percent attendance!

2. The Disciple James

“Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the LORD, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the LORD shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess our faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:13-16



The Disciple James

In this Scripture above, James teaches about prayer and its relationship to the healing of the saints. It is evident from this passage, that James and his fellow first century believers considered prayer and the, “...anointing...with oil in the Name of the LORD...” to be a very important part of their corporate ministry. Prayer was not an option to them, but essential, even for their physical well-being. But even beyond that, they knew the great **power** of, “...effectual fervent prayer...” coming from, “...a righteous man...” would bring about tremendous results!

Of course most of our local churches today do not realize that this same **power** through prayer is at their “disposal”; not only for physical healing, but for financial provision, discerning GOD’s will, etc. Instead, if we are ill, the first thing we do is call the doctor. If we need money, we descend into bondage through borrowing money from the bank. If we are facing a major decision in our life, we consult everyone but the LORD through HIS Word and prayer. No wonder our churches are in such trouble!

3. The Apostle Peter

“But the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” I Peter 4:7

“sober” = to think clearly

“watch” = to be alert

Here the Apostle Peter exhorts his first century readers “to think clearly” and “to be alert” through prayer, because “...the end of all things...” is near.

This same admonition is for us today of course, and O how we need to obey it! Our local churches today seem to be dull of reasoning and spiritually “asleep”. Being more devoted to sincere, HOLY SPIRIT-led prayer will certainly change this. We need to remember that a local church will take on the “personality” and spirituality of its leadership, especially concerning this subject of prayer. If the church leadership encourages and practices this discipline of prayer, so too will the congregation. If the church leadership does not, neither will their people.



“...be ye therefore sober, watch unto prayer.”

B. Lifestyles From The New Testament Emphasizing The Need To Pray

1. The One Hundred And Twenty Disciples

“And in those days, Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty). Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that (JESUS) was taken from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of HIS resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, THOU, LORD, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two THOU has chosen. And they gave forth their lots an the lot ell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.” Acts 1:15, 22-24,26



**Peter The Apostle
Believed In Prayer**

We find in this Scripture above, a very important decision that the infant Church was faced with...who would replace the departed disciple Judas? What was the very first thing they did to discern the will of GOD? They prayed!

O how our local churches need to follow this example! How tragic that we so often resort to fleshly means to try to determine GOD's will, and then perhaps as a last resort, consider prayer.



The Apostles Preaching The Gospel

2. The Saints In Jerusalem

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, and they spake the Word of GOD with boldness.” Acts 4:31

The context here of course, is the Church in Jerusalem has just experienced her first persecution. The Jewish leaders have imprisoned the Apostles Peter and John for healing and preaching in the Name of CHRIST (see vv. 1-4), and now have threatened them to cease this ministry (see vv. 13-22). Upon being freed, the two Apostles immediately return to their fellow CHRISTians to report what has happened (see v. 23). What was the very first thing they did in response to this? They prayed (see vv. 24-30)! GOD then shows how much HE appreciates their prayer by answering them in three very powerful ways. First, *“...the place was shaken where they were assembled together...”* Secondly, *“...they were all filled with the HOLY SPIRIT...”* Thirdly, *“...they spake the Word of GOD with boldness.”*

We can be assured the LORD desires to manifest HIMSELF in supernatural ways in our churches as well. And indeed HE will, but we must also take care of our responsibilities too. One of those responsibilities is to pray!

3. The Twelve Apostles

“Then the twelve (Apostles) called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of GOD, and serve tables. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word.” Acts 6:2,4

The first century Church is growing, and with it, her many responsibilities. One such responsibility is the care of the widows (see v. 1). The question arises, who will minister to them? It is decided



We Need To Spend More Time In Prayer

that GODly men, other than the Apostles should be appointed “...over this business” (see v. 3). The Apostles instead would, “...give (themselves) continually to prayer...” The young Church realized that in order for her to truly be a success, her leaders had to spend much time in prayer!

How very different it is in our local churches today. Sadly, so very few of our spiritual leaders spend any significant time in prayer. They have time for the church softball team, fellowship dinners, pastor conferences, etc., but very little time to pray. Is it any surprise that our local churches are so spiritually weak? If our churches hope to experience any genuine, eternal success in our day, our leaders must spend much time in prayer!

4. The Church Leaders in Antioch

“As they ministered to the LORD, and fasted, the HOLY SPIRIT said, Separate ME Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” Acts 13:2-3

Here Barnabas and Saul are about to embark on their first missionary journey together. The little church in Antioch realizes how important this new ministry is, so they take the

time to fast and pray before sending them forth. Read and study further in the book of Acts to see how the LORD uses these two men in a powerful way to expand HIS kingdom abroad.



Paul Preaching At Antioch

How very unusual it is to see our local churches of today following this Biblical pattern of prayer and fasting. As noted earlier, prayer in itself is rare enough, but prayer with fasting is almost unheard of. Yet, if we desire to know GOD's will and leading as the first century Church did, and if we desire to make a significant impact in the communities around us, we must return to practicing these all important spiritual disciplines!

A Prayer Of Commitment For Our Church

*“Our Precious Heavenly FATHER, we rejoice because of the witness and example of YOUR saints from the first century, and how they were devoted to prayer. We have learned that when we pray, we are acknowledging that we need YOU, and O how we need YOU in these days that we live. Please forgive us for neglecting this important part of the ministry, and help us to be more committed to this discipline. We realize that if we will practice this discipline from sincere hearts, we will witness a whole new moving of YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, and a whole new **power** in our church that will bring YOU glory and expand YOUR Kingdom within our community. We pray this in the Name of our LORD and SAVIOR, JEUS CHRIST, Amen.”*



IX. It Was A Church That Ministered In The Name Of JESUS CHRIST

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple, who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee, in the Name of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he leaping up stood, and walked...” Acts 3:1-3, 6, 8a



First Century Temple In Jerusalem

This is the initial, supernatural miracle administered by the first century Church. This was definitely Divine, for who could heal a, “...man lame from his mother’s womb...” instantly, but the LORD alone? This is the **power** of JESUS’ Name. The first century Church knew this **power** and ministered regularly with it.

To minister, “...in the Name of JESUS CHRIST...”, means to minister with and through HIS **power**, not our own. It means to minister with and through HIS authority, not ours. When it comes to confronting the powerful forces of darkness and evil, when it comes to ministering to a lost and dying humanity, and when it comes to serving the saints of the local church, we have no power or authority in and through ourselves.

This too is another problem in our local churches today. WE too often rely on our own weak and feeble efforts to minister to others. We design and implement our programs, we “market” our churches like businesses and we use the principles of the world to help them “grow”. Although our churches appear outwardly “successful”, there is no real **power** within. If we desire to see the same supernatural, Divine **power** that the first century Church possessed and displayed, we must rely upon and implement the same “source” of that **power**, “...the Name of JESUS CHRIST”!

As we give further time and space to this subject, we will first discover that this was a teaching commonly taught by the New Testament writers of Scripture. Secondly, we will learn of more examples of the first century saints practicing this principle.

A. Teachings From The New Testament Emphasizing The Need To Minister In The Name Of JESUS CHRIST

1. The LORD JESUS CHRIST

“For where two or three are gathered together in MY Name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Matthew 18:20

Here JESUS HIMSELF instructs us concerning the **power** of ministering in HIS Name. HE simply teaches us that if we will meet with others, (whether in a formal or informal setting), through HIS authority HE will meet with us. Sadly, in many of our local churches today, JESUS CHRIST is not present. Instead, we are more concerned with programs that keep people entertained, and expensive building structures that cause us to be slaves to the banks because of indebtedness to them.

2. The Apostle Paul

*“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the LORD JESUS...” **Colossians 3:17a***

The great Apostle makes it very clear here, every word we speak and every action we take, we are to submit to HIS authority and do so through HIS power.



It Is Only Through “...the Name of JESUS CHRIST” That Our Churches Will Have Power!



Many Of Our Local Churches Are Enslaved To Banks Through Indebtedness

Not so in our local churches today. We tend to do things contrary to the above. We first devise our programs and build our buildings, then we ask GOD to bless them; instead of relying on HIS **power** and ministering through HIS authority.

3. The Disciple James

“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the LORD.” James 5:14

Is there **power**, “...in the Name of the LORD” to bring healing to the saint who is ill? According to this Scripture there is. When prayer is made for the sick in this way, healing is Divinely given because we ask for it through the authority and **power** of JESUS CHRIST.

It is extremely rare in our day to see this principle practiced in our churches. Instead, CHRISTians rely on doctors and medicine. Because of this, large numbers of our people are in continuous ill-health, large medical bills are incurred, and the LORD is robbed of receiving great glory through HIS miraculous healing power.

B. Lifestyles From The New Testament Emphasizing The Need To Minister In The Name Of JESUS CHRIST

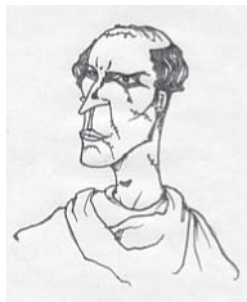
2. The Apostle Peter

“And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, JESUS CHRIST maketh thee whole, arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.” Acts 9:32-34

This is just one example of Peter healing the sick through the Name of the LORD. For other instances, study Acts 3:1-7; 5:15-16; and 9:36-41.

2. The Apostle Paul

“And (Paul) was with (the other Apostles) coming in and going out of Jerusalem. And (Paul) spake boldly in the Name of the LORD JESUS, and disputed against the Grecians, but they went about to slay him...” Acts 9:28-29.



***The Apostle Paul Knew
The Power Of The
Name Of JESUS***

Paul has not been a CHRISTian for very long and already he is boldly proclaiming CHRIST in Jerusalem. What gave him this Divine authority and **power**? He, “...spake in the Name of the LORD JESUS...”!

“And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying, the same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the MOST HIGH GOD, which show unto us the way of salvation. And this she did many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the Name of JESUS CHRIST to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.” Acts 16:16-18

Paul experienced much opposition almost everywhere he ministered. Many times it was openly demonic. Yet the demons had to flee as he would, “...command (them) in the Name of JESUS CHRIST...” !

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, and he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people,



Paul Ministering In Corinth

that they should believe on HIM which should come after him, that is, on CHRIST JESUS. When they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the LORD JESUS.” Acts 19:1, 3-5

John the Baptist’s disciples had been baptized, but only concerning, “...*John’s baptism.*” But now they needed a Divine authority and **power**, so Paul baptized them, “...*in the Name of the LORD JESUS.*”

Do we in our local churches today, desire this same Divine authority that the first century Church ministered under? Do we long for the same supernatural **power** to be displayed in and through our local churches today? If the answers are indeed “Yes” to these two all-important questions, we must then remember that they will only be realities if we minister, “...*in the Name of JESUS CHRIST*”!

“...that ye may know what is the hope of (CHRIST’s) calling, and what the riches of the glory of HIS inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of HIS power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of HIS mighty power, which HE wrought in CHRIST, when HE raise HIM from the dead, and set HIM at HIS own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under HIS feet, and gave HIM to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is HIS body, the fullness of HIM that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:18b-23



“...that we may know...the exceeding greatness of HIS power...”

A Prayer Of Commitment For Our Church

*“Our Precious Heavenly FATHER, we thank YOU once again for YOUR Word. We praise YOU for using it to instruct us concerning the importance of ministering in the Name of JESUS CHRIST. We humbly acknowledge that we have not been serving under the authority and **power** of HIS Name, but attempting to do so in and through ourselves. Because of this, we cry out to YOU to forgive us. We now ask YOU to help us to always put aside our own fleshly, human efforts of ministry and service, but instead to always minister and serve with and through the might authority and **power** of JESUS’ Name. We now realize, that as we follow this instruction, YOU will use us to advance YOUR glory and YOUR Kingdom within our community. In JESUS Name, Amen.”*



X. It Was A Church Willing To Suffer Persecution

“And as they (the Apostles Peter and John), spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through JESUS the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day, for it was now eventide.” Acts 4:1-3

It is within the Scripture above, that we have the record of the infant Church’s first persecution. We will learn later that this would be the first of many.

This concept is so foreign to our local churches in America today of course, We have enjoyed living and ministering in peace and prosperity for so long, we have accepted the notion that persecution could never happen to us. Yet how can we think this way? If the first century Church was required by GOD to experience persecution, why not our local churches today? If this was such a common part of those early CHRISTian’s lives, why not the same for us?



Martyrdom Of Stephen

As we now study GOD's Word in more detail, we will first of all learn of several more instances of the first century Church's persecutions. May we be greatly encouraged by her GODly responses. Secondly, we will study several teachings from the writers of New Testament Scripture, and how they taught their first century readers (but also us today), the need to not only prepare for righteous persecution...but indeed expect it! May the LORD help us to respond accordingly.

A. Lifestyles From The New Testament Revealing Their Persecution Experiences

1. The Twelve Apostles

"...and when they (the Jewish religious leaders), had called the Apostles, and beaten them, they commanded them that they should not speak in the Name of JESUS, and let them go." Acts 5:40



The Burning Of CHRISTian Martyrs In Rome

GOD has been accomplishing, "...many signs and wonders..." through the Apostles (see vv. 12-16). Because of this, the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem have the Apostles arrested (see vv. 17-18). However, the LORD supernaturally delivers them (see v. 19), and commands them to continue to preach HIS Word (see vv. 20-21). Again the Jewish leaders seek to stop their ministry (see vv. 22-28). It is then that the Apostles wax bold and proclaim, "*We ought to obey GOD rather than men*" (see v. 29). It is this great courage on behalf of the Apostles that eventually brings about them being "*beaten*" and threatened in verse 40. Notice two wonderful results because of this persecution...

- The Apostles leave their persecutors, "*...rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for (CHRIST's) Name.*" (see v.41)

- “...daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach JESUS CHRIST.” (see v. 42)

Would we who consider ourselves followers of the LORD JESUS CHRIST display such fearless boldness in the face of persecution today? Even more so, would we be able to actually rejoice because of that persecution?

2. The Deacon Stephen

“When they (the Jewish religious leaders) heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon GOD, and saying, LORD JESUS, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, LORD, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” Acts 7:54, 59-60



Martyrdom Of Stephen

This of course is the account of the infant Church’s first martyr (there would be many, many others!).

Stephen preaches to the Jewish leaders, and his theme is their very own unbelief. (see vv. 2-53). His tremendous boldness causes his murderers to be, “...cut to the heart...” with conviction, which leads them to stone him to death in verse 59. As he dies, he responds as the LORD JESUS CHRIST responded when HE was crucified ... he actually prays for his killers to be forgiven!

How would we respond today if we were faced with such intense opposition for the cause of CHRIST? Would we be willing to sacrifice our very life for HIS glory?

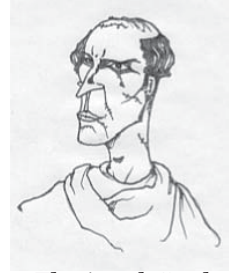
3. The Apostle Paul

“And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples

stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the Gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and Iconium, and Antioch...”

Acts 14:19-21

As we study the life of the early Church, we discover that the Apostle Paul has a prominent role. We learn of his self-sacrifice, his boldness, and his zeal for the LORD. He also knew great persecution.



The Apostle Paul

The Scripture above is just one instance where he actually is martyred...but God raises him up from the dead. This experience does not discourage him however, but rather only strengthens his resolve to bring the Gospel to the unbelieving world!

Are we willing to exhibit such self-sacrifice, such boldness and such zeal? Are we willing to experience great persecution? If we were so privileged, would we allow that very persecution to strengthen our commitment to the LORD?

B. Teachings From The New Testament Revealing Our Need To Expect Persecution

1. The Apostle Paul

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of CHRIST, not only to believe on HIM, but also to suffer for HIS sake.”

Philippians 1:29

Here Paul asserts that suffering for CHRIST is a gift to be received, just like salvation. This implies that persecution is indeed a special privilege for the followers of the LORD JESUS CHRIST!

“Yea, and all that will live GODly in CHRIST JESUS shall suffer persecution.” **II Timothy 3:12**

There is no doubt left here by Paul. He clearly exclaims that persecution shall come to every saint, "...that will live *GODly* in *CHRIST JESUS*..."!



Persecution Can And Will Arise Even In America!

2. The Apostle Peter

"For even hereunto were ye called, because CHRIST also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow HIS steps.

I Peter 2:21

Remember that JESUS CHRIST is our "example" in every area of life, so too concerning suffering and persecution. HE of course, suffered tremendously...even giving HIS life. Here we are commanded to, "...follow HIS steps."



"And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled..."

I Peter 3:13-14

Peter Knew What It Was Like To Suffer For CHRIST.

The Apostle Peter knew what he was talking about concerning suffering persecution. He was one who experienced it often himself, and he tells us here that if we have this same privilege, we can actually be "happy" because of it!

We cannot be assured that we will someday be privileged to experience the same intense and extreme type of persecution that the first century Church experienced, however, we must take these Scriptures that we have studied to heart. So if we indeed are called to suffer for the LORD's Name and glory, we will be prepared and equipped.

A Prayer Of Commitment For Our Church

*“O LORD GOD I heaven, we praise YOU for the testimony of YOUR first century Church and the encouragement they are to us for being so willing to suffer righteous persecution for YOUR glory. We now see that this was another characteristic that made her such a powerful influence in the world around her. LORD, we acknowledge that we have been a church unwilling and even fearful of experiencing real persecution ourselves. Thus we cry out to YOU, asking YOU to give us a heart willing to suffer for YOUR Name...even to die for YOUR glory, if YOU indeed call us to do so. We realize that as YOU give us this kind of heart, our church will have a whole new **power** to expand YOUR kingdom within our community. We pray this in the Name of our LORD and SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST, Amen.”*



Conclusion

We began this study by asking two very important questions concerning the first century Church. First of all, what made her such a Church of **power**? Then secondly, how could she have such an eternal impact on the society of her day? The answers to these questions have been answered by discovering these ten Scripture principles that these first century followers of CHRIST implemented in their individual and corporate ministries.

We also asked a third important question. How we in our local churches today could apply these same principles, and thus see that same great supernatural and Divine **power** work in, through, and about us, to have that same eternal impact on our society today? The answer of course, as we have learned, is to simply follow these above stated principles by the grace and through the SPIRIT of GOD.

MAY WE INDEED ALLOW HIM TO DO SO!

“Now unto HIM that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto HIM be glory in the church by JESUS CHRIST throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” **Ephesians 3:20-21**

**CHAPTER 7 -
SIXTEEN CHARACTERISTICS AND
REQUIREMENTS OF A GODLY
SPIRITUAL LEADER**

SIXTEEN CHARACTERISTICS AND REQUIREMENTS OF A GODLY SPIRITUAL LEADER

Introduction

The lists are long and detailed in Scripture containing the characteristics and requirements of a GODly spiritual leader. They are contained primarily in two sections . . . I Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:6-9. It is in these two sections that they are called “*bishops, elders, (and)deacons.*” In this study we will combine them under one title . . . “spiritual leaders”.

Before we study the positive qualities of a spiritual leader, it would be profitable to learn and understand how a spiritual leader is not to minister. There is a classic passage of Scripture from the Old Testament which describes in detail how the spiritual leaders of GOD’s people had fallen far away from the GODly character that was required of them. The passage is Jeremiah 23.

1. They destroyed and scattered GOD’s people. (v.1)
2. They failed to care for GOD’s people. (v.2)
3. They abused their authority over GOD’s people. (v.10)
4. They lived lives of wickedness. (v.11)
5. They lived lives of foolishness and led GOD’s people astray. (v.13)
6. They lived lives of immorality. (v.14a)
7. They lived lives of deceit. (vv.14b,25-26)

8. They encouraged GOD's people to do wickedness. (vv.14c,17)
9. They taught GOD's people their ways instead of the LORD's (vv.16,21,27-32)
10. They perverted (i.e. - changed), GOD's Word. (v.36)

It is a very serious thing for a spiritual leader to abuse his spiritual calling and office! This is evidenced by the following judgement pronounced by the LORD upon these wicked leaders . . .

"Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence. And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten."

Jeremiah 23:39-40

In contrast to the above, the Apostle Paul lists in I Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:6-9 the positive characteristics and qualifications of the man of GOD who will represent the LORD JESUS CHRIST and lead HIS body which is HIS church. But before he begins to list these, he uses a very significant word to introduce each one. The word is "*must*". W.E. Vine in his book, "Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words" notes that this could be translated "it is necessary". He then lists a number of synonyms . . . "meet, need, needful, ought (and) should."

Scripture is very clear here. In order for a man to qualify as a spiritual leader within a local church or ministry, he "*must*" meet all of the qualifications listed in these two passages, not just some or most of them! How wrong and tragic it is for a local church or ministry to appoint men to this holy leadership because of their wealth, popularity, or success in business, and not consider how far they fall short in these Scriptural qualifications! How wrong and tragic it is for a local church or ministry to feel they must have a certain number of elders or deacons (i.e. - 10,12,15, etc.), and seek to keep those positions filled no matter how far they fall short of these standards!

Within I Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:6-9, there are listed twenty-nine of these characteristics and qualities. However, because of repetition and similarity within the two passages, we have condensed our list to sixteen.

1. A GODly spiritual leader must be . . . “*blameless* . . .” I Timothy 3:2a (see also Titus 1:6a,7a,8d [“*just*”], 8e [“*holy*”])

“*blameless*” = without reproach, non-reproveable, unrebukeable. “It implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person.” (Vine)

Here at the very top of these two Scriptural lists, the Apostle Paul sums it all up as to what a spiritual leader must be in relationship to his ministry. Though it is evident no spiritual leader will be sinlessly perfect in this life, it is something he should be consistently striving for with all of his heart, soul, mind and strength. His life and ministry will be marked by consistently pure and CHRIST-like attitudes, thoughts, words and actions. But when upon occasion he does fall, he will quickly confess it and repent of it, and if his sin has affected others, he will seek to make it right with them immediately. It is then that no one (CHRISTian or non-CHRISTian), will be able to say, “That man wronged me and never tried to make it right”.

2. A GODly spiritual leader must be . . . “*the husband of one wife* . . .” I Timothy 3:2b (see also Titus 1:6b)

There is great debate within Christianity today as to just what this Scripture means. Some say this is condemning polygamy. That is, having more than one wife at the same time. Others say that this means that if a man is divorced and has remarried another woman while his former wife is still alive, he is disqualified from formal eldership and/or deaconship. Regardless of what interpretation is the correct one, following are some very important questions to ask in relationship to this . . .

- a. Can a man who is divorced and remarried be the best possible leadership example to others in his church in this area of the marital relationship?
 - b. Can a man who is divorced and remarried be the best possible counselor of others in his church in this area of the marital relationship?
Note: a man who is divorced and remarried will have a tendency to be too harsh or too lenient when counselling those having marital problems.
 - c. Can a man who is divorced and remarried be one who is fulfilling the Scriptural requirement of I Timothy 3:4-5 to its fullest?
3. A GODly spiritual leader must be . . . “*vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, . . . grave . . .*” I Timothy 3:2c,d,e; 8a (see also Titus 1:8c,8f [“*temperate*”])

The above four virtues are almost all identical in meaning and could be categorized under one word . . . self-control.

To be self-controlled means to have every thought, attitude, action and word under the control of the HOLY SPIRIT.

4. A GODly spiritual leader must be . . . “*given to hospitality . . .*” I Timothy 3:2e (see also Titus 1:8a)

The word “*hospitality*” here means “to have a love of strangers (and to be) hospitable.” (Vine)

A spiritual leader’s very nature should be one of love and kindness toward “. . . *all men*, (but) *especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*” (Galatians 6:10)

JESUS once told a parable of a man, who while on his way to Jericho, fell into the hands of thieves who robbed and assaulted him. It was two “spiritual leaders” of the day who passed by the stricken man without offering any help. Finally a Samaritan came along who showed compassion on him, “. . . *and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*” (Luke 10:34) This illustrates well the “*hospitality*” a pastor should have.

5. A GODly spiritual leader must be . . . “*apt to teach . . .*”
I Timothy 3:2g

This of course will be one of the primary and most important functions of a spiritual leader. When listing the different offices that GOD works through within the local church, Paul notes the office of “*pastor-teacher*”, seemingly implying that one who will be a spiritual leader will also be a teacher.

When giving one of HIS last instructions to one of the very first “spiritual leaders” of the Church (Peter), CHRIST three times exhorted him to, “*Feed (HIS) sheep*” (i.e. - those who would believe in HIM), John 21:15-17. This very same Peter later instructed other spiritual leaders to do likewise with their people (see I Peter 5:2).

The wise spiritual leader will not only teach his parishioners in the “classroom” setting of a church service or Sunday school class, but also using the everyday situations of life. The greatest “spiritual leader” of all time, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF, was a master at this. Many, indeed most, of HIS teachings took place in these settings. i.e. - Matthew 4:18-20; 5:1-7,29; 8:5-12,19-22; 9:1-6; etc.

Another powerful way for the spiritual leader to teach his people is not by spoken words only, but by a disciplined life. Memorizing and meditating upon GOD’s Word, prayer, fasting, witnessing, giving, etc. are but a few of the important disciplines that parishioners will learn, not just by being taught, but by learning from their GODly spiritual leader’s behavior as well. This is what Peter meant, as he was instructing other spiritual leaders, when he said, “(do not) *be lords over GOD’s heritage, but . . . examples to the flock.*” I Peter 5:3

6. A GODly spiritual leader must be . . . “*not given to wine . . .*”
I Timothy 3:3a (see also Titus 1:7d)

When GOD instructed the spiritual leaders of HIS people in Israel concerning their relationship to alcohol HE said . . .

“Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die, it shall be a statute forever throughout your generation. And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.” **Leviticus 10:9-11**

Notice from the above Scripture, that in order for a spiritual leader in Israel to properly minister to his fullest mental, emotional, and spiritual capacity, (i.e. - “ . . . *that (he) may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that (he) may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken . . .*”), he had to totally abstain from alcohol.

The Scriptures are abundant with references to the dangers of drinking wine and strong drink. See Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5; Hosea 4:11; Ephesians 5:18; I Timothy 3:3e (Where the Greek word for “*brawler*” here carries the idea of the effects of drinking alcohol).

Regardless whether you believe that “social drinking” is sanctioned in Scripture or not, remember that spiritual leaders are to be “ . . . *examples to the flock*” (I Peter 5:3b), and that the consumption of wine and strong drink can cause a fellow-CHRISTian who may be weak in this area to fall into drunkenness!

“But if thy brother be grieved with thy (drinking wine and strong drink), now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy (drinking of wine and strong drink), for whom CHRIST died. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything where by thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.”

Romans 14:15,21

7. A GODly spiritual leader must be . . . “*no striker . . . but patient, not a brawler . . .*” I Timothy 3:3b,d,e (see also Titus 1:7c [“*not soon angry*”] and 1:7e)

JESUS once instructed HIS twelve disciples (future spiritual leaders in a very real sense), that HE was sending them “... forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, (and thus to be) wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” Matthew 10:16

Any man who has been a spiritual leader for very long, will know and will have experienced the intense and hurtful pain that comes from the attacks (both verbal and physical), of others, especially from his own parishioners. Indeed, the spiritual leader must realize and accept the fact that this is going to be a regular and ongoing part of his ministry.

This is why it is so vital that the spiritual leader learn what it means to be a “*peacemaker*” (Matthew 5:9). For to be a real “*peacemaker*”, means to be one who is skilled at bringing reconciliations, not only between two warring parties, but also between his parishioners and himself.

The spiritual leader who is skilled and successful in “peacemaking”, will be one who possesses and exemplifies that fruit of the SPIRIT called “*meekness*” (Galatians 5:23).

“*Meekness*” could best be defined by Scripture itself. JESUS taught those who would follow HIM to . . .

“Love (their) enemies, bless them that curse (them), do good to them that hate (them), and pray for them which despitefully use (them), and persecute (them).” **Matthew 5:44**

HE went on to say that if we could do this, we would be “*perfect even as (our) FATHER WHICH is in heaven is perfect.*” (Matthew 5:48) One of the greatest spiritual leaders in all of church history gave us further instruction as to how to respond to those who would attack us, even those fellow-believers within the Church, and he sighted CHRIST HIMSELF as our example.

“WHO, when HE was reviled, reviled not again, when HE suffered, HE threatened not, but committed HIMSELF to HIM that judgeth righteously.” **I Peter 2:23**

He later gave further amplification concerning this when he wrote,

“Finally . . . love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” I Peter 3:8a,9

The Scriptures tell us of Moses, that Old Testament “spiritual leader” of many years ago, who was the meekest man that ever lived (see Numbers 12:3). When you study the way he consistently responded to his “parishioners” in the face of their many attacks upon him, you can see why the Scriptures testify of this. Read and study Numbers 12:1-13; 14:1-5; 16:1-4.

8. A GODly spiritual leader must . . . *“not (be) greedy of filthy lucre . . .”* I Timothy 3:3c (see also I Timothy 3:8d; Titus 1:7f; I Peter 5:2b)

Though the Scriptures clearly teach that a spiritual leader is to be financially compensated for his work in the ministry (I Corinthians 9:7-14), he should not have an attitude that is marked by lust and greed for it. Note: Paul re-emphasizes this by going on to say that the GODly spiritual leader must *“not (be) covetous”*, that is, “no lover of money” (I Timothy 3:3f).

There are two men in Scripture who illustrate the contrasting attitudes toward ministry and money. First there is Balaam, who clearly was in the ministry for financial gain (read and study Numbers 22:1-34). Secondly there is the Apostle Paul, who though he could have received financial compensation for his Gospel labors, refused it, because he was afraid that he would abuse the privilege (read and study I Corinthians 9:7-18).

9. A GODly spiritual leader must be . . . *“one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity . . .”* I Timothy 3:4 (see also I Timothy 3:12b; Titus 1:6c)

Here the Scriptures address the family life of the spiritual leader, specifically the children. In order to understand this

portion of Scripture more clearly, defining three meaningful words here is important.

“ruleth” = “to lead, to attend to” (Vine)

“subjection” = “to submit oneself, to obey” (Vine)

“gravity” = “dignity, seriousness, reverence” (Vine)

Considering the above definitions, we could paraphrase this verse by saying . . . A GODly spiritual leader must be “one that can lead and care for his family, his children being in submission and obedience to him, with a reverence for him (and the things of the LORD).”

The Scriptures go on to reason here that . . .

“ . . . if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of GOD?” I Timothy 3:5

10. A GODly spiritual leader must . . . “*not (be) a novice . . .*” I Timothy 3:6a

Paul is referring to the new convert here, the man who has just accepted CHRIST as his LORD and SAVIOUR. He proceeds to explain why this must be so, because . . .

“ . . . lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” I Timothy 3:6b

Another Scripture supports this when it says . . .

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Proverbs 16:18

Being in a position of spiritual leadership, though it may bring its privileges, also brings its unique problems as well, one of them being the temptation to be lifted up in pride. For this reason Scripture warns the local church (and the para-church organization as well), not to appoint the new convert to spiritual leadership too quickly! Just a little bit later in the same epistle, Paul reinforces this when he says . . .

“Lay hands suddenly on no man . . .” I Timothy 5:22a

When is a CHRISTian man not a “*novice*” anymore, and thus eligible for spiritual leadership? Scripture does not give us a time-frame per se, but would suggest that when he has met all of the other qualifications listed in I Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:6-9, then he would be ready. This is what Paul probably meant when, listing the requirements for deaconship, said . . .

“ . . . *let these also first be proved* (that is, tested in all these other areas), then *let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.*” **I Timothy 3:10**

Note: This same principle would apply to those men who, though being CHRISTians for many years, have wandered from the LORD, and have just recently come back to HIM through confession and repentance.

11. A GODly spiritual leader must . . . “*have a good report of them which are without . . .*” I Timothy 3:7

This characteristic and requirement is closely akin to #1 (i.e. - “*blameless*”). Whereas a spiritual leader being “*blameless*” is referring to his relationship with all men in general, this virtue deals more specifically with his relationship to the unsaved, “. . . *them which are without . . .*”

A spiritual leader’s ministry and influence is not just felt within the body of CHRIST, but indeed extends to the unbelieving world as well. Thus, a man may have a real ability to minister within the body of CHRIST (for example, teach the Word of GOD effectively), but if his testimony is not of the highest quality among the unbelievers, he will be perceived as a “hypocrite” by those unbelievers, and have no spiritual impact upon them.

This is why the Apostle Paul went on to warn us what would happen if this “*good report (among) them which are without*” was not a part of the spiritual leader’s testimony. He said that they would . . .

“ . . . *fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*”
I Timothy 3:7b

Paul goes on to emphasize this principle even more when he writes that a spiritual leader must be able to minister . . .

“ . . . the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.” I Timothy 3:9

To have a “*pure* (that is, cleansed) *conscience*”, means not only to know and experience the forgiveness of GOD and removal of guilt concerning our sins, but also to know and experience the forgiveness of man and removal of guilt that perhaps is plaguing our conscience because of us offending man in some way.

This is why Scripture addresses this issue in many other places. It was the Apostle Paul’s own testimony . . .

“ . . . to have always a conscience void of offence toward GOD, and toward man.” Acts 24:16

If a man is desirous of spiritual leadership, but his testimony among the ungodly is not yet “above reproach”, he must first follow the Biblical steps of seeking reconciliation and making restitution (if so needed), then wait for GOD’s timing in relationship to becoming a spiritual leader.

12. A GODly spiritual leader must . . . “*not (be) double-tongued . . .*”
I Timothy 3:8b

“*double-tongued*” = saying something to one person, but then relating the same thing to another person with a contrary view.

Note: this word in the original only appears this once in all of Scripture

As in all areas of his life and ministry (including his speech), a spiritual leader must be consistently holy and CHRIST-like.

13. A GODly spiritual leader must have a GODly spiritual wife.

“Even so must (the spiritual leaders’) wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.” I Timothy 3:11

It is here that the Scriptures reflect on the spiritual leader's family life once again (see verses 4-5). Whereas verses 4-5 address the spiritual leader's children, verse eleven deals with his wife. For a man to be qualified for spiritual leadership, one of the requirements that must be met is to have a GODly spiritual wife.

The Scriptures here list four character qualities that must be present in the spiritual leader's wife. Following is that list with their definitions and amplifications . . .

"grave" =	"a seriousness of purpose and to self-respect in conduct" (Moule)
"not (a) slanderer" =	"someone who is not given to finding fault with the demeanour and conduct of others, and (not involved), with spreading their innuendos and criticisms in the church" (Vine)
"sober" =	alert, temperate, self-controlled
"faithful in all things" =	reliable and trustworthy in her actions, words, thoughts, and attitudes

14. A GODly spiritual leader must . . . "*not (be) self-willed . . .*"
Titus 1:7b

"*self-willed*" here means self-pleasing, selfish, loving self. Vine defines this as . . . "one who, dominated by self-interest, and inconsiderate of others, arrogantly asserts his own will."

The opposite of this evil attitude of self-will, is the righteous virtue of desiring to be a servant of others. The Scriptures declare over and over again that the successful spiritual leader will possess this virtue.

When JESUS was once instructing the eleven Apostles, all of whom would be future "spiritual leaders" themselves, HE taught them this very important principle. HE said . . .

"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion . . . over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you,

let him be your minister (literally servant), and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant (literally bond slave), even as the SON of MAN came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (that is, to serve), and to give HIS life a ransom for many.”

Matthew 20:25-28

Peter, one of the greatest spiritual leaders in all of CHRISTian history, was one of those who heard JESUS' Words that day. He later wrote to other spiritual leaders and said . . .

“The (spiritual leaders) which are among you I exhort . . . (do not be) lords over GOD’s heritage (i.e. - HIS people), but be examples to the flock.” **I Peter 5:1a,3**

15. A GODly spiritual leader must . . . “(be) *a lover of good* . . .”
Titus 1:8b

As a spiritual leader becomes “*a lover of good*”, then it is implied that he will be one that hates evil as well.

The Scriptures tell us that this is the very attitude that CHRIST HIMSELF has towards good and evil . . .

“THOU hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity . . .”
Hebrews 1:9a

As the GODly spiritual leader learns to possess this righteous attitude towards good and evil, he not only is developing one of the very attitudes of CHRIST, but is also giving clear and distinct direction to those under his authority and leadership. In a day when good is being called evil and evil is being called good, the people of GOD need strong and uncompromising standards in these areas by their spiritual leaders!

16. A GODly spiritual leader must . . . “(be one who is) *holding fast the faithful Word* . . .” Titus 1:9

The phrase “*holding fast*” here means “to hold firmly or to cling to”. (Vine)

How appropriate that this list of characteristics and requirements of a GODly spiritual leader end with this one. For it is of utmost importance that the Word of GOD have the preeminence in the life and ministry of a truly GODly spiritual leader, not only so he will “*be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers*”, but because it is the only basis for any real success he’ll experience, whether in his personal life or public ministry. Scripture testifies this of itself when it says . . .

“This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

Joshua 1:8 (see also Psalm 1:2-3)

Notice from the Scripture above that this success is not based on a cold, intellectual knowledge of the Bible, but rather a saturating of one’s soul with it (i.e. - through meditation), and an obedience to it!

O how we need more GODly spiritual leaders who have these convictions and commitments in our day!

Some Concluding Thoughts

- A. Scripture teaches the need for a multiplicity of spiritual leaders within a local church or para-church organization (that is, if there are men that meet these characteristics and requirements). See Titus 1:5 and James 5:14
- B. Scripture says nothing about the “election” of elders, they were always appointed (as they met these characteristics and requirements). See Acts 6:3; 14:23; Titus 1:5
- C. The local church would do well to have these same characteristics and requirements for their minister of music and other musicians, for they too teach and lead others (i.e. - through music).

Conclusion

It is very evident from this list that GOD is more interested in who we are then what we do for HIM. Because these characteristics and requirements are extensive and detailed, it is also very clear that only by GOD's grace and through HIS HOLY SPIRIT can we attain unto them. And although we may never become an elder, deacon, or spiritual leader per se, these are still CHRIST-like qualities and virtues we all can strive for!

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*The LORD JESUS CHRIST and
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