BEING A TRIBULATION CHRISTIAN

HOLDING ONTO YOUR FAITH IN THE LAST DAYS

Now is the time to fortify your Faith and step out from where you now stand so you can be more than you can be

by David Allen Rivera
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All Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible
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PREFACE

For those familiar with the type of research that I do, this book signals a turning point in the focus of my work. For years, after studying the big picture, I believe it’s time for the application of that work, so it can be activated in your life.

In 1996, after rededicating my life to Christ, I began working on a manuscript called Being More Than You Can Be: How You Can Begin to Slay the Dragons in Your Life. In the next few years, as I began to step into the path that I thought would lead to my destiny, I reworked that manuscript, and in 2000, it became known as Being More Than You Can Be: Raising Up Warriors in the Last Days. I had the manuscript posted on my website, and received some positive feedback. In 2003, on his album Closer, singer Josh Grobin had a song called You Raise Me Up. The last line of the chorus was: “You raise me up to more than I can be.” It is a comforting thought to believe that somehow, in 2000, the lyricist Brendan Graham stumbled onto my website and read my manuscript.

In 2004, in the midst of a difficult period in my life, the focus of the manuscript changed again, and I renamed it Being More Than You Can Be: Breaking the Power of the Past, To Be Released Into the Destiny of the Future. However, for some reason, I still was not satisfied with it. I thought that it was some of my best writing, yet there was something about it that left me feeling like it was undone. It just didn’t seem to come together into anything that was cohesive. Again, it went back into the file.

At the end of 2006, I began to experience a spiritual clarity that I never felt before; and I realized that everything God had laid on my heart, and all that He had shown me in His Word, was now working to guide and prepare me. I began looking at my manuscript in a different light because I had a better sense of how I fit into the scheme of things. The new title of the project reflected more of where I wanted to go with it: The Burned-Out Christian: Rising From the Ashes.

It wasn’t until 2009, when Progressive Press republished the first half of Final Warning, and I committed to finishing the entire book, that things began to truly gel. I lost my job in 2012, and this gave me the opportunity to finish my research, reformat the book, and follow through with the vision I’ve had for the book from the time I began researching it in 1978.

In the process, it was almost as if a veil was lifted from my eyes as God began to move in my life, realign priorities, and give me direction. My research has always been about looking at the big picture, but now God had fully developed that picture so I could finally see the message that has been at the crux of all the research that I have ever done.

Usually my writing has taken the form of something you would find in a college textbook, because I was presenting fact, after fact, after fact. But with this book, I wanted to take a different approach, a more personal approach. It is more of an appeal, really; and as such, I want to “talk” directly to you, minister to you, so-to-speak. The issues that I raise in this book are deeply personal, which is obvious, since I spent so many years studying them. Therefore, I believe that I have the credentials and justification to speak about them, as well as the life experience that makes this an important book for just this time in history.

We live in a physical world, and we think in terms of the physical realm. Yet we are adversely affected by things in the spirit realm, and if you are aware of these rules of engagement, then you will be prepared to survive and thrive in what will be a very difficult time. Some of the aspects of this book deal with issues that are very divisive within the Church, and therefore have not been effectively dealt with in the Christian community, because they don’t know how to deal with it, and they don’t want to deal with it. For the most part, the Church has become a weak vessel “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,” (Ephesians 4:14b), but fortunately our hope is in Christ, and victory comes from believing in God’s Word and the promises He has for us.

— David Allen Rivera (April 6, 2013)
CHAPTER ONE
SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE END-TIMES

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;" [2nd Thessalonians 2:3]

It has always been assumed that the “falling away” described in the Bible was going to be something that was going to occur around the time that the Antichrist would come to power. However, after studying the birth and growth of one-world government, and its relationship to Bible prophecy for over 35 years; I have seen this “falling away” as an incremental process that continues to weaken us as it progresses.

To me, the first stage was the acceptance of pagan holidays, which I believe has adversely affected the spirit of the Lord being able to function effectively in the Church. I have written about this at length in my 1997 book Controlled by the Calendar: The Pagan Origins of Our Major Holidays (which can be downloaded free on my website), so I won’t belabor the issue here. However, let me give you just one example to make a point.

“Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.” [Jeremiah 10:2-5]

After reading a stern warning about this in the Bible, what do we do? We going out and cut down (or buy) Christmas trees, bring them home and decorate them to celebrate Saturnalia in honor of the Roman god Saturn. Jesus wasn’t born on December 25th, but it was the birthday of Sol Invictus, the Mithraic sun god, and his followers celebrated the “birth of the unconquered sun” after the winter solstice, which is the shortest day of the year. The facts will show that the Roman Catholic Church Christianized the birthday of the sun god to be the birthday of the son of God. Why do you think there were always halos around the head of Jesus in old paintings? It signified sun worship.

The second wave of the “falling away” has been more direct and far more damaging. It has been a progressive attack that continues to get worse. This is the attack against the very Word of God.

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” [Matthew 24:24]

I believe it has been “the very elect” who have been deceived into producing the corrupt versions of the Bible that have flooded the market, and it is this perversion of God’s Word, and its language of inclusion, that has been willingly accepted by most Pastors and is the instrument being used to help render the Church powerless to fulfill their God-ordained role in the Last Days.
THE ORIGIN OF THE SCRIPTURES

Early Hebrew language had no vowels, so early scribes used dots to separate words. In the early 10th century BC, the Arameans (in the area of what is now Syria) began putting special letters at the end of each word to indicate the final long vowels. Two centuries later, the Moabites of Canaan began doing the same thing and Hebrew scribes picked up on the same idea, but really didn’t develop a system for showing vowel sounds until AD 500. By the time the Hebrew scribes began to insert vowel markings into their text, they had lost the meaning of a few words. Most could be ascertained in the light of the surrounding material, thus only ancient or rare words were lost.

A small Jewish sect in Babylon, known as Karaites had developed an effective system of vowel markings around AD 500, but a Masoretic family named ben Asher produced a better system of vowel markings in the 9th and 10th centuries; and what followed was a complete text of the Old Testament of the Bible with vowel markings by Rabbi Aaron ben Moshe ben Asher. The Moshe ben Naptali family of Masoretes had developed a different vowel marking system and produced a slightly different Old Testament text. However, late in the 12th century, noted Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides declared the ben Asher text to be the “received text.”

The earliest known Masoretic manuscript with the ben Asher text from the Moses ben Asher family is the Cairo Codex (Codex C) which was produced in AD 895 and given to the Karaites in Cairo. It contained the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Minor Prophets, Joshua, Judges, 1st Samuel, 2nd Samuel, 1st Kings and 2nd Kings. The St. Petersburg Codex (Codex P, Codex Babylonicus Metropolitans) was written in AD 916 and contained the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 Minor Prophets. The Aleppo Codex (Codex A) was probably written before AD 940 and was corrected by Aaron ben Moses ben Asher who added its punctuation. Over a third of this ben Asher text was lost when rioters set fire to the Aleppo Monastery (Syria) in December, 1947. The earliest complete manuscript of the Old Testament is the Leningrad Codex (Codex L), and was copied in Cairo in AD 1008 from texts said to be written by Aaron ben Moses ben Asher. The Reuchlin Codex (containing the books of the Prophets) was produced in AD 1105 by the ben Naphtali family.

The true Masoretic Hebrew Text used by the King James translators was from the Jacob ben Chayyim text that had been copied from the ben Asher manuscripts and published in Daniel Bomberg’s 2nd Edition of 1525, and was known as the “Second Rabbinic Bible” (and is available today as the Meir Letteris’ Second Edition of the Hebrew text from 1866). It was the standard Hebrew text for 400 years. Rudolph Kittel’s first 2 editions of Biblia Hebraica (the Hebrew Bible) in 1906 and 1912 used the ben Chayyim text, but then in 1937 he changed to the ben Asher text that was basis for the Leningrad Codex, just because he claimed it was the oldest single Hebrew manuscript, even though there had been 15-20 changes made per page.

The New Testament was translated from the Greek text which originated from Asia Minor after having been handed down to the 7 Churches identified in the book of Revelation. Of the 5,255 Greek manuscripts; 5,210 are from this area, while the rest are from Palestine, Alexandria and Western Europe. The Asia Minor texts became known as “Byzantine” because the Byzantine Empire rose to power there.

In 1458, after the fall of Rome, Greek manuscripts of Biblical text began making their way to Europe. Desiderius Erasmus of the Netherlands used 6 different Greek manuscripts for his Edition (none earlier than 1300) and any missing material was back-translated from the Latin Vulgate. Much has been said about his refusal to use older and supposedly better manuscripts that were at his disposal because he rejected them as being corrupted. In correspondence with the Vatican library, he was sent 365 selected readings from the Codex Vaticanus, but rejected it in deference to the Textus Receptus, because Vaticanus had more in common with the Latin Vulgate that the Textus Receptus. It was his 3rd Edition of the Greek New Testament in 1522
that was used by Robert Estienne (and probably William Tyndale) for his New Testament; and it was his 3rd Edition of 1550 that was used by the translators of the *Geneva Bible*, as well as Theodore Beza (successor to John Calvin). When Beza’s 5th Edition of 1598 (used by the King James translators) was published by Bonaventure Elzevir and his nephew Abraham Elzevir in their 2nd Edition (1633), the preface said: “So you hold the text, now received by all, in which (is) nothing corrupt.” This is why the underlying Greek text of the *King James Version* is known as the *Textus Receptus* or “received text.” This is slightly different (about 1800 differences) than what is referred to as the Majority Text (Traditional Text) or the bulk of the manuscripts which have an Antiocheian or Syrian origin; as opposed to the Minority Text which are Alexandrian (Egypt) in origin.

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” [*Psalm 12:6-7*]

It is the *Authorized King James Version* of the Holy Bible in 1611 that is believed to be referenced by this Scripture:

1) *William Tyndale New Testament* (1526)
2) *Myles Coverdale Bible* (1535)
3) *Matthew’s Bible* (1537)
4) *The Great Bible* (1539)
5) *The Geneva Bible* (1560)
6) *The Bishops’ Bible* (1568)
7) *King James Version* (1611)

This is based on the promise that we have in God’s Word that He would assure that His Word was preserved.

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” [*Isaiah 40:8*]  
“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” [*1 Peter 1:24-25*]

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” [*Matthew 5:18*]

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” [*Matthew 24:35*]  
“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.” [*Mark 13:31*]

The concept of *sola scriptura* (Latin, “by scripture alone”) maintains that the Bible contains all the knowledge necessary for salvation and holiness; and only those doctrines found in Scripture are to be adhered to, rather than Believers having to be dependent on the traditions of men. We are to be subordinate to, and corrected by, the written word of God. This was the foundational doctrinal principle of the Protestant Reformation and continues to be held by the
majority of Protestantism today. Part of the assurance for the preservation of the Bible was the mandate that His Word was not to be altered in any way to change any doctrine.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” [2nd Timothy 3:16]

“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.” [Deuteronomy 4:2]

“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” [Proverbs 30:5-6]

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” [Revelation 22:18-19]

After 1611, Cambridge University issued a revision of the King James Bible in 1629 and 1638; and then in 1762 there was a revision by Dr. F. S. Parris (of Sidney Sussex College) and Dr. H. Therhold (Fellow of Magdalene) to correct the text by amending the spelling and punctuation, unifying and extending the use of italics, and removing the printers’ errors. In 1769, for Oxford University, Dr. Benjamin Blayney (of Hertford College) also produced a comprehensive revision to update the spelling and grammar, which has become the standard that is used by most King James Bible publishers today. However, the Cambridge text has usually been upheld as being more faithful to the original KJV text.

Proponents of the King James Bible have been labeled as divisive. In 1978, Alex Underwood, a professor at the Tennessee Temple University Bible College for 8 years, was fired for following the KJV, and for going to a meeting to hear Dr. Peter Ruckman (a King James defender) speak. In fact, some churches do not want you to even carry a KJV Bible into their church. Why is that? The KJV was in use for 300 years before the first of the new versions reared its ugly head in the churches. It would seem that the new versions are the ones being divisive. In 1st Corinthians 14:33, the Apostle Paul wrote that “God is not the author of confusion,” yet there have been numerous versions of the Bible in the last 125 years. They can’t all be God’s Word, now can they?

THE BIRTH OF APOSTACY

In May, 1844, when Constantine Tischendorf (1815-1874) was visiting the St. Catherine Greek Orthodox monastery at the base of Mt. Sinai in Egypt, he found pages of an ancient text in a trash basket that the monks were using to start fires. He wrote:

“I perceived in the middle of the great hall a large and wide basket full of old parchments, and the librarian, who was a man of information, told me that two heaps of papers like these, mouldered by time, had been already committed to the flames. What was my surprise to find amid this heap of papers a considerable number of sheets of a copy of the Old Testament in Greek, which seemed to me to be one of
the most ancient that I had ever seen. The authorities of the convent allowed me to possess myself of a third of these parchments, or about forty-three sheets, all the more readily as they were destined for the fire. But I could not get them to yield up possession of the remainder. The too lively satisfaction which I had displayed, had aroused their suspicions as to the value of this manuscript."  

If you have ever seen the James White-Jack Moorman debate on YouTube about the King James Question, during Mr. White’s opening remarks he said:

“Sinaiticus was not found in or near a trash can. That is a common myth, but it’s untrue. All you have to do is read Constantine von Tischendorf’s own first-hand account of his discovery of the manuscript.”

You have read Tischendorf’s own words, and it is clear that the Sinaiticus text was being disposed of, and that is why it was being used for kindling. There is a reason for that. But you can see the deception that was used by White to bolster the credibility of this text.

James R. White, received his B.A. from Grand Canyon College, his M.A. from Fuller Theological Seminary, his Th.M., Th.D., D.Min. from Columbia Evangelical Seminary; and is a professor of Greek, Hebrew and Systemic Theology. He was a textual consultant for the Lockman Foundation’s *New American Standard Bible*, the author of more than 20 books, and he is an elder of the Phoenix Reformed Baptist Church, and the Director of Alpha and Omega Ministries (a Christian Apologetics organization). He is an accomplished and prolific debater, with few being able to match the scholarship he commands. Though he denies it, he has practically made it his life’s work to refute the authority of the *King James Bible*.

On the photocopies of *Sinaiticus* available to scholars today can be seen pages that appear to have burn marks on them as if they may have been pulled out of a fire. He published the pages without revealing their origin, in the hopes that he could get back there to get the rest, but then subsequently discovered through an intermediary that the monks found out about their value, and were not willing to “part with them at any price.” He did return in 1853 with the hope of at least being able to copy down the text, but did not find anything. He went back in 1859, and while he was speaking to the steward of the monastery about the *Septuagint*, the steward said that he had also read a *Septuagint*:

“Scarcely had he entered the room, when, resuming our former subject of conversation, he said, ‘And I too, have read a Septuagint,’ i.e. a copy of the Greek translation made by the Seventy and so saying, he took down from the corner of the room a bulky kind of volume wrapped up in a red cloth, and laid it before me. I unrolled the cover, and discovered, to my great surprise, not only those very fragments which, fifteen years before, I had taken out of the basket, but also other parts of the Old Testament, the New Testament complete, and, in addition, the *Epistle of Barnabas* and a part of the *Pastor of Hermas*…I knew that I held in my hand the most precious Biblical treasure in existence– a document whose age and

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2 Ibid., pg. 25.
importance exceeded that of all the manuscripts which I had ever examined during twenty years' study of the subject."³

He received permission to take the manuscript to Cairo where it could be transcribed completely and it was published as the Codex Sinaiticus (Codex Aleph). He wrote about his find:

"…Providence has given to our age, in which attacks on Christianity are so common, the Sinaitic Bible, to be to us a full and clear light as to what is the real text of God's Word written, and to assist us in defending the truth by establishing its authentic form."⁴

The Codex Sinaiticus has been purported to be an Alexandrian 4th century Bible Uncial (4 column) manuscript (AD 350-375 or 330-360), written by 3 separate scribes with alterations and corrections in the 6th and 7th centuries by as many as 7 scribes. His discovery was challenged by Constantine Simonides (1820-1867), a Greek scholar and paleographer, who claimed to have written it in 1840 at Mt. Athos to be a gift to Czar Nicholas I of Russia. When he first saw it in 1860, he wrote: "…I at once recognized my own work..." He didn't come out against it publicly until 1862, when he was drawn into the debate by Samuel P. Tragelles (who worked on the Revised Version committee with Frederick H. A. Scrivener, Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort), who believed Sinaiticus to be authentic.

Simonides supplied the details as to how it was written and how it got to Mt. Sinai; as well as the names of others who could vouch for him. A Greek monk from Alexandria named Kallinikos came forward in support of Simonides, having remembered seeing him working on the manuscript at Mt. Athos. Simonides had added acrostics to some of the pages, which would have proved his authorship, but these pages were destroyed or damaged. So, the question is, did Tischendorf do this on purpose? It is believed that Tischendorf knew it to be of recent creation and washed the pages with lemon juice and herbs to weaken the appearance of the letters and to give it an ancient look. The monks at Mt. Sinai denied Tischendorf’s story that the pages were found in a trash basket; and Kallinikos, who was at St. Catherine’s at the time, said that he did not have permission to take those first pages. Tischendorf refused to debate Simonides publicly, but the newspapers still denounced Simonides as a fraud (mostly based on accusations that he had forged a Greek copy of the apocryphal Shepherd of Hermes), and even denied the existence of Kallinikos—accusing Simonides of writing the letters being published in the newspaper.⁵

Tischendorf himself documented 14,800 corrections to the manuscript by contemporary and later correctors, and it is one of the most corrected manuscripts of all the Greek texts. Although the Codex originally contained both the Old and New Testaments, about half of the Old Testament survived: Genesis 23:19-24:26, Numbers 5:26-7:20, 1st Chronicles 9:27-19:17, Ezra-Nehemiah, Psalms, Esther, Joel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Malachi, Judith, Wisdom of Sirach, Tobit, and 1st-4th Maccabees. The New Testament is missing the following: Matthew 5:44a ("bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you"), 6:13b (For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."), 10:39a ("He that findeth his life shall lose it: and"), 12:47, 15:6a ("or his mother"), 16:2b-3, 17:21, 18:11, 20:23b ("and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with:"), 23:14, 23:35b ("son of Barachias"), 24:35, 24:36

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³ Ibid., pgs. 29-30.

⁴ Ibid., pg. 36.

⁵ Adullam Films. Tares Among the Wheat, 2012, 157 minutes.
("nor the Son," is added to the text); Mark 1:1 ("the Son of God"), 7:16, 9:44, 9:46, 10:7b ("and cleave to his wife;"); 11:26, 15:28, 16:9-20; Luke 9:55b-56a ("and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."); 11:4 ("but deliver us from evil."); John 5:4, 7:53-8:11 (referred to as the Pericope adulterae), 16:15, 20:5b-6, 21:25; Acts 8:37, 15:34, 24:7, 28:29; Romans 16:24, and 1st John 5:7 (referred to as the Johannine Comma, or Comma Johanneum). The Sinaiticus also included the apocryphal books of the Epistle of Barnabas and portions of The Shepherd of Hermas.

Although parts of this Codex are located in 4 libraries around the world, most of it is now at the British Library (347 leaves) in London with other portions at the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg (3 leaves), Leipzig University Library (43 leaves, where it is known as the Codex Friderico-Augustanus; which represents the pages that Tischendorf received on his first trip), and St. Catherine’s Monastery (12 leaves, 14 fragments).

The counterpart to Sinaiticus is Codex Vaticanus (Codex B) which is also supposed to be an Alexandrian 4th century document (AD 350-375 or 325-350), written by 3 separate scribes with corrections made to it in the 10th or 11th century by 2 scribes; yet it seems so remarkably preserved that it looks like a much later manuscript because of the text being overwritten by a 10th or 11th century scribe, who added decorations and titles. Therefore it may have the appearance it has, and be so well preserved, because it is not an ancient document. Some have even gone as far as saying it was a forgery of the Catholic Church.

An 8th century document, called the Donation of Constantine, contained a decree by the Emperor Constantine to Pope Sylvester, which granted to him and his subsequent successors, a status above his own temporal throne. The Pope was given the Lateran Palace, the City of Rome, and “all the provinces, places, and cities of Italy and of the western regions.” Because of this, Constantine moved his capital to the east, at the strait of Bosporus in Turkey, where he built Constantinople in 330, which became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Since it was known to have been written around 754, during the papal reign of Stephen II, the document is now considered to be fraudulent; but had been used by the Church to prove that secular power had been conferred upon the Pope to give them authority over the government.

Vaticanus was said to have been discovered in the Vatican library in 1481, and records indicate that it was entered into its collection in 1475 (shelf number 1209). Until Sinaiticus, it had been considered the oldest of all the Greek manuscripts. It is still in the Vatican, and scholars have only been able to work off of photocopies. In 1845 S. P. Tregelles was given an opportunity to look at the Codex, but “it was under such restrictions that it was impossible to do more than examine particular readings.” He also said: “They would not let me open it without searching my pockets, and depriving me of pen, ink, and paper; and at the same time two prelati kept me in constant conversation in Latin, and if I looked at a passage too long, they would snatch the book out of my hand.”

After the completion of the Vaticanus Project by the British Library, they considered it to be littered with revisions, and with 23,000 corrections (or about 30 per page) is the most altered Biblical manuscript. Even Hort said that the scribe behind Vaticanus “…reached by no means a high standard of accuracy.” The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible proclaimed: “It should be noted…that there is no prominent Biblical (manuscripts) in which there occur such gross cases of misspelling, faulty grammar, and omission, as in Codex B.”

There are so many omissions in Vaticanus. In just the Gospels alone it leaves out 237 words, 452 clauses and 748 whole sentences. It is missing Genesis 1:1-46:28, Psalms 106-138, Matthew 5:44b (“bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you”), 6:2-3, 10:37b (“and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me”), 12:47, 15:6 (“or his mother”), 16:2b-3, 17:21, 18:11, 20:23b (“and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with”), 23:14; Mark 7:16, 9:44, 9:46, 10:7 (“and cleave to his wife,”), 11:26, 15:28, 16:9-20; Luke 9:55b-56a (“and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to

It has been suggested that Codex Vaticanus (as well as Sinaiticus) may have been among the 50 manuscripts that Constantine commissioned Eusebius of Caesarea (260-340 AD) to make for the churches of Constantinople. Some scholars believe the two had been held in Caesarea in the 6th century, and ended up at the Vatican, from Constantinople, after the Council of Florence (1438-1445). As a Roman Catholic document (which mirrored many of the same omissions as Sinaiticus thus proving its pedigree) Vaticanus was available to the KJV translators, but they disregarded it.

What seems to have been lost in all this is that for years, Rome has destroyed the Scriptures and killed Christians; yet the translators of the new Bible versions are basing their work on manuscripts of Catholic origin.

Though Tischendorf was considered a Protestant scholar, he had a lot of interaction with Catholics and even had an audience with the Pope, and it is clear that he had an agenda. He wrote:

“But we have at last hit upon a better plan even than this, which is to set aside this Textus Receptus altogether, and to construct a fresh text, derived immediately from the most ancient and authoritative sources. This is undoubtedly the right course to take, for in this way only can we secure a text approximating as closely as possible to that which came from the Apostles.”

Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892), two theological heretics (posing as conservatives) from the Anglican Church, began working on their revision of the New Testament in 1853, and in 1881 they published The New Testament in the Original Greek based on the Codex Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. It is apparent that Hort shared the same contempt for the King James Bible, because in 1851 he wrote:

“I had no idea until the last few weeks of the importance of texts having read so little Greek Testament and dragged on with the villainous Textus Receptus. Think of that vile Textus Receptus leaning entirely on late manuscripts.”

Westcott and Hort were closet Catholics. Westcott believed in Mary worship, rejected the literal account of Creation, didn’t believe in the second coming of Christ, the Millennium, a literal Heaven, or the doctrine of a literal Hell. He confessed to being communist by nature and praised the Christian Socialist movement. Hort believed that Mary worship had a lot to do with the worship of Jesus and believed in keeping the Roman Catholic sacraments. He was interested in the work of Charles Darwin, rejected a literal Creation and the doctrine of a literal Hell. He did not believe in the Trinity or angels and rejected the infallibility of Scripture.

According to Herman Charles Hoskier (1864-1938), a Biblical scholar and textual critic, there are 3,036 contradictions between Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus (Aleph) in just the Gospels alone (Matthew, 656; Mark, 567; Luke, 791; John, 1022). Between the two, which are both Alexandrian in origin (and written in Platonian or Classical Greek, instead of Koine Greek), Westcott and Hort used the following criteria: When both were in agreement that was the original reading. If they did not agree, then any reading of B combined with one other

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manuscript would be a true reading. If they couldn’t find another manuscript to agree with B, then B alone would be presented as the true reading. Thus *Vaticanus* became the favored text.

Their New Testament altered the 140,521-word text of the *Textus Receptus* at 5,604 places which included 1,952 omissions, 467 additions, 3,185 changes, and 4,366 alterations totaling 9,970 Greek words that were either added, subtracted, or changed, which affected 7% of the text, and created a radically new Greek text. The Westcott and Hort text is shorter than the *Textus Receptus* by 2,886 words. This is the text used by many of the new Bible versions.

They only had 45 manuscripts (including *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus*, and basically Alexandrian in origin) which they worked from, using the assumption that the “oldest are the best,” as opposed to 5,210 manuscripts (from Antioch in Asia Minor, the cradle of Paul’s missionary journeys), known as the Byzantine text that line-up with the *Textus Receptus*.

The argument that the Byzantine text did not exist before the 4th century is just plain wrong, as the early Church Fathers often quoted Scripture in their writings. John William Burgon, an Anglican bishop, an authority on ancient manuscripts, and a contemporary of Westcott and Hort, opposed their new Greek text. A supporter of the *Textus Receptus*, he considered the Codex of *Vaticanus*, *Sinaiticus* and *Bezae* (Codex D, a 5th century uncial text which contains, in both Greek and Latin, most of the four Gospels and Acts, along with a small fragment of 3rd *John*) to be corrupted. Burgon compiled 86,000 quotations from the writings of the early Church Fathers (100-600 AD), and after he died in 1888, Edward Miller edited the final work. From AD 100-400 there were 4,383 quotes from 76 Church Fathers who died before AD 400; and of these, 1,753 (40%) followed the Westcott and Hort text, while 2,630 (60%) followed the *Textus Receptus*.

Burgon wrote about *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus* (he was given an hour and a half, in which he was able to look at 16 different passages) after examining them in the 1860s:

“That they exhibit fabricated texts is demonstrable...These are two of the least trustworthy documents in existence...so grossly improbable does it seem that after 1,800 years 995 copies out of a thousand will prove untrustworthy and one to five which remain, whose contents till yesterday as good as unknown, will be found to have retained the secret of what the Holy Spirit originally inspired...I am utterly unable to believe, in short, that God’s promise has so utterly failed, that at the end of 1,800 years, much of the text of the gospel had in point of fact to be picked, by a German critic, out of a wastepaper basket in the convent of St Catherine; and that the entire text had to be remodeled after the pattern set by a couple of copies which had remained in neglect during 15 centuries, and probably owed their survival to that neglect...Codex B bears traces of careless transcription in every page. The mistakes, which the original transcriber made, are of perpetual recurrence. I can testify to the fact that the codex is disfigured throughout with repetitions. The original scribe is often found to have not only written the same words twice over, but to have failed whenever he did so to take any notice with his pen of what he had done. Codices A, B, Aleph, C, and D yield divergent testimony; and therefore, so habitually contradict one another, as effectually to invalidate their own evidence throughout.”

Around 1885, Dr. Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener (1813-1891), commissioned by Cambridge University Press, published *Scrivener’s Annotated Greek New Testament: Being the Exact Greek Textus Receptus that Underlies the King James Bible*. He advocated the Byzantine text (Majority Text) over the other manuscripts as a source for Bible translations. He was the first to distinguish the *Textus Receptus* from the Byzantine text. He compared the *Textus Receptus* with the editions of Stephanus (also known as Robert Estienne, 1550), Theodore Beza (1565), and Elzevier (1633) and enumerated all the differences. He also identified the
differences between the *Textus Receptus* and editions by Tischendorf, S. P. Tregelles (1813-1875), and Karl Lachmann (1793-1851).

In 1898 Eberhard Nestle published his *Novum Testamentum Graece* (*Greek New Testament*) based on the textual work of Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, and Richard Weymouth (1822-1902, a Baptist Bible scholar). The Nestle text was shorter than the *Textus Receptus* by 2,886 words. From that point on, colleges, universities and seminaries taught from a corrupted Greek text. In 1975, this work, now known as the Nestle-Aland, was adopted as the basis for the Greek New Testament published by the United Bible Society, which is geared more towards translators; while the Nestle-Aland is focused more on scholars and textual critics, and therefore provides relevant variant readings. It is currently in its 28th Edition (designated as NA28), and it continues to deceive multitudes of students entering the ministry.

*Luke 6:43* says: "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." As corrupt fruit is being produced, it is reproducing itself. Case in point is Bart D. Ehrman who attended Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, and got his Ph.D. and M.Div. at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he studied under the liberal Bruce Metzger. An Evangelical Christian as a teen, he became a liberal Christian in college, and then eventually became an agnostic. He is a New Testament scholar who is the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His best-selling books, debates and speaking engagements have hinged upon attacking the Bible, Jesus and the inconsistencies of the New Testament. You can bet there’s many more just like him, and it is men like this who are influencing the men behind your pulpits. No wonder our Churches are becoming lifeless carcasses willing to latch onto any movement that gives them some sort of justification for taking money from people.

As of 1967 there were 5,255 Greek manuscripts: 45 (1%) support Westcott & Hort (W/H), while 5,210 (99%) follow the *Textus Receptus* (TR).

1) Papyrus Fragments were made from a kind of paper derived from the papyrus plant grown in an area of Egypt. It is brittle and does not age well. As of 1967 there were 81, but now there are 88. Of these, 13 (15%) support W/H, 75 (85%) support the TR.

2) Uncial Manuscripts were written in capital letters without any spaces between the words or punctuation. *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus* fall into this category. Of the 267, 9 (3%) support W/H, 258 (97%) support the TR.

3) Cursive Manuscripts written in longhand as the Uncial style was abandoned by 9th century scribes. Of these 2,764 manuscripts, 23 (1%) support W/H, 2,741 (99%) support the TR.

4) Lectionary Manuscripts were the portions of Scripture read in churches on particular days, of which there were 2,143, which totally support the TR.

THE REVISION NEVER STOPS, THE DECEPTION NEVER RESTS

In Revelation 1:11, 19, Jesus told the Apostle John to write what he had seen. In Galatians 1:12, Paul says: “For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” The Apostles and the early church were fully aware that their writings were the inspired word of God. When Jesus was being tempted in the wilderness, He
said (Matthew 4:4), “It is written,” in verse 7, He said “It is written” and in verse 10 He said “it is written.” In Matthew 21:42, Jesus said, “Did ye never read in the scriptures...” The Apostles were primarily Jewish, and were familiar with their tradition of copying Scripture and would have utilized the same care in assuring that their writings would be preserved by destroying inaccurate copies, as was being done with Codex Sinaiticus when it was discovered. It was being disposed of because it was considered an inaccurate text. But seemingly greed got the better of the monks when they discovered the desire for it.

Besides the fact that great care was taken in their choice of source documents, the translators of the KJV were world renown in their scholarship and far superior in their qualifications compared to those involved in the modern Bible versions. They were honest in their work to the point that when they weren’t sure about something they notated it by italicizing the word(s).

In addition, the KJV translators used the more accurate technique of verbal equivalence and formal equivalence (word-for-word) in their translation methods, instead of dynamic equivalence (thought-for-thought) which is used in many modern versions.

It is important to see the extent of the attack on God’s Word, so I’m going to give you a brief rundown on the major Bibles which have been published since the King James Bible in 1611.

Young’s Literal Translation (YLT; 1862, Textus Receptus, Majority Text; 1887, Westcott-Hort; 1898)

Cambridge Paragraph Bible (CPB, 1873)

New Cambridge Paragraph Bible (NCPB, 2005)

Revised Version (RV, 1885; this was the Bible that had Westcott and Hort on the Translation Committee); also known as English Revised Version (ERV). It was not really a revision, in that the committee changed the original Greek text with 5,337 alterations.

- Revised Standard Version (RSV, 1952)
- Reader’s Digest Bible (1982)
- English Standard Version (ESV, 2001)
- American Standard Version (ASV, 1901)
- Amplified Bible (AMP, 1965, 1987; Zondervan, Lockman Foundation)
- Living Bible (TLB, 1971; paraphrase; Tyndale House Publishers)
- World English Bible (WEB, NT completed 2000, OT incomplete; digital; Rainbow Missions)
Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible (EBR, 1902)


Twentieth Century New Testament (TCNT, 1904)

Moffatt, New Translation (MNT, 1922), also known as The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments, a New Translation

The Complete Bible, An American Translation (AAT, also SGAT, 1939, University of Chicago Press)

Bible in Basic English (BBE, 1949; Cambridge University Press)

New World Translation (NWT, 1961; Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Jehovah Witnesses)

Wuest's Expanded Translation of the New Testament (WET, 1961)


The Holy Bible in the Language of Today: An American Translation (BECK, also AAT, 1976)


New Evangelical Translation (NET, 1990)

God’s Word (GW, 1995; Baker Publishing Group)

Children’s King James Version (CKJV, 1962)

Good News for Modern Man (1966; paraphrase, New Testament only; American Bible Society)
Good News Bible (GNB, 1976, 1992); also known as Good News Translation (GNT) and Today’s English Version (TEV)

Contemporary English Version (CEV, 1995; designed for a lower reading level); also known as The Bible for Today’s Family

The Jerusalem Bible (TJB, 1966; Catholic)

New Jerusalem Bible (NJB, 1985)

New Catholic Bible (CTS, 2007)

Modern Language Bible (MLB, 1969; Zondervan)


New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE, 2011)

New English Bible (NEB, 1970; Oxford University Press & Cambridge University Press)

Revised English Bible (REB, 1989)

King James Version II (KJII, 1971)

The Bible in Living English (BLE, 1972; Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Jehovah Witnesses)


NIV Reader’s Version (NIRV, 1994)

Today’s New International Version (TNIV, 2005)
International Children’s Bible (ICB, 1986)


Expanded Bible (EXB, 2011)

New King James Version (NKJV, 1982; Thomas Nelson Publishers)

New Life Version (NLV, 1986; Christian Literature International)

Easy-To-Read Version (ERV, 1987, 2004; World Bible Translation Center)

Christian Community Bible (CCB, 1988)

Modern King James Version (MKJV, 1990)

21st Century King James Version (KJ21, 1994; Deuel Enterprises)

Third Millennium Bible (TMB, 1998); also known as the New Authorized Version (NAV)

The Clear Word Bible (CWB, 1994; paraphrase; Seventh Day Adventist)


American King James Version (AKJV, 1999)

Recovery Version (1999; Living Stream Ministry)


Updated King James Version (UKJV, 2000, 2009)

Holy Scriptures in English (HSE, 2001)
The Message (MSG, 2002)

Comfort-able King James Version (CKJV, 2003)


New English Translation (NET, 2005; online; Biblical Studies Foundation)

Authorized Version Update (AVU, 2006)

The New Authorized Version (AV7, 2006; New Testament only; The New Authorized Version Foundation)

Universal King James Version (UKVJ, 2007)

Common English Bible (CEB, 2011)

Lexham English Bible (LEB, 2011; digital; Logos Bible Software)

The Voice (VOICE, 2012; Thomas Nelson)

I’ll bet you didn’t realize that there were that many Bibles out there. And this list doesn’t even include some of the minor ones that didn’t have widespread distribution. So, are you starting to get a sense for what is happening here? It’s not about trying to achieve the best translation, it’s about making money. You see, although the KJV is protected by copyright in the United Kingdom, it’s in the public domain here in the United States. Anyone can print a King James Bible. You could actually print your own off the Internet. A publisher can’t make money off of printing a KJV because they can’t copyright it. They can copyright any commentary or study notes, but not the text of the Scripture. To make money, they have to change the text so they can copyright it.

Most Christian publishers will not even accept manuscripts that use text references from the KJV; which means, depending on how many are used, an author would have to pay for the right to use that version. So what ends up happening, is the author is forced to quote from various versions so they don’t go over their limitation; which is what some ministers do anyway, because they quote from whatever version is in agreement with what they want to preach.

I realize that I can’t do an in-depth treatment of the subject here, because it’s not the premise of this book; however, I want to give you some major points so you can understand my contention here.
NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV)

The NIV has become the most popular version of the Bible, and although it is published by Zondervan Publishers; Zondervan was purchased in 1988 by HarperCollins (a division of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation, the world’s 2nd largest media group who owns the Fox News Network). In 1999, the News Corporation had bought out the Hearst Corporation, which in 1959 had purchased Avon Books, who in 1969 published the Satanic Bible.

After being introduced in 1978 as a more accurately translated Bible, it was revised in 1984, and again in 2011. Most people who use the NIV were not even aware that they revised it in 2011. Are they ever going to get it right? It’s getting to be almost like computer software when you have to upgrade your Bible every few years. Hey, look at the positive side; you don’t wear your Bible out. When they come out with an upgrade, you should be able to trade your Bible in, just like a used car.

As far as the 1984 revision, it had 64,098 less words than the KJV. It added to, subtracted from, or changed 6,653 things. In fact, the complete verses of Matthew 17:21, 18:11, 23:14; Mark 7:16, 9:44, 9:46, 11:26, 15:28; Luke 4:8, 17:36, 23:17; John 5:3b-5:4; Acts 8:37, 15:34, 23:9, 24:7, 28:29; Romans 13:9, 16:24; 1 Timothy 6:5; part of 1 John 5:7, and 1 John 5:13 have been removed; and Matthew 12:47, 21:44; Mark 16:9-20; Luke 22:43-44; John 7:33-8:11 have been removed from the text and placed in the footnotes.

Also in the 1984 revision, 46 times, the title of “Master” for Jesus was changed to “teacher.” The following words were also removed from the text: “bottomless pit,” “Calvary,” “damnation,” “devils,” “fornication,” “Holy Ghost,” “Jehovah,” “Lucifer,” “Messiah,” “omnipotent,” “quickened,” “regeneration,” and “remission.” It attacked the Virgin Birth in Luke 2:33 by referring to “Joseph” as the “child’s father,” and denies (1st Timothy 3:16) that “God was manifest in the flesh.”

The NIV is one of the worst translated Bibles out there and I believe it’s clear that there is an agenda here. It’s not about having an accurate translation. They are going to keep revising it till they have milked it dry of its power and truth so that it becomes a Bible that doesn’t offend anyone and can be accepted by everyone.

With the newest revision, being touted as a universal Bible, gender references are being obscured. In the KJV the word “men” appears 3,222 times, but in the NIV it appears only 1,027 times. The word “man” in the KJV appears 4,538 times, but in the NIV only 1,989 times.

In all 5 usages of the word “sodomite” or “sodomites” in the Bible, Deuteronomy 23:17, 1st Kings 14:24, 1st Kings 15:12, 1st Kings 22:46, 2nd Kings 23:7, “shrine prostitute” is substituted for “sodomite.” The connotation here is that you’re only a sodomite if you have sex with another man for money.

In 1st Corinthians 6:9, the KJV says:

“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,”

In the 1984 edition of the NIV, it said:

“Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders”

Notice the term “male prostitutes” was substituted for “effeminate.” Now, look at the 2011 revision of NIV:
“Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men”

Notice now that they have removed their previous change of “male prostitutes” totally, combining it with "men who have sex with men." Why this change? I believe it was because of the pressure from the 690-page book New Age Bible Versions published by Gail Riplinger in 1993 which has brought a tremendous amount of attention to this issue of all these changes by collating the texts of these various modern versions to show their discrepancies.

But let’s look at another verse. In Leviticus 18:22 the KJV says: “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.” The 2011 NIV says “Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.” The word “abomination” is associated with defilement, because our bodies are the Temple of the Lord; as opposed to “detestable,” which means “arousing or meriting intense dislike.” Does it sound like they’re trying to make homosexuality less offensive?

How about Romans 1:24-27 in the KJV which says:

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.”

In the new and improved NIV it says:

“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural sexual relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error [“perversion” in 1984 NIV].”

It seems that when you get your NIV upgraded, you get a downsized message. I believe this is being intentionally done to weaken Churches because the very core of the message is being compromised and its spiritual dynamics affected. Most people who use an NIV, or any other version, trust its content, and don’t compare it to a KJV. And why would they, since they’re told it is not as accurate of a translation as the NIV. However, do you really want to take that chance?

In Matthew 17:19, the disciples went to Jesus and asked Him why they were unable to cast the demon out of the child, and Jesus said (Matthew 17:21): “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” Lo and behold, the NIV removes that entire verse. But wait, it's also over in Mark 9:29, where Mark records Jesus saying: “And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.” However, the NIV says: “He replied, ‘This
kind can come out only by prayer."
What the NIV does is to remove a very powerful spiritual
principle, which means if you find yourself in a battle against the forces of darkness, you want to
grab that King James Bible and not your NIV.

In short, the NIV wants to take your sword and turn it into a knife by making it an
ineffective tool for spiritual guidance.

NEW KING JAMES BIBLE (NKJV)

Conceived in 1975, the New King James Bible (NKJV) was supposed to be a more
readable rendition of the KJV. The implication was that it was going to change things like the
antiquated pronouns of “thees” and “thous,” modernize verb forms, and update words that are
no longer used and whose meaning has escaped modern readers. Thomas Nelson Publishers
did not get the entire Bible published until 1982, and it became the 3rd best-selling Bible after the
NIV and KJV. In July, 2012, Thomas Nelson was also purchased by HarperCollins, a subsidiary
of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation.

This version is almost as bad as the NIV because of the changes which have been made,
and has mirrored some of those made with the NIV, New American Standard (NASB) and
Revised Standard Version (RSV). The NKJV makes over 100,000 word changes, and in just the
New Testament alone, removes 2,289 words from the KJV. The NKJV replaced the KJV
Hebrew (ben Chayyim Masoretic Hebrew text) with the corrupt Stuttgart Edition of Biblia
Hebraica (the ben Asher text of Old Testament); and has ignored the Textus Receptus over
1,200 times.

The NKJV omits the words: “Lord” 66 times, “God” 51 times, “heaven” 50 times,
“repent” 44 times, “blood” 23 times, “hell” 22 times, “JEHOVAH” entirely, “new testament”
entirely, “damnation” entirely, and “devils” entirely.

The NKJV also uses many terms that don’t mean the same thing as in the KJV. For
example, in 1 Thessalonians 5:22, the KJV says: “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” But in
the NKJV it says: “Abstain from every form of evil.” Its claim of being easier to understand is
questionable when the word “hell” was omitted 22 times and replaced with the words “Hades”
and “Sheol,” “little rivers” in Ezra 31:4 was changed to “rivulets,” “Judge” in Psalm 43:1 was
changed to “Vindicate,” “fat” in Isaiah 28:1 was changed to “verdant,” “pounds” in Luke 19:11-27
was changed to “minas,” “judgment hall” in John 19:9 was changed to “Praetorium,” and “boat”
in Acts 27:30 was changed to “skiff.”
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<th>NKJV Demotes &amp; Diminishes Deity of Jesus</th>
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When the NKJV Bible came out, its front cover featured a symbol, that according to the publisher Thomas Nelson, was a “triquetra” (from a Latin word meaning “three-cornered; also referred to as a “triskelion”– an ancient symbol of the Trinity. However, the truth of the matter is that you’ll also find this same symbol associated with New Age, as pagans believed it to be the symbol of the god Odin, and it was used on the cover of the Book of Shadows, to represent mind, body and soul. This Trinity Knot is so-named because it contains 3 knots, which actually form three 6s, which is actually the Triquetra Knot used by the ancient Celts. It is an occult symbol, yet today, it has found its way onto wedding rings and traditional Irish engagement rings. Pagans who worshipped the sun used the figure of a spiral to represent it, which is very similar to the number 6. So, the symbol on the NKJV Bible was an interwoven 666, which represents a union of Christianity and the occult.

SELECTED SCRIPTURES

Let me finish off this chapter by taking some passages of Scripture, and seeing how the modern Bible versions handle them. You’ll find the explanations for the abbreviations on the list of the major Bible versions that I gave you. After you read this, along with everything else, I think you’ll have to agree that the sheer number of Bibles, the perversion of their language and the war against the King James Version is nothing more than an attack on God and religion by people who profess to be Christians.

In Genesis 1:1, the KJV uses the word “heaven,” and the following versions use the word “heavens”:

ASV,AMP,CEB,CEV,ESV,EXB,GNT,HCSB,LEB,MSG,NASB,NET,NIV,NKJV,NL,NLT,NRSV,RSV,VOICE
In Isaiah 14:12, the KJV uses the term “Lucifer, son of the morning,” and then in 2nd Peter 1:19 Jesus is called the “day star” and in Revelation 22:16 He is called the “morning star.” The manner in which the various Bible versions handle this is absolutely incredible, and you can see how they are being purposely deceptive and showing what their true intentions are:

(ASV) Isaiah “day-star,” 2nd Peter “day-star,” Revelation “morning star”

(AMP) Isaiah “light-bringer and daystar,” 2nd Peter “Morning Star,” Revelation “Morning Star”

(CEB, LEB) Isaiah “morning star, son of the dawn,” 2nd Peter “morning star,” Revelation “morning star”

(CEV, GNT, NlrV) Isaiah “bright morning star,” 2nd Peter “morning star,” Revelation “morning star”

(ERV, EXB, NCV) Isaiah “morning star,” 2nd Peter “morning star,” Revelation “morning star”

(ESV, MSG, NRSV, RSV) Isaiah “Day Star, Son of Dawn,” 2nd Peter “morning star,” Revelation “morning star”

(GW, NIV, VOICE, WEB) Isaiah “morning star, son of the dawn,” 2nd Peter “morning star,” Revelation “morning star”

(HCSB) Isaiah “shining morning star,” 2nd Peter “morning star,” Revelation “Morning Star”

(NASB) Isaiah “star of the morning, son of the dawn,” 2nd Peter “morning star,” Revelation “morning star”

(NET) Isaiah “shining one, son of the dawn,” 2nd Peter “morning star,” Revelation “morning star”

(NLV) Isaiah “shining one, son of the morning,” 2nd Peter “Morning Star (Christ),” Revelation “Morning Star”

(NLT) Isaiah “shining star, son of the morning,” 2nd Peter “Christ the Morning Star,” Revelation “morning star”

In Daniel 3:25, the KJV uses “the Son of God,” while the following versions use:

“a son of the gods” (ASV, AMP, EXB, GW, HCSB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NIRV, NIV, NLV)

“one of the gods” (CEB)

“a god” (CEV, NET, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE)
“an angel” (ERV, GNT)

In Matthew 1:25, the KJV says: “And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.” The following versions remove “firstborn”:
- ASV, CEB, CEV, ERV, ESV, EXB, GW, GNT, HCSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NIRV, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE

In Matthew 5:22, the KJV says: “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” The following versions remove “without a cause”:
- ASV, AMP, CEB, CEV, ERV, ESV, EXB, GW, GNT, HCSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE

In Matthew 6:13, the KJV says: “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” The following versions remove “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”:
- ASV, CEB, CEV, DRA, ERV, ESV, GW, GNT, LEB, MSG, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLT, NRSV, RSV

In Matthew 9:13, the KJV says: “But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” The following versions remove: “to repentance”:
- ASV, CEB, CEV, DRA, ERV, ESV, EXB, GW, GNT, HCSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE

In Matthew 15:8, the KJV says: “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.” The following versions remove “draweth nigh unto me with their mouth”:
- ASV, CEB, CEV, DRA, ERV, ESV, EXB, GW, GNT, HCSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE

In Matthew 18:11, the KJV says: “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” The following versions have removed that verse:
- CEV, ERV, ESV, GNT, LEB, MSG, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLT, NRSV, RSV

In Mark 11:26, the KJV says: “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” The following versions have removed that verse:
- ERV, GNT, LEB, MSG, NET, NIV, NLT, NRSV, RSV
In *Luke* 4:4, the KJV says: “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” The following versions remove “but by every word of God”:

ASV, CEB, CEV, ERV, ESV, EXB, GW, GNT, HCSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE

In *John* 1:18, the KJV uses the words “the only begotten Son,” the following versions remove that term:

AMP, CEB, CEV, ERV, ESV, EXB, GW, GNT, HCSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE

In *John* 3:15, the KJV says: “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” The following versions remove “should not perish”:

ASV, CEB, CEV, ERV, ESV, EXB, GW, GNT, HCSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE

In *John* 6:47, the KJV says: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” The following versions remove “on me”:

ASV, CEB, ERV, ESV, EXB, GW, GNT, HCSB, LEB, NASB, NCV, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE

In *John* 7:8, the KJV says: “Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.” Jesus did go to this feast, and the following versions have removed the word “yet” removed, which makes Jesus out to be a liar:

ASV, CEB, CEV, DRA, ERV, ESV, EXB, GNT, LEB, MSG, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLT, NRSV, RSV

In *Acts* 8:37, the KJV says: “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” The following versions have removed that verse, bracket it or change it:

CEB, CEV, ERV, ESV, GNT, HCSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, RSV

In *Romans* 1:16, the KJV says: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” The following versions remove “of Christ”:

ASV, CEB, CEV, DRA, ERV, ESV, EXB, GW, GNT, HCSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NET, NIRV, NIV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE

In 2nd *Timothy* 2:15, the KJV says: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” The following versions remove “Study”:
In *James* 5:16, the KJV says: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The following versions change "faults" to "sins," when you're mandated to confess your sins to only God:

ASV, CEB, CEV, DRA, ESV, EXB, GW, GNT, HCSB, LEB, MSG, NASB, NCV, NET, NIRV, NIV, NKJV, NLV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, VOICE

A TROJAN HORSE

The attack on our Bible has been one of Satan’s most important strategies. People never expected it, so they didn’t even see it coming. The claim that *Sinaeicus* and *Vaticanus* are older than the Byzantine texts of the *Textus Receptus* have proven to be false, because the manuscript underlying the KJV is based on older manuscripts, as well as texts that the early Church Fathers had which are no longer extant. Yet, Christians, believing that these Biblical scholars were telling the truth, accepted these new Bibles as if they were new revelations from God; when in fact our Bible has been turned into propaganda that supports the direction that the New World Order wants to take the Church to help usher in one-world government. Our Bible will be a ticking time bomb as long as these apostates continue to have free rein in being able to control the content of God’s Word. Well, you know, it’s not even God’s Word anymore— it’s really man’s words.

Don’t take this personally, because I’m not just bashing your Bible. I’m warning you of the danger that lies in reading a modern version of the Bible. If you don’t have a King James Bible, then you don’t have a Holy Bible.

In the past, I’ve been tolerant of other versions, but with the increasing number of attacks on King James-only adherents and the blind allegiance to these blatantly ungodly books disguised as Bibles; I’ve kind of reached my saturation point. The Church is just standing there and allowing its Bible to be dismantled, and is not only refusing to do anything about it, they are welcoming it with open arms.

Because I’ve studied the Illuminati for so long, I’ve seen how they operate; and the secret of their success has been in attacking on multiple fronts to achieve their goal. Their goal, all along, has been one-world government, and they’ve focused on controlling our financial structure, our government, the media, oil production, food distribution, corporate organizations and religious institutions. Their manipulation in all of these areas is working together to remove the obstacles that will further their plans to bring this world to the place it needs to be for the Antichrist to come to power.

When I watch videos that try to rally people against the New World Order, and government tyranny; I have to just shake my head. Let me hit you with another reality check. One-world government is coming, and there’s nothing you’re going to be able to do about it. How can I say that? Because the Bible tells me so! If you’re a Christian, that means you believe in the Bible; and the prophecies of *Daniel* and *Revelation* are crystal clear about what is coming down the pike. I know that is a hard message to hear, and I’m not being a defeatist. I’m not talking about just giving up and rolling over, but I am talking about being warned, being aware and being prepared.

These new versions of the Bible have been part of the Satan’s plan to slowly change the face of the Church. Why is it that our society has become so tolerant of homosexuality that in
the near future, same-sex marriage will probably be legal? How is that possible in a country
where over 70% identify themselves as Christians?

By reading a modern version of the Bible can someone really plug into everything that
God has for them? Can they access the promises that are in His Word? Can they gain victory
through the truths they find there? Because of all the selective manipulation in the modern
versions, the answer is a resounding No. It is the truth that sets you free (John 8:32), but if the
truth has been removed from your Bible, how can you be free?

Do you sometimes feel that you’re relationship with the Lord isn’t what it should be, or
something just isn’t clicking in your spiritual life. Maybe it’s because your Bible just ain’t working
for you. How can God speak to you through His Word, if His Words have been removed from
your Bible? A castrated Bible has created a passive Church that is desperately reaching out for
a different spirit and a different Christ.

So you see, the “falling away” has already started, and though it will continue to
accelerate; I believe there is going to be a major event that will exacerbate this and cause a
huge defection among Christians.
CHAPTER TWO
THE TRUTH ABOUT THE RAPTURE

For many years, Christians have been banking on the fact that before the onslaught of the Tribulation, they are going to be raptured out of this world. Because of that “promise” there seems to be a reckless disregard for what is going on, maybe because they believe they won’t be here. Maybe that’s why they don’t care that their Bible is being gutted. Maybe that’s why they didn’t challenge the fraudulent birth certificate of their President. Maybe that’s why they’re standing idly by as a minority of gays are being allowed to exert influence over the majority.

When I was growing up, I heard the Rapture Doctrine preached at Church, so I didn’t know anything else. That is, till I was older and began hearing alternative informative that convinced me to research it for myself.

The word ‘rapture’ is not in the Bible. It is the English transliteration of the Latin word rapturo, which means “to seize or be carried away in one’s spirit,” or the transporting from one place to another, and comes from the 1st Thessalonians 4:17 term “caught up” (Strong’s #726) The original Greek word was harpazo, and means “to seize, catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force).” To me, when you really read this verse, it seems that this event is not going to take place until Christ returns, or what is commonly referred to as the “Second Coming.” And, yes, I’m talking about an actual physical removal as reflected in the use of the term in Acts 8:39 and 2nd Corinthians 12:2.

In the Bible there are a number of passages that refer to the promise that Jesus will return to this world. Paul wrote about “our gathering together unto him,” (2nd Thessalonians 2:1) and our gathering together “in one,” (Ephesians 1:10) which echoed Psalm 50:5– “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” While many would try to separate this into 2 separate events, the Rapture and the Second Coming, at two different times, the Scripture does not bear that out.

I have found that I have a better understanding of Scripture when I glean out everything having to do with a particular subject, so that’s what I am going to do here as I present a study on this issue.

“And if I [Jesus] go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” [John 14:3]

“Which [angels] also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” [Acts 1:11]

“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” [Acts 3:20-21]

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” [Hebrews 10:35-37]

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” [Romans 13:11-12]
“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” [James 5:7-8]

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” [Hebrews 10:25]

“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.” [1st John 2:28]

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him. That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” [2nd Thessalonians 2:1-2]

“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come…Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh…Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” [Matthew 24:42, 44; 25:13]

“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” [Mark 13:33]

“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” [1st Peter 4:7]

“Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.” [Luke 12:40]

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” [1st Thessalonians 5:1-6]

“...and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” [Daniel 12:1b]

“So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.” [Job 14:12]

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be…I immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear
the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” [Matthew 24:27, 29-31]

“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” [Mark 13:24-26]

“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” [Luke 21:20-28]

“For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.” [Luke 17:24]

“For the coming of the Son of God shall not be plain; but as the lightning that shineth from the east unto the west, so will I come upon the clouds of heaven with a great host in my majesty; with my cross going before my face will I come in my majesty, shining sevenfold more than the sun will I come in my majesty with all my saints, mine angels.” [The Apocalypse of Peter, Ethiopic Text, AD 135, M.R. James translation]

“When the Christ comes, He will come in the manner of a covey of doves with the crown of doves surrounding Him. He will walk upon the heaven’s vaults with the sign of the cross leading Him. The whole world will behold Him like the sun which shines from the eastern horizon to the western. This is how He will come, with all his angels surrounding Him.” [Apocalypse of Elijah 3:2-4, AD 117]

“And then shall appear the signs of the truth; first, the sign of an out-spreading in heaven; then the sign of the sound of the trumpet; and the third, the resurrection of the dead; yet not of all, but as it is said: The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him. Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.” [The Didache 16:6-8, AD 50-120, M. B. Riddle translation]
“And the trumpet shall give a sound, which when every man heareth, they shall be suddenly afraid.” [2nd Esdras 6:23]

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” [Revelation 1:7]

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” [Jude 1:14-15]

“Behold, he comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute Judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done, and committed against Him.” [Book of Enoch 2:1]

“To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” [1st Thessalonians 3:13]

“And after these things [Antichrist] a trumpet, and the graves will be opened and the dead will rise up uncorrupted.” [Apocalypse of Ezra 4:36, M. E. Stone translation, AD 350-600]

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” [1st Thessalonians 4:16-17]

“For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” [John 5:26-29]

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” [Daniel 12:2]

“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.” [Isaiah 26:19-21]

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” [Colossians 3:4]
“And this is the will of him that sent me [Jesus], that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day...No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day...Whoso eateth my [Jesus] flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” [John 6:40, 44, 54]

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” [1st John 3:2]

“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” [1st Corinthians 15:49-52]

When you consider this passage in 1st Corinthians, it brings some clarification to this event, because more detail is given, and with the term “last trump,” clearly places this event at a much later time than before the Tribulation. The preceding list of verses gives us a schematic that we can use as an itinerary for the sequence of events at that time:

“...there shall be a time of trouble...as never was...at that time thy people shall be delivered” (Daniel 12:1); “immediately after the tribulation” (Matthew 24:29a); “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel” (1st Thessalonians 4:16); “he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet” (Matthew 24:31); “the trump of God” (1st Thessalonians 4:16); “at the last trump...and the dead shall be raised” (1st Corinthians 15:52); “I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:40); “riseth not: till the heavens be no more” (Job 14:12); “the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive...shall be caught up together with them” (1st Thessalonians 4:16-17); “gather together his elect” (Matthew 24:31)

Even though we do find Scriptural evidence in the Bible for a Rapture, the question has always been about when it was going to happen. This collation of Scripture fully illustrates that it’s going to take place after the Tribulation when Christ returns.

This notion of a Rapture, with its Pre-Tribulation, Mid-Tribulation, Partial Tribulation, and Post-Tribulation applications, has been one of the most divisive issues in the Church– with the Pre-Trib theory still being the prevailing view. If this is what you believe, still, after reading Scriptural proof; then keep on reading so I can lay out the rest.

For a long time, the Church has taught that the Rapture will be the supernatural end-time event that will signal the beginning of the Tribulation period, and Christians will be ‘removed’ from this world before ‘trouble’ starts. In the Olivet Discourse, when Jesus talked about this coming trouble (Matthew 24:3-14, Mark 13:3-13, Luke 21:7-19), He said that not one hair on your head would be affected (Luke 21:18); and because of that, the Church believes they will be raptured out.

In Matthew 24:37-40 (see also Luke 17:26-30), part of that same Discourse, Jesus said:

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the
flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”

Some proponents of the Rapture theory believe that the Matthew 24:40 term “taken” points to a Rapture; when, according to other researchers, Jesus said right before that, that the flood waters “took them,” which gives a negative connotation to the term “taken,” since He said that at the time of His return, it would be “as the days of Noah.” So, let’s take a peek at some Greek and see if we can get more of an insight to this piece of Scripture.

In Matthew 24:39, the word “took” is the Greek word ἀνέλαβε (Strong’s #142), which means “to lift, to take up, or take away.” This same word is translated as “loosing” in Acts 27:13 to describe a boat leaving the bonds of land for the sea. The unrestrained boat is lifted up and taken away by the water, which aptly explains those taken away by the flood waters. However, in Matthew 24:40, the word “taken” is translated from the word παραλαμβάνω (Strong’s #3880), and means “receive, take unto, or take with.” In Acts 15:39, “Barnabas took Mark,” and in other similar passages, this word is used to convey the act of accompaniment. But then in John 14:3, the word is translated as “receive,” where Jesus tells His disciples: “I will come again, and receive you unto myself.” Here in this dual-purposed word we can see why it was used to describe His coming, because He will receive those who are rising to meet Him, and they will accompany Him to heaven. Looking back at William Tyndale’s 1526 translation of the New Testament (as well as the subsequent Matthew’s Bible and Geneva Bible), he differentiated the language of the two lines by saying that “the flood came and took them all away,” and “one shall be received, the other shall be refused.”

There are reasons for the pre-Tribulation theory being perpetuated. When half of Europe converted to the Protestant faith because of reformers like Martin Luther who preached against Rome, they began to see the papacy as the Beast of Revelation 13:1-10 and the whore of Revelation 17. Catholics called the Council of Trent (December 13, 1545 to December 4, 1563) to discuss how to break their power, and also how to deal with the time prophecies of Daniel 7, 8 and Revelation 13. A couple of Spanish Jesuit priests were directed to write alternative interpretations of Bible prophecies. Luis de Alcazar created a doctrine which taught that the time prophecies of Daniel were fulfilled on the basis of literal time; therefore Antiochus Epiphanes was identified as the “little horn,” because he slaughtered a pig in the Holy of Holies in 164 BC. However, it made the prophecy 11 days off. It was Francisco Ribera (1537-91) who came up with the doctrine of the secret Rapture. In 1590, he wrote a 500-page commentary on the book of Revelation that refuted the Protestant view. To mask the time prophecies of Daniel occurring in the Last Days, they had to have the coming of Christ before the time prophecies kicked-in; and they began a campaign to infiltrate the Protestant Church with this doctrine.

There has also been some much-criticized research by Dave MacPherson to indicate that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture may be a fairly recent creation. Great men of God like John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Matthew Henry, John Knox, Isaac Newton, John Newton, Charles Spurgeon, Charles Wesley, John Wesley, George Whitfield, and John Wycliffe never wrote about a Pre-Trib Rapture, because the concept literally did not exist. In 1975, after years of investigation, MacPherson was able to pull the whole story together about the actual origin of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture teaching.

A British theologian by the name of John Nelson Darby (1800-82), a founding father of the Plymouth Brethren Church in England, is the guy who has received the most attention for teaching the Pre-Trib theory. Some researchers maintain that he was expressing this view as early as 1827, while Dr. Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins (authors of the Left Behind books), said he got the inspiration for his understanding of it in 1828. However, in 1829, Darby wrote an essay called “Reflections,” which became part of his Collected Writings, and it was in that essay that he actually indicates a post-tribulation ideology; and in his 1834 article “The Dispensation of
the Kingdom of Heaven,” he wrote that “the Saints...will be raised with Jesus at his second coming,” and doesn’t mention a pre-Trib Rapture. Pre-tribulation advocates keep pushing for an earlier date that pre-dates 1830, to make it appear that he originated the concept. By his own admission, he claimed 1830 as the year he gained this revelation.7

It is therefore believed that Darby heard it from Edward Irving (1792-1834) of the Apostolic Catholic Church; and Irving actually found out about it from Margaret Macdonald (c. 1815-40), a 15-year old, chronically sick girl from Port Glasgow, Scotland, who was a member of his church (along with her sister and brothers) who apparently manifested the charismatic gifts of prophecy, along with speaking in tongues, and visions. After being sick for a year and a half, and a Christian for only a year, in the spring of 1830 she had a vision, which she gave copies of to various clerical leaders, including Irving.8

The most unique part of her long, scripture-laden message was the earliest known documentation of the Pre-Tribulation theory: “Only those who have the light of God within them will see the sign of his appearance. No need to follow them who say, see here, or see there, for his day shall be as the lightning to those in whom the living Christ is. ’Tis Christ in us that will lift us up— he is the light— ‘tis only those that are alive in him that will be caught up to meet him in the air.”9

Macdonald’s vision was first published in 1840 by Dr. Robert Norton (who heard and recorded the words in person), a long-time friend of the family, in the book Memoirs of James & George Macdonald, of Port-Glasgow, a biography of her older brothers. Norton quoted a May 18, 1830 letter written by Margaret’s older sister Mary which indicated that “the house has been filled with people every day from all parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland,” listening to her expound on the Rapture and end-time events. He did not attribute the vision to Margaret until his 1861 book The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church.10

He said that during her long convalescence she had access to her family’s “extensive library” which could have included Bibles like the Self Interpreting Bible (1778), and the Columbian Family Bible (1822) which contained cross references and marginal notes similar to that in study Bibles; as well as a host of other sources which MacPherson believed could have been used as a basis to develop her idea.

In the March, 1830 edition of The Morning Watch, a quarterly-published prophecy magazine that Irving edited, he wrote an article that stated that the “translation of the saints taketh place...before the judgments which fall upon the earth at the coming of the Son of Man...just before the great consummation of wrath.”11 However, in a letter dated June 2, 1830, Irving wrote that the “substance of...Mcdonald’s visions...carry to me a spiritual conviction and a spiritual reproof which I cannot express.”

In Part 1 of an article called “Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse,” in the June issue of The Morning Watch, by an author who identified himself only as “Fidus,” wrote from a Post-Trib view. Yet, when Part 2 appeared three months later in the September, 1830 edition, he clearly elaborated a Pre-Trib view when he wrote that the

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8 Ibid., pg. 59.

9 Ibid., pg. 250.

10 Ibid., pg. 59.

11 Ibid., pg. 256.
Philadelphia church “which receives the answer of its faith in being caught up to meet him; which is thus kept from the hour of temptation...” while the Laodicean Church is described as “the last and dying stage of the Gentile church, before the gathering of the Jews...”\(^\text{12}\)

An article Darby wrote in 1850 places him squarely in the Pre-Trib corner:

“It is this passage [2\textsuperscript{nd} Thessalonians 2:1-2] which, twenty years ago, made me understand the rapture of the saints before—perhaps a considerable time before—the day of the Lord (that is, before the judgment of the living).”\(^\text{13}\)

Subsequently, Dr. Cyrus I. Scofield discovered this new teaching on a trip to England, and he took it back with him to his church in Dallas, Texas; where it became part of the Scofield Study Bible as a theological concept, and then became the official position of the Dallas Theological Seminary, as well as the Moody Bible Institute.

In an attempt to insert the pre-Tribulation Rapture into accepted doctrine, there is a theory that Ephraim the Syrian, a 4\textsuperscript{th} century theologian, wrote about a pre-tribulation Rapture 1,600 years ago. The only problem is that it is read out of context, because later in the document, the writer said that Christ is coming for His Church after the tribulation.\(^\text{14}\) And that is exactly what Matthew 24:29-30 says. In addition, this apocryphal document wasn’t even written by Ephraim, because it is actually referred to by scholars as Pseudo-Ephraim, because they consider it to be a 7\textsuperscript{th} century forgery by an unknown writer who just put Ephraim’s name on it.

There is no reason why we can’t take the Rapture verses I’ve gleaned out literally. If we do that, we can see that when Jesus returns, there will be a resurrection of the dead, and then a ‘catching away’ of the living; which will occur “at the last day” (John 6:40).

In fact, I believe that Jesus confirmed this “last day” Rapture with his “witness of three.” The number three turns up frequently in regard to Jesus:

- The Wisemen presented 3 gifts.
- Jesus was tempted 3 times.
- The wedding was on the 3rd day in Cana.
- A voice from Heaven spoke to Him 3 times.
- Jesus raised 3 from the dead during His earthly ministry.
- Jesus said, that if the temple was destroyed, in 3 days He would raise it up.
- Pilate said 3 times that he found no fault in Jesus and wanted to release Him.
- Peter denied Jesus 3 times.
- Jesus prayed 3 times in the Garden before He was betrayed.
- Jesus was crucified on the 3rd hour.
- There were 3 hours of darkness when He was on the cross.
- Jesus was buried 3 days and 3 nights.

Jesus also had an interesting way to emphasize things that also involved the number three. For example, after His resurrection, on His third appearance to His disciples, He asked Peter three times if he loved Him (John 21:15, 16, 17); which was obviously in response to Peter denying Him three times. In Mark 9:44, 46, 48, Jesus says: “Where their worm dieth not, and the

\(^{12}\) Ibid., pg. 258.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., pg. 124.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., pg. 271.
fire is not quenched.” This was done because He wanted to convey the importance of overcoming spiritual stumbling blocks. In John 6:40, 44, 54, so there was no misunderstanding, Jesus said three times: “I will raise him up at the last day.” This raising up clearly points to the Rapture.

The clincher is in Matthew 24:13 when Jesus said: “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

So, the question becomes, if the Rapture is going to occur when Jesus returns—when is He going to return? Again, let me collate some Scriptures to piece it together.

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end com.” [Matthew 24:13-14]

“And the gospel must first be published among all nations.” [Mark 13:10]

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” [2nd Timothy 3:1]

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” [2nd Timothy 3:12]

“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” [Acts 14:22]

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” [Matthew 24:21]

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;” [1st Timothy 4:1-2]

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” [2nd Timothy 3:2-7]

“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 unto fables.” [2nd Timothy 4:3-4]

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” [2nd Timothy 3:13]

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very
elect...Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." [Matthew 24:23-24, 26]

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand;) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains." [Matthew 24:15-16]

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." [2nd Thessalonians 2:3-4]

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" [1st Timothy 4:1]

Now, let’s organize this into something more concise to get a better picture of what we’re to look for:

“Gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mark 13:10); “that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (2nd Thessalonians 2:3); “then shall be great tribulation...as was not since the beginning” (Matthew 24:21); “a falling way” (2nd Thessalonians 2:3); “immediately after the tribulation of those days...they shall see the Son of man coming” (Matthew 24:29, 30)

It is God’s will that none should perish (John 3:16, 2nd Peter 3:9) before having the opportunity to receive Salvation. God promised that man would have 6 “days” (6,000 years) to reconcile himself to God, and we have breached that threshold. The “last day” that Jesus talked about, God’s wrath on man, is not meant for His people— His Church. You can see this in 1st Thessalonians 5:9: “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is why the Rapture is going to happen at that point, and not before the Tribulation, which is man’s wrath on man. With the sequence of the Scriptures I have given you, you have an absolute time frame for the coming of Jesus. There’s only one resurrection— not two; He’s only coming once— not twice. There is nowhere in the Scripture that indicates that He is coming twice. It really irritates me when I hear well-intentioned ministers on the radio or television who say that ‘Jesus could come back tonight— are you ready?’ No, Jesus is not coming back tonight! How do I know that? Because the Bible tells me so!

There are four things that have to happen before Christ can return. He will not return to this earth until the Gospel is preached to the entire world, the Antichrist is revealed, the Tribulation occurs, and the “falling away” takes place.

Technology has not only enabled us to physically navigate the globe on the water and in the air; but with satellites, we can also do it on the airwaves. The Bible has been translated into nearly every language, and the Gospel is reaching the world through missionaries, evangelism, radio, television, multi-media and computers. So, this has conceivably been fulfilled. That leaves the Antichrist being revealed (which will conceivably take place at the time of the Abomination in the Temple), the Tribulation, and the “falling away.”

There are those who try to prove a pre-Trib Rapture by saying that the “falling away” refers to the Rapture. However, you can’t “fall” and “rise” up to meet Him in the air. The term “falling away” (Strong’s #646) comes from the Greek apóstasia, meaning a “defection from truth,” and refers to someone who forsakes their faith or principles. It is where we get our English word
“apostate.” The only other place it is used in the New Testament is in Acts 21:21 where it is rendered as “forsake.” So, the “falling away” is not the Rapture.

Jesus is going to return at the Last Trump. This is confirmed by Scripture, so if you’re one who would be considered a lukewarm Christian, it’s time to get serious about your faith. To me, it is clear that the Word of God indicates that there will not be a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, and I shudder to think what will happen when those expecting one don’t get it. For many years the Church has gotten away from the end-time warning, because they think they’re going to be raptured out, so they don’t have to worry about how things are escalating and prophecy is being fulfilled. What will they do if there is no rapture? Will this cause them to lose their faith? Will this be the source of the “falling away”—those whose faith will not be strong enough to endure the strong-arm tactics of a nation bent on being part of a world government. Here’s a verse which spells that out exactly:

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” [2nd Peter 3:3-4]

The opening of the 3rd Seal in Revelation brings the Black Horse, with a pair of balances (Revelation 6:5-6), and represents the control that the Illuminati has on the commodities and financial structure of this world, enabling them to eventually use that control to enslave it. The 3rd Vial causes the rivers and fountains of water to become as blood because of the shed blood of the saints and prophets (Revelation 16:4-7). The 3rd Trumpet causes a great star to fall from heaven that is called Wormwood and a 3rd of the waters and fountains of waters become Wormwood and many men die (Revelation 8:10-11). When we consider the correlation of Seal, Vial, and Trumpet attributes, which I believe is the way it should be interpreted; we have the introduction of an additional detail, and that is Wormwood. I believe the “great star” is not a literal star, but is actually symbolically referring to an angel (which is also how it’s referenced in Revelation 12:4); and in this case, a fallen angel. Using the Law of First Mention, let’s look at the first occurrence of the word “wormwood.”

“Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;” [Deuteronomy 29:18]

Looking at how this word is used in the context of this verse, I believe that this angel ushers in the event known as the great “falling away.” I believe the next event on the prophetic calendar is the war outlined in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39, which is going to be an Arab attack against Israel that will end up drawing in Russia. Because of the magnitude of this war, I believe that many Christians will think that this is Armageddon, and will wonder why they’re not being raptured out.

Obviously Christians haven’t had to think about being on the earth during the Tribulation, but nevertheless it’s going to happen, because there is not going to be a Rapture. The sooner you come to that understanding, the sooner you can acclimate yourself to being prepared for it. Even more than now, during the Tribulation, we’re going to be besieged by false prophets, preachers who have gotten rich from peddling their brand of religion, and Churches that have fallen under the deception of ecumenicalism to preach a watered-down, powerless Christianity. This will be a time of great disillusionment as many people reject Christ because of the
fermentation of doubt. That is why it is important to steel your mind now, and begin taking steps to get ready for that time.
CHAPTER THREE
WELCOME TO THE MATRIX

In my book Final Warning: A History of the New World Order, I methodically lay out the path that our country has been set upon. A complex plan of deception has been put into place; and there’s no question as to what forces have been behind it, and what their ultimate goal is. After looking at many pieces of this puzzle, although the picture is incomplete, I was able to put enough together that I could step back and get a panoramic view of how we got to where we are. It’s not a pretty picture. Our way of life has been drastically changed, and will continue to change, because of the tyranny of a government out of control. How did this happen—right under our nose?

Without doing the research for yourself, it’s difficult to envision what has been put into place. A World Government that is able to control every aspect of our life—fully directing our day-in and day-out activities. Surprisingly it was a movie that was able to grab a hold of us, change our perspective, and show us the very thing we had become blind to. It was the 1999 Warner Brothers movie called The Matrix. Not considered a major project, it was shot in Australia to save money. Expectations were not high for this edgy sci-fi action film, however, after its opening, it was quite clear that its writers, the Wachowski Brothers, had struck gold by tapping into the collective intellectual consciousness of a nation that was preparing to enter a new millennium. Most movies are made to entertain, and are fairly straightforward in their approach, but The Matrix challenged its viewers. Incredibly unique was the fact that different people, who saw it, had different interpretations of its meaning.

The plot revolved around Neo, a computer hacker (played by Keanu Reeves) who discovers that the world he lives in is nothing more than a computer simulation that is being fed into his brain as his body rests in a pod, intravenously kept alive, in the real world, along with endless numbers of others, providing the energy that sustains the machines that run the world. This was a symbolic representation of the Government’s aspiration for us, to have us totally dependent and reliant on them because they control every aspect of society.

When I read the original script, there were lines in there that did not appear in the final version of the movie. For example, “Anthony” (whose name was changed to Choi in the movie) says to DuJour about Neo: “I told you, honey, he may look like just another geek but this here is all we got left standing between Big Brother (a term from George Orwell’s book 1984 and the New World Order.” Also, in a chatroom called “The Matrix,” we find the following comments:

Quark: “The Matrix is a euphemism for the government.”
Superastic: “No, the Matrix is the system controlling our lives.”

It’s not hard to see why these lines were removed. They didn’t want the movie coming across as being a political commentary that was intended to convey their contention that we are living in the “Matrix,” which is being controlled in the real world by the boys in the New World Order.

Especially revealing is the scene in the movie when Neo meets Morpheus (Lawrence Fishburne), the leader of the resistance, at the Lafayette Hotel, and tells him what the Matrix is:

“The Matrix is everywhere. It is all around us. Even now, in this very room. You can see it when you look out your window, or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes, to blind you from the truth.”
Applying the Wachowski’s innuendo to our current situation, we find that they have described a system of ‘Command and Control’ that has been able to so dominate and overwhelm that we have been completely deceived into believing a lie. The connotation was that as long as we are “plugged-in” to that system, we have lost our freedom.

In the movie, Neo is unplugged from the Matrix, enabling him to see the real world. Most people have been deceived and are not aware of the nefarious plans of the New World Order, so, it’s probably news to you that the world you thought you were living in—doesn’t really exist.

WHAT IS THE REAL WORLD?

During an online interview, the Wachowski’s were asked: “Do you believe that our world is in some way similar to the ‘Matrix,’ that there is a larger world outside of this existence.” The answer: “That is a larger question than you actually might think. We think the most important sort of fiction attempts to answer some of the big questions. One of the things that we talked about when we first had the idea of the ‘Matrix’ was an idea that I believe philosophy and religion and mathematics all try to answer. Which is, a reconciling between a natural world and another world that is perceived by our intellect.”

On an intellectual level, it may be difficult to comprehend the possibility that another world could be co-existing with the reality we see with our own two eyes, and experience every day. Yet, there seems to be a segment of the scientific community who is exploring the idea of another world that can’t be seen.

Chuck Missler wrote in his book *Cosmic Codes: Hidden Messages From the Edge of Eternity* about a theory that was put forth by a protégé of Einstein, David Bohm, of the University of London, one of the most respected quantum physicists in the world. In his work at the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, he discovered that in plasmas (gases consisting of high-density electrons and positive ions), the particles would stop acting singularly and began taking on characteristics of being part of a larger, interlocked body. At Princeton University, in 1947, he continued his research in the action of oceans of particles, paying particular attention to what appeared to be an organized behavior; almost as if they knew what each of the other particles were doing.  

Bohm’s theory deals with nature of location, because his interpretation of quantum physics pointed to the fact that at the subquantum level, “location ceased to exist.” More specifically, “all points in space become equal to all other points in space, and it was meaningless to speak of anything as being separate from anything else.” This property is called “nonlocality.” Paul Davis of the University of Newcastle, in Tyne, England, found out in his research, that with all the particles constantly interacting and separating, “the nonlocal aspects of quantum systems is therefore a general property of nature.”

One of the amazing observations that Bohm had made, is that the tangible reality of the world as we know it, is actually an illusion, much like a holographic image; and under that is a “deeper order of existence,” or an immense, primary level of reality that “gives birth to all the objects and appearances of our physical world,” just as a holographic film reveals holographic images. Bohm called this deeper level of reality, the “implicate order” (‘enfolded’), while he calls our level of existence the “explicate order” (‘unfolded’). From the evidence of his research, Bohm has suggested that “our world and everything in it are only ghostly images, projections

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16 Ibid., pg. 339.
from a level of reality so beyond our own that the real reality is literally beyond both space and
time."\(^\text{17}\)

Missler, a Naval Academy graduate and former CEO of several international high-tech
companies, wrote that "the disturbing insight from our present understanding of reality is that the
universe may be some kind of digital simulation."\(^\text{18}\) All physical objects are composed of matter,
the smallest particles of which are atoms. God created all things, which means He not only
created atoms, but He is controlling the atoms, and holding them together in all their various
configurations.

"For by him 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]

It is surprising the aspects of God's Word that you gloss over because you don't think about the
kinds of things that might be in there. We know that we live in a three dimensional world, yet the
Bible says there are four dimensions:

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in
love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and
depth, and height;" [Ephesians 3:17-18]

In Job 22:12, it says: "Is not God in the height of heaven?" The Bible even subtly hints that
this particular matter is a mystery:

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a
matter. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is
unsearchable." [Proverbs 25:2-3]

"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]

The designation of "height" signifies the 4th dimension and God resides in this spirit realm,
as well as Satan (who in 2nd Corinthians 4:4 calls the "god of this world"), angels, and demons.
The spirit realm was in existence before this earth was created, and represents the Real World.
Our physical world, our perceived reality, is a created environment, a world within a world, an
anomaly. It is not real. When we consider Bohm's theory in the light of the implications made in
The Matrix, the following line of thinking is developed:

Explicate - the physical world, or the Matrix - our perceived reality.
Implicate - the spiritual world – the real world.

The Bible paints a detailed picture of what we are. Rev. Bill Anderson explains it this way:
"Man is a spirit, it is who he really is, but he possesses a soul, that makes him unique and

\(^{17}\) Ibid., pg. 340.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., pg. 346
different from everyone else and he lives in a house called a body.” If man is a spirit, that explains why Romans 8:1 says: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The “flesh” refers to the physical body within which our spirit resides in our physical world.

When Morpheus and Neo entered the sparring program of the Construct, Morpheus said that it was “similar to the programmed reality of the Matrix. It has the same basic rules, rules like gravity. What you must learn is that these rules are no different than the rules of a computer system. Some of them can be bent. Others, can be broken.” James 5:17, says that Elijah “was a man subject to like passions as we are,” yet he called fire down from heaven, parted the Jordan River, and brought the widow’s son back to life. He clearly had the ability to function within the spirit realm. Yet, he is one of the very few in the Bible who had that level of anointing to operate on such an advanced level. What is it that allowed someone to walk in that kind of power?

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” [1st Corinthians 15:45-49]

In Matthew 3:2, John the Baptist preached that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” In Matthew 4:17, we find Jesus preaching the same exact thing. The term “at hand” is the Greek word eggizo (Strong’s #1448) and according to Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon is translated as “to draw or come near, to approach.” In the past, this was thought to refer to the End-time period when Jesus would return to this Earth to rule and reign. However, this is incorrect. Another meaning of the term is to “to bring near, to join one thing to another.” Jesus came to bring the kingdom of heaven to earth, and to teach the concept of being able to operate here within the spirit realm. Look at the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:10– He said: “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” He is identifying the kingdom principle of doing on earth what is done in heaven.

After Jesus finished His Sermon on the Mount and went to Capernaum, He healed Peter's Mother-in-Law, and that night, many came to be prayed for, and were healed. Because of the throng, He decided to travel by boat to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. It was on that trip that a storm arose, and because of their fear, the Disciples awoke Jesus, who got up and rebuked the storm and the sea became calm (Matthew 8:26). On the other side, in the country of the Gergesenes (Gadarenes), He was approached by two demon-possessed men who lived among the tombs in the local cemetery. A demon spoke (Matthew 8:29) through one of the men: “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” You’ll find another rendition of this event in Mark 5:1-20 that goes into more detail; but the book of Matthew was written by a Jew for Jews in the early Church, and as such, seems to concentrate more on the establishment and growth of the kingdom.

The Jimmy Swaggart Bible Commentary believes that the word “time” refers to the period outlined in Revelation 20:1-3, when Satan, fallen angels, and demonic spirits would be shut-up

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in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years.\textsuperscript{20} However, at this point of time, would Satan know of this? Though it occurred early in Jesus’ ministry, it was not recorded by Matthew until later. The earliest copy of Matthew has a writing style that was used in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century, and it most certainly was written before the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 - maybe as early as AD 60. It has long been assumed to be the first Gospel. Whereas, the book of Revelation, which contain the visions of the Apostle John, is believed to have been written during the period of AD 90-95. There was nothing in the writings of the Prophets of the Old Testament that would give Satan any detail of his fate. So, that calls into question what the term actually means.

The word “time” is translated from the word kairos (Strong’s #2540), which means “before the time appointed,”\textsuperscript{21} while the New Analytical Greek Lexicon indicates that it refers to “a destined time.”\textsuperscript{22} Because this phrase appears in Matthew and not Mark, which is more detailed, my feeling is that this comment is actually recognizing Satan’s knowledge of the intent of the ministry of Jesus, and what its success would mean to the kingdom of darkness.

The 3\frac{1}{2} years of Christ’s earthly ministry was made up of doing signs and wonders, healing the sick, and doing the Father’s will. In heaven, sickness does not exist, so for Jesus, in teaching the kingdom concept of operating within the spirit realm, He had to teach that we have the authority to eradicate those things that do not have the right to co-exist. In Matthew 14:26, when Jesus walked on the water, he “bent” the physical laws of this world. But then, He is the Son of God. Jesus imparted not only power and authority to his disciples, but also the knowledge of operating in the spirit realm. Peter was able to walk on water (Matthew 14:29) and Philip was able to supernaturally transport himself (Acts 8:39).

Jesus said that those who followed Him were not of this world, just as He was not of this world (John 17:14); and He said to those who opposed Him (John 8:23): “Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.” Jesus, and those who followed Jesus, although living on this physical world, considered themselves separated from it, and were able to operate within the spirit realm. Jesus said (Luke 10:19): “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” This same power and authority pertains to the followers of Christ today. Jesus said (John 14:12): “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”

Throughout the New Testament, there are constant reminders of our Spiritual nature, that, as Christians, we have to be mindful of, if we are to fulfill the destiny that God has planned and purposed for our lives.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” \textsuperscript{[1st Corinthians 2:14-16]}


“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” [2nd Corinthians 4:18]

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” [John 15:19]

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” [Romans 12:2]

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” [1st John 2:15]

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” [James 4:4]

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:2)

So, what The Matrix is telling us, is that the real world represents the spirit realm, and the Matrix represents the physical world, that we perceive to be the real world. A clue to this possibility lies in the city of “Zion” that Tank talked to Neo about—identifying it as the only remaining refuge for humans. Zion was one of the hills that the city of Jerusalem stood on, and the name became synonymous with that city. The Wachowski Brothers are from Chicago, and all the street names used in the movie were from Chicago. But did you know that “Zion” is also a name from Chicago.

In 1900, Evangelist John Alexander Dowie (1847-1907) from Scotland, purchased 6,600 acres (10 square miles) of farmland about 40 miles north of Chicago (between Chicago and Milwaukee), on the west shore of Lake Michigan in Lakeland County, to establish Zion City, a “city of God,” that would be a Christian community. He said: “God’s rule is the only government that brings peace.” Because many people were being healed, his ministry became very successful; and his Christian Catholic (Apostolic) Church was headquartered in a 7-story building in Chicago. He was arrested 100 times in a single year for practicing medicine without a license. His printing company distributed their weekly publication Leaves of Healing, he had 13 “healing homes” (for ministry to the sick), and he had a worldwide missions program.

Along with Washington, DC, it was one of the few cities in the country to be completely planned before construction ever started. He communicated with the mayors of several large cities for suggestions, and he was able to pull in consultants from Chicago to lay out streets, lots, utilities, parks, a golf course, and a marina. Dowie modeled the street layout after the Union Jack flag of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. All the north-south streets had Biblical names and were in alphabetical order. The only non-biblical name was for “Caledonia Boulevard,” the Roman word for Scotland. The east-west streets were numbered, starting with 1st Street at the state line (now Russell Road). All of the main streets led to the center of town where the Church was located— the 6,000 seat Zion Tabernacle (which burned down in 1937). It had originally extended all the way to the Lake, until the land around the Lake was purchased by the state of Illinois to preserve the beach, and some of the diagonal streets were never finished.

Dowie started companies to provide work for those who were moving in. He relocated the Zion Lace Factory from Nottingham, England. It was the first lace company in America, and they exported around the world. He established the Zion Cookie Factory who exported fig bars to
Europe and Asia. There was also the Zion Candy Factory, Zion Bank, Zion Hotel (which housed workers helping to build the city), a brick kiln factory, lumber mill, electric plant, and general store. He established a public school system— even a 4-year college. The City of Zion even issued their own postal stamps.

The City of Zion was established in July, 1901, with the first house being built in August, 1901, and by the end of the year, construction was proceeding very quickly. The lots were leased to settlers through Zion Land Investments, and held in trust by the Church for 1,100 years. The reasoning behind that was that Jesus would be returning in 100 years, and then after the 1,000 year millennium, there would be no reason for leases. The profits from the businesses, as well as the tithes and offerings would support the church.

Within a few years, Dowie became an alcoholic, was accused of polygamy, suffered a mental breakdown, stroke and partial paralysis before dying in Zion. His 25-room mansion, known as Shiloh House, which was built in 1901, is still standing, is privately owned, and is a museum and home to the Zion Historical Society.

Although it is no longer the Christian refuge envisioned by Dowie, today, the city of Zion is a viable community of 8.2 square miles, with a population of about 25,000 people. Even though Dowie’s ministry ended in controversy and failure, the fact remains, that for a time, he did operate in the supernatural, because the walls of his church were lined with hundreds of braces, canes, and crutches of people who were healed through his ministry. Because of his credibility, he established the right to pray for the sick without interference from government authority; and some of his followers became influential figures in the Pentecostal revival movement, such as John G. Lake, who was a deacon in his church.

To a Christian wanting to escape the secular world to live in a self-sufficient Christian community like Zion, the prospect of it certainly seemed like heaven on earth. I believe that the Wachowskis used Zion as an allegory in The Matrix to add another layer of meaning within the movie, and that was to associate a Christian community with the real world— thus giving it a spiritual identity.

At the end, Neo tells the AI (a symbolic representation of the kingdom of darkness): “I know that you’re afraid. You’re afraid of us. You’re afraid of change. I don’t know the future. I didn’t come here to tell you how this is going to end. I came here to tell you how it’s going to begin. I’m going to hang up this phone, and then I’m going to show these people what you don’t want them to see. I’m going to show them a world, without you. A world without rules and controls, without borders or boundaries, a world where anything is possible...” This is a very powerful statement, and if we break it down into its various spiritual aspects, we can get a better idea of what he is saying:

“...and then I’m going to show these people what you don’t want them to see. I’m going to show them a world, without you.”

As Christians, we are to be a “light to the world,” to take people out of the darkness, where they are blinded and living in deception; to the light of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who represents truth. Jesus said (John 8:32): “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” As followers of Christ, being in the world, but not of the world, we should be able to see through the veil that has been placed over the eyes of those entrenched in the world system. In Heaven, sickness doesn’t exist, depression doesn’t exist, and the works of darkness do not exist. Jesus empowered his Disciples, and by extension, the Church, to apply kingdom principles here on earth to operate within the spirit realm to destroy the works of darkness.
“A world without rules and controls, without borders or boundaries,”

From the very beginning, it has been Satan’s goal to rob people of their true spiritual heritage. Through his deception of mankind, he manipulated cultures through government authority, and to a certain extent, church authority, in an attempt to reshape this world into a place devoid of God, and His influence. It says in Colossians 2:20— “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances...” Because of the spiritual authority, attributes, and power available to all Christians, we have the ability to be separate from this world. Because of the truth of God’s Word, we can see through the lies of Satan, and not be forced to stay within the confines of the physical realities of this world. These physical realities, or physical boundaries, do not exist in the spirit realm, and therefore we are not obligated to recognize or be restrained by them.

“a world where anything is possible...”

Jesus said (Luke 18:27): “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” This brings us back to the fact, that as the Creator, God is ultimately in control of everything. The world we live in is subject only to God’s power and authority, and Satan is only able operate if he is given the opportunity. To gain the upper hand, he uses lies (because he is the father of lies, John 8:44) to hide his true nature to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10). Only through relationship with God, and by walking in the spirit, can we access the authority and ability to not be held back by the things of the physical world that seek to keep us bound.

The country as we know it is going to come crashing down, but it is being done in a way so that it won’t look like it was pushed. As the times we live in continue to get tougher, and the New World Order solidifies around us; the created reality that we are exposed to is meant to distract us from a God-ordained reality that is available to us as Believers. It is important not to get caught up in this created world, but it is being made increasingly harder to do so because of changes that are being made to manipulate our perception of reality. The world of sports and entertainment has created billion dollar industries that vie for the hearts and minds of an unwitting public. A controlled mainstream media continues to deceive Americans by making them believe they have a choice in who runs this country, when they are actually hiding the fact of what is going on behind the scenes to destroy our republic and have it replaced by a socialistic world government. The public education system that spawned the architects of our country’s takeover continues to churn out educators, politicians, foreign policy and economic experts who perpetuate this conspiracy, and create a populace of good citizens that are programmed not to question their government. With our manufacturing base destroyed by a government that made it easier for companies to leave this country to seek cheap labor, millions lost their jobs; yet, every day, at the grocery store, at the department store, and the gas pump, we see prices escalate.

While America plays, shops, and watches American Idol and Dancing With the Stars, and follow their friends on Facebook; our government has been engineering total economic collapse; and has gotten away with it because Americans are too distracted to take the time to be informed, and have been led to believe that the government has their best interests at heart. Many ministries have ignored what is going on in this country, because they would rather preach “feel-good” sermons and sell you books, DVDs and CDs to spread a message of sunshine and rainbows. They will ultimately have to answer for their sin.
CHAPTER FOUR
LOOKING AT OURSELVES

A few years back, I found myself sitting on the edge of the table in my doctor’s office, telling him that I had been getting headaches every day for about four months. What prompted me to finally make an appointment to see him, were the chest pains I started getting when I was breaking up shale in my back yard. He asked me what was going on in my life, and I began telling him about all the work my wife and I were doing to our house, so much so that it was consuming all of our time. I related things that were going on at work. I expressed the frustration of working on my first book for so long, and not have it parlayed into anything that was beneficial to my writing career. And then was the investment I was making into my church, doing what I thought God wanted me to do, only to see the church move into a different direction. Without hesitation, the doctor told me that my headaches and chest pains were probably being caused by stress.

Stress! You’ve got to be kidding. Ever since I was a child, I was always doing something—always working on something. And when I got older, because of my organizational skills, I prided myself on being able to effortlessly multi-task. My wife criticized me because I was always working on a project. She said I didn’t know how to have fun. In the early 1990s, in the midst of working on my first book, she stood in the doorway of my den and said that ever since she knew me I had been working on that book. It was an obsession. In reality, it was more than that. I had to always be working on something. It was what I did. It was as natural as breathing. I always felt I had to be doing something productive. So, for the doctor to tell me that I was experiencing stress-related symptoms was like telling me that I could no longer handle what I had always done.

Even though he made the arrangements for me to have a stress test to rule out anything heart-related, my elevated blood pressure bolstered his argument that I needed to decompress. I began to realize that in my middle-age, I was not going to be able to handle the level of stress, pressure, and aggravation that I could when I was younger.

He explained to me, that even if I could afford to retire and immediately fly to some Caribbean island to lie on the beach, my blood pressure would still be high, and I would still get headaches. Immediate changes had to be made. Psychologically-speaking, my mind was like an onion, and I had to start regressing backwards by peeling away each layer to achieve restoration.

Here’s a good illustration that my sister-in-law e-mailed to me:

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, “How heavy is this glass of water?” Answers called out ranged from 20 grams to 500 grams. The lecturer replied, “The absolute weight doesn’t matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that’s not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I’ll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you’ll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it’s the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes.”

He continued: “And that’s the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won’t be able to carry on. When we’re refreshed, we can carry on with the burden. So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don’t carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow.”
Without a doubt, this is good advice. But what about multi-dimensional or compounded stress, which is what most of us are exposed to today.

In the workplace, employers want their workers to be able to wear many hats. For example, they want someone to be able to be a Receptionist, Secretary, Administrative Assistant, Personal Assistant, Filing Clerk, Clerical Assistant, and to also do Customer Service. But they don’t want to pay a lot to get all that. And then outside of work, there’s the responsibility of doing parent-related activities; and at church, there’s the responsibility of carrying out those duties. So, you see, we are prone to stress from multiple origins. For a number of years, my mother liked to work in her garden to plant flowers, but recently, as she has gotten older, she’s talked about not looking forward to doing all that work. My response was, if it is no longer relaxing or a joy to do it, then you should stop doing it so it isn’t a source of stress.

My point here, is that unknowingly, we are already targets of something that is already making our lives difficult, which is something that has to be addressed; before you can even start to deal with the kind of thing that I believe is going to be unfolding in the near future.

To help me unwind, and target the headaches, my doctor prescribed Effexor-- an anti-depressant. It seems that the same medicine that is used to battle depression, is also used to combat stress and anxiety. Being a Christian, it was hard for me to reconcile the use of medicine to help me, since we are taught that we are to “lean on the everlasting arms” and to take our burdens to the Lord and leave them there. Jesus is quoted as saying (Matthew 11:28): “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And then there is that old standby in Isaiah 40:31 that says: “…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.”

Besides feeling like I was less of a man for having to take this kind of medication, my faith was shaken because I felt like I had let God down— that I was disappointing Him. My relationship with my Heavenly Father began to decline as my prayer life suffered. Here I was, working toward what I thought was my God-ordained destiny, only to be derailed. I had always felt secure, and protected, but now, I felt vulnerable and exposed. I no longer had a clear vision of what my Call in life was, or if I even really had a Call. I had worked my whole life towards something that now appeared to be a complete waste. I felt empty and alone.

Because I believe that God is true to His word, then I had to assume that I was being consumed by a mindset that could have only been formulated in the pits of Hell in an attempt to delay me from pursuing my destiny. This attack was all encompassing. It entailed a mental (mind), emotional (heart), physical (body) and spiritual (soul) onslaught. Noted Bible teacher Joyce Meyer preached a series of messages about the mind being the battlefield. It is here that the battle begins, and it is here where it must end. As far as stress, it is a war that is fought on multiple fronts.

As I alluded to earlier, because of the multi-faceted origins of stress, we are exposed to stressful situations from various areas in our life. Therein lays the problem. We live at a different time, and our lives are formatted much differently now, then they were in the 1950s and 1960s.

For example, when I grew up, my mother didn’t have to work. She was able to be a stay-at-home-mom. There was a clearly defined traditional delineation of family duties and responsibilities; and because of that, life was much simpler. Now, both parents have to work, and in some cases even have multiple jobs. That creates a scenario of having to get a baby sitter so you can work, and coordinating that represents a point of stress.

Working at a job represents the primary source of stress, and you can even break that down into multiple categories. There’s the aggravation of commuting to work, whether it is via mass transit and dealing with crowds, scheduling and delays; or driving and dealing with long distances and traffic. Then you have the interaction with co-workers, the social atmosphere and
dealing with personality conflicts. If you’re interested in upward mobility, there’s the constant strategizing to accomplish that. And then you have your job responsibilities, and productivity issues.

Psychology professors Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter wrote about the fundamental changes in the workplace and the nature of our jobs.23 The concern is more for short-term financial gains, rather than long-term stability, by producing items as cheaply as possible, and considering workers a commodity, rather than a resource.24 Downsizing, retirement and layoffs are pressuring less people to do more work (now called multi-tasking), learn new technology, and constantly increase productivity.

Because of our economy, wage concessions have forced lower salaries. This causes people to work more hours to make the same amount of money, or forces them to get additional part-time employment. This means less time spent with the family, and less leisure time. Work overload, job dissatisfaction, and the pressure to succeed have all contributed to employment stress.

Second, is the stress at home; and again, this can be broken down into multiple categories. You have structural issues, such as having to do with maintenance to your house, yard work, and cleaning. If you’re someone that owns an older house, you know there’s always something that has to be done. There are the emotional issues such as marital relationships, and having to raise children. There are the financial issues, which are inexplicably connected to all the others. Having money problems in a marriage is the root problem of many divorces.

In a sense, we may have been made prone to stress from the very beginning. Susan Littwin writes in The Postponed Generation that children raised by parents who sheltered them from the harsh realities of life, have practically set them up for failure because of not teaching the values of hard work and sacrifice.25 Materialism and the need for status have created a preoccupation with self, and the need for its satisfaction. Our fast-food credit card want-it-all-at-once culture is all about our quest for instant gratification, yet we live in an economy where the prices of things have increased over 1000% compared to our parent’s generation. Inflation, escalating interest rates, impatience, and an infatuation with material things have made it more difficult to achieve the financial stability our parents had. What we refer to as the “rat race” is a far cry from the America of years gone by, when life was not so hectic. This in turn has affected the quality of life, and the prospects of financial security upon retirement, but has also forced the Lord to take a backseat in our lives and in our hearts.

Third, is the stress experienced at church; and although the pastor is the key person in a church, it takes many lay leaders in a congregation, working together as a team, to fulfill the vision that the pastor has. Roles such as assistant pastors, deacons, elders, teachers, helpers, musicians, singers, and technical people (sound, multi-media), have to be filled. It is here that you find truth in the adage that 20% of the people do 80% of the work.

Some Christians are forced to put on their “game face” when they go to church, trying to conform to the standards someone else is setting for them. They don’t allow it to come off because they feel forced to live a “perfect life.” Those in leadership positions are more


24 Ibid., pg. 2.

susceptible because they feel like they've been put up on a pedestal as an example. It takes a lot of effort to keep up such a facade, and tends to be very draining.

Legendary minister Charles Spurgeon, during the last years of his life (he died when he was 57), preached to 10,000 people a week. He wrote many books that are still utilized by pastors and students. He literally spent his life working on Kingdom things. In his book Lectures to My Students, in the chapter called “The Minister's Fainting Fits,” he candidly talked about his attacks of depression.

In his book Clergy and Laity Burn-out, William H. Willimon observed that “people appear to burn-out in church not necessarily because they are overworked, but because they are overburdened with the trivial and the unimportant.” In other words, the multi-dimensional, or compounded stress of life that is unavoidable. Generally what happens is that people that are burdened with stress will step down from their positions, and eventually leave the church, because they feel inadequate and fear that people will perceive them as being failures because they are not able to handle it all.

Then there as that fourth area of stress for those people that are involved in personal projects, have businesses or enterprises on the side, or are involved in politics or other groups they may be active in such as charitable organizations. Anything that would involve an additional level of commitment is going to be another point of origin for stress.

It is no wonder, that somebody juggling all of this would experience stress, especially when most people struggle with the inability to manage their time effectively and set priorities.

The world is a cruel place, and I have always felt that our public school system has neglected to properly prepare our kids to face the responsibilities of being an adult. You go right from high school or college and being sheltered at home, to looking for a job, working, shopping, paying taxes and bills; yet there is very little training in school in regard to filling out job applications, interviewing for a job, handling a checking account, voting, running a household, having a financial budget, and being responsible with credit cards. Your kids have heard you complaining for years about the bills, but when they start working, and find out they have to pay taxes— life’s not fair. They’ve entered life at a disadvantage because they are uninformed. They’ve experienced a form a culture shock. So, already they’re stressed out because they could conceivably be starting out life financially “in the hole.” Until they get guidance and experience, it could be a little while before they can get out. For some, things never change, and they’re always “behind the eight ball.”

It is this multi-dimensional aspect of stress that makes it appear that life is caving in on them from all angles, regardless if it’s because of errors in judgment or circumstances beyond their control. There is a term for this all-encompassing type of stress.

We’ve all heard the term “burn-out,” and perhaps you’ve even used it. After a particularly tough day at work, you went to bed early because you felt really “burned-out.” Given what the word actually represents, this is an inaccurate use of the word.

Although the word is derived from Rocketry, and describes the “moment when all the fuel of a rocket engine is used up,” its usage dates back to 1710 and Webster’s Dictionary indicates that it was something that was “worn out by excessive or improper use.”

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connotation here is about being exhausted or worn out to the point of having to be discarded, or replaced. Therefore it seems to be a more serious term, compared to the phrase that someone just ran out of gas.

The term burn-out more aptly describes someone who has put so much time, effort and ability into something, only to expend themselves beyond their means, come crashing down, and then are unable to function normally. Willimon writes that the “word implies that our energy is gone. We cannot summon the energy to do what needs to be done. We appear distracted, tired, empty.”

Maslach and Leiter indicate that “burn-out is the index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit, and will—an erosion of the human soul. It is a malady that spreads gradually and continually over time, putting people into a downward spiral from which it’s hard to recover.” They put more of an emphasis on a person’s environmental influence, rather than personal shortcomings and weaknesses, by saying that “burn-out is not just about the presence of negative emotions. It is also about the absence of positive ones.”

So you see, we’re talking about something a little more involved than just running out of gas, or feeling wiped out. We’re talking about a long-term, very debilitating form of emotional exhaustion. Some physicians will diagnose burn-out as depression, while others will treat it as a psychiatric disorder. Maslach and Leiter state that “burn-out is simply what clinical depression looks like when the patient manages to make it to work.” Burn-out is multiplied stress that comes from different origins so that there is no escape from it.

Here are some of the physical symptoms of burn-out: exhaustion or chronic fatigue, muscle tension, feelings of failure, loss of enthusiasm, negativity, cynicism, skepticism, hostility, ineffectiveness, a sense of helplessness, the inability to see a way out of problems, feelings of inadequacy, headaches, gastrointestinal illness (such as ulcers), high blood pressure, greater susceptibility to colds and flu, and physical withdrawal. Mental symptoms arise in the form of anxiety, stress, depression, sleep disturbances, and psychological withdrawal.

Stress contributes to 90% of all diseases, and half of all doctor visits are stress-related. Anxiety reduction is big business for physicians as they medicate for treatment, and in most cases don’t try to address the origins. They medicate, rather than educate.

Fortunately, my doctor used medication as a bridge to get me from where I was, to where I needed to be; and I had six months to get there.

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31 Ibid., pg. 28.

32 Ibid., pg. 32.
CHAPTER FIVE
THE RISING STORM

We are all products of our environment and upbringing. We are molded and shaped by what we experience and learn in life. By looking at the seeds that were planted in our childhood, we can discover how we grew into what we became.

My mother was saved through the ministry of Leroy Jenkins in the late 1960s, and soon after that, the abrupt change in my mother’s life caused my parents to divorce. We began going to a non-denominational church that had a lot of revivals. So, I ended up having to go to church everyday except Monday. Not exactly what I wanted to do at that age, but my mother was faithful to God. I could have sat there and hated it; but since I had to be there anyway, I decided it was better to be open and receptive. Because of that, many good seeds were planted in my life.

When I was about 8 or 9, I can remember on two occasions somebody telling me that I was going to grow up to be a preacher. I never really thought much about it, and I figured they said that to all the kids. Well, when I grew up, I got away from church, and the Lord.

You would have thought that I would have known better. My mother had booklets from Leroy Jenkins’s ministry, and one was his testimony. He said that when he was a young man, God had called him to preach, and he didn’t want to preach, so he ran away from God. One day, while changing a window, a glass plate slid through his arm, nearly severing it. At that time, medical science wasn’t advanced enough to effectively reattach it, and gangrene had set in. He found his way to a revival meeting and there he surrendered to God, and was completely healed. This story should have been enough to scare me— but it wasn’t.

When I would look into the mirror and see the scar on my forehead, it is a constant reminder of being hit by a car when I was 2½ years old. Another time, in elementary school, I fell in a deep construction hole in the street, but managed to catch myself on the edge and hold on till someone came and pulled me out. So I knew that the Lord definitely had His hand on me, and had spared my life for a reason. But what? I didn’t want to find out.

When I started going to college, then got involved in politics, I found myself juggling those responsibilities, as well as working a full-time job. It seemed easy at that age. I remember doing homework, watching television, and listening to the Philadelphia Phillies game– all at the same time. And then my first serious relationship failed, and for the first time in my life, I felt emotional pain. The only thing that helped, was work, and lots of it.

Even though I had gotten away from the Lord, I was never far enough away to forget that there was a Call of God on my life. Soon after I got married, I made a half-hearted attempt to rededicate my life to the Lord. But that commitment turned out to be more word, than deed. I was what you would call a lukewarm Christian. Real lukewarm. I wasn’t going to church, but I was studying the Bible, and doing research on the New World Order and its relationship to Bible prophecy.

The incident that got me to start thinking that God still had his eye on me, was back in January of 1986. I had abdominal pains, and my family doctor misdiagnosed the pain as the result of stress. Two days later, my ruptured appendix was removed. After the operation, someone in the hospital told me: “Boy, you’re lucky, some people die after a half an hour.”

Soon, work began to dominate my life. I poured everything into my work. I did whatever was necessary to get the job done— even at the expense of my family. I took work home, worked overtime, even worked overnight. I worked 70 and 80 hours a week. Back in 1993, I averaged over 65 hours a week, and in one week I worked 92 hours.

But I had to prove myself. I had to show what I could do. I had to be somebody. It didn’t work. I became my own worst enemy. The stress and fatigue I was under from over-extending
myself nearly pushed me to the point of emotional instability. I did and said things which nullified the potential that I was trying to convey.

One day I had a conversation with my boss, and he wondered why I wasn’t happy with my job. I told him that I liked my job, but that I didn’t want to be a bookkeeper for forty years. He said: “Why not?” Here I am, trying to get ahead in this company, and I finally came to the realization that I wasn’t going to be allowed to do that— that I was going to be kept down. That I had gone as far as I was going to be able to go there. I became bitter. I didn’t go to college, and develop my abilities to be a bookkeeper for the rest of my life. Actually, I considered myself a glorified cashier.

But I couldn’t let it affect my work– I have too much pride in myself to do that. I felt that I still had to maintain the standard of excellence that had become associated with me since I began working there. However, now I wasn’t getting any satisfaction from my work. And without satisfaction, there is no fulfillment.

I completed all the research I was doing, and the result was my first book, Final Warning: A History of the New World Order, which I initially self-published in 1994. It did not bring me the fulfillment in my Christian walk that I had hoped, because it was a message that churches seemingly wanted to avoid.

When we moved to the area we now live, my wife began going to a local church, but I was too busy to go to. I was working a lot of overtime. She tried to get me to come to church on Sunday, but that was my one day to rest. Somehow I knew that if I would start going to church, even just to make her happy, that the Lord was going to get me.

Nevertheless, the Lord began dealing with me. In April, 1996, my wife wanted me to go to a Ron Susek seminar at another church in the area. Even though I was in a backslidden condition, I still enjoyed good preaching, and I had watched him on TV, and wanted to hear him. So I went. After it was over, I went home under heavy conviction. The next day, a Sunday, when my wife went to church, I got out of bed, and got down on my face before God and rededicated my life to the Lord.

Two months later, she wanted me to come to her church to hear a prophetess by the name of Sharon Stone (no, not the actress). Now my thinking was, there are no prophets today— that was Old Testament stuff. But, I knew I needed to start going to church, and I figured now was as good a time as any. Well, I went, and because I was skeptical, had no expectations.

After preaching a little bit, she began to have people stand up so she could minister to them personally. I was still skeptical. Then she called on my wife and I. Uh-oh. She began ministering and speaking some things to me, and then she said: “Son, that you might stand tall, knowing that I have appointed you, I have Called you; let me recommission you...” Her words cut through that skepticism, because I knew in my heart that she was bringing forth an accurate Word of the Lord. I had never even told my wife that there was a Call on my life— only my mother knew. Needless to say, I knew it was time to get serious with God.

Wanting to get serious, and actually getting serious, is two different things. My job, and work, was still a large part of my life. Though it may seem a harsh way of putting it, I was under bondage— a slave to my job. I would set a goal at the beginning of the day, and if I hadn’t achieved that goal by day’s end, I would stay until I did. When I went to work it was dark, when I got home it was dark. My neighbors probably thought I was a vampire. In all actuality, I was the one being sucked dry, and burned-out. All my mental energies were focused on my work— nothing else.

As a result of trying to right what I perceived to be a wrong, I received a three-day suspension from my job. While I was at home, my emotions traveled full circle. My heart was filled with intense bitterness. I could not believe, that after everything I had done for this company, and all the sacrifices I had made, my commitment meant nothing. Therein was the problem. The problem was with my commitment.
As a Christian, my commitment should be to Jesus Christ, not the company I work for. The company that employes me just showed me what they thought of me, what I actually meant to them, and just how much they cared. But Jesus said that He would never leave me or forsake me (Hebrews 13:5)

During those three days, I did a lot of soul-searching. In many places throughout the Bible, those who chose to dedicate their lives to God, and to make a total commitment, were blessed and used by God in mighty ways. Here I was, blessed with many God-given talents. Yet, I wasn't using them to glorify Him. That had to stop.

The prophet Isaiah wrote about a vision he had, where God asked: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” (Isaiah 6:8) Isaiah answered: “Here am I; send me.” How many Christians are willing to make that kind of commitment, to dedicate themselves to God in that manner. If I did it for my employer, could I do any less for God? I think not.

So what appeared to be bad was being turned around for good. An act that was intended to break my spirit, only served to break the bondage I was under. Instead of feeling used and abused; I was now renewed and invigorated. In a step of faith, I went to the pastors of my church and said, here I am, this is what I can do, use me. To be more precise, I was actually saying, Jesus use me.

I realigned my priorities. I didn’t slack off at work— I just didn’t place an emphasis on it. I still got the job done. But now, I no longer allowed it to dominate and control me. At the end of the day, if things weren’t done, it didn’t matter, because tomorrow was another day. I didn’t allow myself to get caught up in things which were of little consequence to my personal life, and my relationship with God.

Now, rather than being self-centered, I had become more God-centered. I know that what I have done for Kingdom-purposes, has, and will bless others; as opposed to the things I did at work, which were labor intensive, and of short-term value. Now, because I was serving God— heart, mind, body and soul, I anticipated a feeling of fulfillment like I never felt before.

My whole life, I’ve always been a driven person. From the time I was in high school, I’ve always been able to set a goal, and work to achieve it. Along the way, I would do what I had to, to stay motivated and focused. At my job, I had done everything I was asked to do, and volunteered for more. I wanted to prove that I could handle anything they threw at me, so they would realize the potential I had, and would consider me for some kind of promotion. But now, my focus had shifted, and I offered to do everything and anything at church. I figured it was okay because I thought I was operating under a divine mandate. So, nothing changed. My emphasis on work, now became an emphasis on church.

I was a helper in the Kings Kids Sunday School class (ages 3 through kindergarten), and trained to be a teacher. I did some video work, I did some artwork, I helped with the puppet ministry, I helped the pastor proofread and edit her book, I was the webmaster for the website, I sometimes proofread the announcements, I was the facilitator for a weekly Bible School program, and I was also undergoing mentorship and training for ministry in the church. Anything I was asked to do— I did. It got to the point that when I went to church, it felt like I was going to work.

Though it may sound like I was doing a lot, there were others serving in the church in other capacities that were doing much more than I was. It just so happened that I was doing a lot of little things. An active church needs active members to fulfill the vision that God has for that church; and if you are going to step out to make yourself available, you are going to set into motion a reaction that will make you a target. Part of taking too much on yourself, is the process of not being able to set boundaries for yourself, or knowing your limitations. If you don’t know your limitations, or you don’t have any limitations, you will find yourself being asked to help with everything. If that happens, it is not the fault of the leadership. It is your fault. Whether it is church, a charitable organization, or some other group, if you put yourself out there as a
volunteer without boundaries, you will find yourself utilized to your fullest extent. This opens you up to be manipulated for the benefit of someone else who has no regard for your wellbeing—because they are only concerned with what they want to get done.

The pastor of a church is given a vision for that church. It could be a vision from God, or it could be one from the flesh. Irregardless, it is the vision that the pastor is working to implement. He needs people to make that happen.

What you need to know is that man’s ways are not always God’s ways (Isaiah 55:8). You don’t have to do everything you’re asked to do. Everything that you are asked to do at church is not necessarily God’s will for your life. You don’t have to ‘kill’ yourself to make yourself look good. You shouldn’t take on things you’re not sure you can handle, and you especially shouldn’t take on things that you really don’t want to do. God doesn’t want anyone to be burned-out. If you’re burned-out, you’re no good to Him, and you’re no good to anyone else. I saw this quote on a cover of a Christian journal book: “The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you.”

However, let me also say this— if it is God’s will for you to serve your church in some capacity, you better do it. Because, if it truly is God’s will– He will give you the grace to do it; and if it is His will for you to take on more responsibility– He will give you the strength to do it. God does want to move us out of our comfort zones into new things, new areas, and new levels. That’s where the anointing comes in.

Three things were working against me: I liked to work, I didn’t know how to say no, and I felt pressured and intimidated to do things to fit in.

You see, I had to prove to God that I was worthy of the abilities He blessed me with, and that I deserved His love. I now know that I was dealing with issues of self-worth, and my ignorance about relationship with our Heavenly Father.

You would think that whatever you do for God would be blessed. However, without being in His will, and doing things in His timing, we quickly become one who sits there spinning our wheels, becoming mired deeper and deeper in a rut that eventually threatens our relationship with God, and ultimately our Christian walk.

I’ve always felt that my abilities to do things stemmed from a divine anointing, when in reality, I was running on adrenaline. I wasn’t relying on God for His strength and grace— I was doing things in my own strength. It’s when you do things on your own, for an extended period of time that you become susceptible to burn-out.

I was being swept by a spiritual wildfire, and as the winds blew, the fuel that was needed to feed that fire was being consumed. Our church had always been oriented toward youth, but they still had programs that catered to the adults. However, the attention to adults began to dwindle as the emphasis on the youth accelerated. The worship music became more youth-centered. They established a Bible School and Youth Center. In the past, the youth would have their own class, but they began to stay in the sanctuary with the adults, and to me, it seemed the ministry was being watered down so the youth could comprehend it. In addition, when you are helping with a children’s class, you miss the ministry. Even though they would give you a tape of what you missed— listening to it at work was just not the same. So here I was, pouring myself out at church, and not being filled again with enough spiritual sustenance.

I was expending myself at my job, I was starting to run on empty at church, and then things really began to get bad.

While my wife and I were active at church, we found ourselves neglecting our house. My thinking was that we were going to move, so I didn’t need to worry about doing any kind of maintenance. Well, tell that to the house. It began to fall apart. My wife took the initiative to start removing old wallpaper, and painting inside of the house. Outside, my wife and I removed all of the old paint from the front porch, and the 2nd floor balcony in the back of the house, and then primed and repainted it. I tore out some old steps behind the house, added onto and expanded
an existing wall, and built new steps. These were projects that literally took a couple years to complete, and ended up pulling me away from church to get them done.

During that same period I had finally gotten my first book published, and I was given a deadline by the publisher to complete the manuscript. Before I was finished, I was contacted by a ministry who wanted to fly me to Topeka, Kansas to do a PowerPoint presentation for them, which they videotaped. After that, I began working on an illustrated version of my book.

On top of that, my oldest daughter began having problems in school, as well as health problems, involving many doctor visits and therapy, which took a toll on our family.

So you can see how the extended period of multi-dimensional stress can result in burn-out. Burn-out depletes every aspect of you. It can destroy completely— if you let it.

I look back at that time and I realize now what was going on. It was a very slow process as things began to build up. I remember that I had trouble focusing and concentrating, and because of that I made a few— okay, quite a few poor financial decisions.

One thing in particular that sticks out in my mind was when I needed to get another vehicle. I had a 1992 Chevy Astro Van that I needed to get rid of because it was starting to nickel-and-dime me to death. It was a good vehicle, so I got a good deal on a fairly new model. I didn’t even look at any of the specs. It was even a special edition. I just wanted it— so I got it. Nearly a year later, when gas prices were starting to rise, I realized that I was only getting about 16 miles per gallon. With my old van, I was getting about 26 mpg. In fact, one year, I drove from Millersburg, PA to Michigan, through Canada, on one tank of gas. I went back to the dealer, and told him that, and he basically called me a liar and said that I was getting what I was supposed to get per gallon. I later remembered that when I bought my old van, the dealer told me that the previous owner had owned a gas station. It appears that he made some type of alteration that enabled it to get another ten miles per gallon. In fact, as I think back, I remember that I couldn’t put in regular gas, because it wouldn’t run right. I had to put in a higher octane gas.

I traded that vehicle back for a more economical car and loss half of the value of my van— about $8,000. If I would have looked at the mileage statistics before buying the new van, I would have discovered that, and I would not have gotten a van. Do you want to add insult to injury? Shortly before I decided to trade the van back, I got it inspected and got four new tires— which cost over $1,000. I was not thinking!

The mental gaffes didn’t hit me at the time because I was sort of numb to things. I was just trying to get by— just trying to get through it. There was so much going on, that in order to get things done, I had to have tunnel-vision, and devote every fiber of my being towards that thing. I became oblivious to everything outside of that line of sight.

There always seemed to be a tremendous weight on me. It seemed like everywhere I turned, somebody wanted something from me, was trying to pull from me, was trying to take from me. I was never able to get truly rested, because I never got done with what I felt I had to do.

It seemed like I had no control over my life or situations— I had to just go with the flow, and hope that the waves did not buffet me too much. I felt like a ball in a pinball machine, being bounced from bumper to bumper, all over the place.

Quite literally, one of the main problems was that I had bit off more than I could chew as far as the time I had available. So obviously I was plagued with frustration because there are never enough hours in a day to get things done. I felt like I had to rush to do everything; and when you don’t have time— you make time— which means that you sacrifice sleep for progress. Big mistake! When you are under stress, sleep is very important for the mind and body.

I kept trying to exercise and walk on a regular basis to keep my weight under control, but the motivation— and time was not there. Many times I just didn’t feel good— I didn’t feel myself. But life goes on. I was almost like a zombie— just putting one foot in front of the other, just doing what had to be done, and doing what was necessary just to get through it.
Now, let’s add to the mix– a mid-life crisis. When I turned 40, I didn’t have a problem. I didn’t know what everyone was talking about. I felt healthy and I felt fairly good. However, around the age of 45, a different feeling began to come over me. The feeling that my life had been a waste, and that I was never going to accomplish anything worthwhile. I never finished college, squandered many opportunities because of not having the proper guidance, and I now found myself at nearly 50, worried about what kind of life I was going to have when I was ready to retire. I get a statement from my employer that analyzes your Social Security, pension and 401K and gives you an idea of what you’re going to receive every month after you retire. Now, that figure isn’t too bad, but at 70, when I retire, based on the current decline of the economy, it appears that life for me will be a pretty pathetic undertaking. So, it looks like I will be working till I die.

Every 4th of July, I ran a 50-yard dash with a co-worker who was born in England. Physically, one thing that I always had going for me, was that I was fast. But now, during this period, I not only found myself being beaten handily; but on a couple occasions I lost my balance at the finish line. And to add insult to injury– he’s three years older than me. When I take out the trash, I’m wondering what in the world my family is throwing out because the bags are heavier. The realities are that my physical capabilities are slowly waning. Couple that with the mental and emotional instability, and again you have an illustration of the multi-dimensional stress I am referring to.

I mentioned that my doctor prescribed Effexor for me. The primary concern was the constant headaches I had. I had been taking over a dozen aspirin a day, and they did nothing more than take the edge off the pain. Effexor is a pretty powerful medication, but it takes a few weeks for it to fully kick in. And likewise, six months later when I was to stop taking it– it took a long time for it to get out of my system. That period of time represented a different kind of battle for me. I really didn’t realize it at the time, but I was able to see it later.

Obviously, along with taking the medicine, I committed to trying to do what I had to, to alleviate the stress that I had in my life. I threw myself into getting all my projects done around the house. I shut down my website. I get rid of all my extra e-mail addresses. I stopped carrying a briefcase. I tried to exercise more, take vitamins, and eat better.

However, when I got everything done around the house, I found myself not wanting to be around the house. I began to…shop. Yes…shopping. In the past, I knew what I wanted before I went into a store, went in and got it, and that was it. Because of working outside for almost three months, I lost nearly 50 pounds, and had the best tan of my life. So I decided to buy a completely new wardrobe. I bought pants, shirts, a coat, a few jackets, new belts, new jeans, and another pair of boots. I had discovered shopping-therapy. Needless to say, I began using credit cards very heavily.

Every time I was out, I would eat at a different restaurant. I began ordering things on eBay. I began buying CDs and DVDs. I began buying all the things that I wanted. Every night I came home, I walked in the house with a few bags. My credit card debt began to escalate wildly.

I’ve never been a drinker. I had the occasional drink with dinner when my wife and I would go out. But now I was buying bottles of wine. However, because alcoholism has been a factor in my family, there’s something in my DNA that won’t allow me to breach that threshold, and allow it to be a problem in my life. Basically, God had His hand on me.

I remember one time that I bought a jug of Pennsylvania Dutch Egg Nog from the liquor store. When I got home, and tasted it, it was way too strong for me, so I just put it under my desk. Some time after that, when I was on a deadline to get my book done, I was so stressed-out that I needed to do something to relax. I would go to work during the day, come home and work till 2 or 3 o’clock in the morning. I was under such incredible pressure, and felt the need to do something to relax, so I got that bottle out, and drank the entire thing over a period of a couple hours. I figured I would get so drunk that I would pass out and get some much needed
sleep. I was wrong. It did nothing. I kept working on my book. The only thing it did was enable me to get into a much deeper sleep when I finally went to bed. That goes to show you how powerful the mind is, to be able to override the effects of alcohol.

Even though I was fortunate to escape the grasp of alcoholism, many people who are burned-out fall into that trap, as well as the trap of drug abuse. This is sometimes referred to as better living through chemistry. Yes, it may seem to help for a short time— but it is not a long term solution, and therefore does nothing to help your problem.

Through this time, the relationship with my wife was also affected. I felt that she didn’t understand me, and didn’t understand what I was going through. She was going through her own problems, and when you have two people going through battles, you have lost the support-system of your help-mate, and that only complicates matters. I guess, that’s another one of the reasons why I didn’t want to be around the house.

At one point I had contacted an old female friend, and helped her move; and when my wife found out she was pretty upset. She stopped just short of accusing me of having an affair—which I was not, although the opportunity may have been there to do so. But, like alcohol abuse, sex would not have done anything to help me, so that was something that I was not looking to pursue. I won’t say that I didn’t get fleeting thoughts about things, but the important thing is that I love my wife, and my study of God’s Word has shown me the divine nature of covenant. What I discovered about covenant made such an impression on me that I felt that if I ever morally strayed— that I would be struck by lightning.

But again, the realities are that many men do have affairs and cheat on their wives. Just like substance abuse, I believe these sexual indiscretions are an attempt to deal with the symptoms of burn-out. I look back at all the high profile cases of men in the ministry being caught in extramarital affairs. Everyone is shocked, and everyone questions how these things could happen. I now believe that these ministers and evangelists were dealing with burn-out.

Burn-out makes you feel like you’re less of a person, and so the tendency is to do things that would normally be out of character— things which would allow yourself to descend into a dimension of no responsibility in order to escape the feeling of helplessness. But, more often than not, you end up with feelings of guilt that further work against you and contribute to the overall feeling which pulls you down lower and lower.

All of that weight on you, and those things which make you feel less than who you are, stem from an ungodly belief. The bottom line is that God sent His Son to die for our sins, which means that He cares about us more than we’ll ever know. He loves us beyond what we are able to love; and He wants more for us than we want for ourselves. I believe it’s important to understand that, and to realize that the only thing that God has ever wanted from us, is to have an intimate, personal relationship with us. It’s not about religion— it’s about relationship.

An important first step toward healing is an understanding of how important an intimate relationship is to your spiritual balance. Just as a physical imbalance can affect your physical health— a spiritual imbalance can affect your spiritual health. When you study God’s Word, you realize the truth of the divine relationship that exists between God and man, and how the absence of that relationship opens up doors to demonic influence.
CHAPTER SIX
DISCOVERING RELATIONSHIP

I believe that who we are, how we think, and what we do, has a lot to do with the level of relationship we have with God. That’s where I want to start at— that relationship. I believe that by understanding your relationship with God, you will be able to strengthen it, and make it the intimate relationship it was meant to be.

In Psalm 139:13-15, David says:

“For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought...”

What a wonderful truth. While you were in your mother's womb, God gave you special qualities that were unique to only you. Just like a snowflake, you were the only one that God touched in that particular way. Did you ever hear anyone say that God broke the mold after He made you? It's true. He made everyone to be different.

In verse 13, the word “reins” is translated from the Hebrew word kilyah (Strong's #3629) which figuratively meant “the mind,” the inner most self, or personality. This is what makes you— you.

In Jeremiah 1:5, the prophet Jeremiah relates what God told him:

“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

Before Jeremiah was even born, God had already Called him to be a prophet. This sort of lets you know what God thinks about abortion. It doesn’t matter what somebody’s opinion is about when life starts, or when the fetus is actually considered a viable human being. The Word of God supports the argument that life begins with conception.

Over in Ephesians 1:4-5, Paul wrote: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will...” And in verse 11, he wrote: “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will...”

This means that before Adam was created, God chose you, gave you a destiny, and while you were in your mother’s womb, placed it within you. So, long before you were a gleam in your father’s eye, you were a gleam in your Heavenly Father’s eye.

Now, wait a minute. What gives God the right to do this? Didn’t He create man with a free will, just as He did the angels (remember, a third of the angels rebelled against God, Revelation 12:4)? Then, by what principal does God use to do this? We find that the Pentateuch, or 5 books of Moses, is referred to as the Law of Moses, because it records the laws passed down to man from God. Here we find that man is governed by legal precedence, both in the physical and the spiritual realm. Just as man was expected to act within certain legal parameters, God also put into place a system of legal protection that prevents the spirit man from being breached.

For example, when you sought Salvation to become a Christian, you had to ask Jesus to come into your heart. You had to welcome Him in. Revelation 3:20 says: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." He's not going to crash your party. He's not going to come in unless you let Him in.

On the other hand, if you were to get involved in the occult, you are exposing yourself to the possibility of demonic activity in your life. Why? Because you are giving Satan the legal right to do so through the performance of unholy practices. In the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20), Jesus outlines the legal parameters that Satan must abide by in targeting people:

1) Those that are unsaved.
2) Those that are not well-grounded in the Lord.
3) Those that are caught up in the things of the world.

So, if Satan has his legal requirements to fulfill, and God has His, what legal precedence does God use to move in your life even before you are born?

If you go to the 17th chapter of Genesis (verses 1-14), you'll read about the covenant God made with Abram (Hebrew for "exalted father"):

1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.
11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

The result of the covenant was that he was now known as Abraham (Hebrew for “father of a multitude”). The sign of the covenant was that the foreskin of the sexual organs of all the men in his House had to be removed. This was a blood covenant. Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised.

Today, even with our medical expertise, this procedure is still considered by those against circumcision to be a risky operation because of different factors involving the skin, nerves, and blood vessels. But during this time period, approximately 1958 BC, this was done with a sharp stone— and no anesthesia. Ouch!

The Lord commanded that when a male child was eight days old, they were to be circumcised. This was repeated again to Moses in Leviticus 12:3 as part of the Law.

The Abrahamic covenant is one of 15 covenants in scripture. I could just imagine...Abraham out behind the tent, praying, and the Lord speaking to him about this covenant. Couldn’t you just see Abraham saying, “Lord, you gave Father Noah the rainbow as a sign of the covenant, that you would never again destroy the earth with a flood, so do you think maybe you could come up with something like that for us instead of this circumcision thing.”

This is one of the passages of Scripture that proves divine authorship of the Bible, because at a time of very little medical knowledge, they would not have known the right time to do the circumcision.

A report in the book *Holt Pediatrics* by L. Emmett Holt, Jr. and Rustin McIntosh in 1953 (pgs. 125-126), indicated that a newborn is susceptible “to bleeding between the second and fifth days of life.” This potential for hemorrhaging occurs because the blood-clotting element known as Vitamin K is not present in an adequate amount until the fifth to seventh day. Therefore, the first acceptable day to do a circumcision would be the eighth day.\(^{34}\)

In addition, another element essential for clotting, Prothrombin, by the third day, is only 30% of its normal level. However, by the eighth day, it rises to a level of 110% before leveling off to 100%.\(^{35}\) This medical evidence proves the divine mandate of the covenant of circumcision.

Now the operative word, if you’ll pardon the pun, is “everlasting.” It was meant to be an everlasting covenant. The word “everlasting” is translated from the Hebrew word *olam* (Strong’s #5769) which means “continuance” or “eternal.” That’s a long time.\(^{36}\)

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\(^{35}\) Ibid., pg. 21.

So, could only the Hebrews enter into this covenant. Apparently not, because the Bible said that strangers, not of his seed, had to be circumcised (Genesis 17:12-13).

But what about women, seemingly there were no provisions for them to be a physical part of this covenant, and had to be satisfied by being made part of it through their husband, the head of the household, in this male-dominated culture. Or have they been an integral part of the continuing covenant all along. Remember, God said that this was to be an eternal covenant.

Okay, let’s jump up to the book of Acts (Acts 15:1-24, 21:21-25; see also Romans 2:25-3:31, 4:9-25). Here, in the early days of the church, there was much debate about circumcision. Although Paul did not preach against circumcision to the Jews, he maintained that the Gentiles did not have to be circumcised. Obviously, this did not sit well with the Jews. You can go back to what David said about Goliath: “...who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (1st Samuel 17:26) There are also other places where you could see resentment towards those who were not circumcised.

In 1st Corinthians 7:17-20 you can read Paul’s boldest statement about circumcision:

“But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.”

So, to be a Christian, it was not necessary to be circumcised. What happened to this eternal covenant? It seems that the apostles and elders of the new Christian church had brought an end to the eternal covenant that God had with his people. Or maybe not.

All along, we’ve focused on the act of circumcision as being the symbol of covenant with God. But let’s go back in history and look at some very interesting developments.

Noah had three sons: Ham, Shem and Japheth. Ham had a son by the name of Cush, and Cush’s son was called Nimrod, and was known as the “mighty hunter.” Nimrod, according to Genesis 10:10, built the cities of Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar, which in secular history was known as Sumer. He also attempted to build a tower that reached to heaven, but God confused their language (around 2334 BC) so they couldn’t understand each other, and they were scattered over the face of the earth.

According to the book The Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop, in Babylon, Nimrod (allegedly the founder of Masonry) established a religious system, with the help of his mother and father, to control the people through political methods. This was the beginning of the occult, which became known as Baal (Satan) worship. Nimrod’s great-uncle Shem became so enraged over Nimrod’s activities, and with the help of a group of Egyptians, killed him, cut up his body into little pieces (one source said 14), and sent the pieces to different cities as a warning to those who messed around with the occult.37

Nimrod’s mother, Semiramis (who had married her son Nimrod), took over the religion, and proclaimed Nimrod a god. She collected all of Nimrod’s pieces, but she was never able to find his sexual organ, so she established phallic worship, and created the symbol of the obelisk (which is a tall, four-sided stone pillar which tapers toward a pyramidal top) to represent that worship. She claimed that an evergreen tree sprouted from a tree stump, which she said indicated the entry of new life into the deceased Nimrod. Every year on the anniversary of

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Nimrod’s birth, said to be on December 25th, she would leave gifts at this evergreen tree, which is said to be the origin of the Christmas tree.\(^38\)

After Nimrod was killed, she called him Baal, the sun god, and commanded that he was to be worshipped. She proclaimed herself to be a goddess. Although she claimed to be a virgin, she became pregnant, and gave birth to a son, Tammuz, who she said was the reincarnation of Nimrod. She became known as the “Virgin Mother,”\(^39\) “Holy Mother” and the “Queen of Heaven” and was symbolized by the moon.\(^40\)

As this occult religion spread from country to country, and from culture to culture, this unholy Trinity became the foundation upon which all false gods were based. Each had their own sun god— Ra (Egypt), Apollo (Greece), and Sol or Mithra (Medo-Persia), as well as others. But they all originate from Baal worship, which is the worship of Lucifer, the “the bringer of light,” or Satan worship.

What had been previously reported to be structures representing phallic worship, have actually turned out to be something more significant.

According to the book \textit{Too Long in the Sun}, the “obelisk shape has been defined as that of a phallic symbol, or a ray of the sun extending to heaven.”\(^41\) But in the book \textit{The New World Order}, Ralph Epperson wrote: “The Masons have admitted that they use symbols to conceal important truths from their fellow Masons...” And one of these is the Babylonian obelisk, of which there are three in the world which have major significance. The first is in St. Peter’s Square in Rome, which the Pope faces when addressing gatherings there. The second, in New York City’s Central Park, that was brought from Alexandria, Egypt in 1881. Its four sides are covered with Egyptian hieroglyphs which indicate that the stone was quarried “...to praise and adore the divinity of the sun...It is a representation of the god Ra, or the sun.” The third is the Washington Monument, which was completed in 1848 to honor President George Washington, who was a Mason. The monument is full of Masonic symbolism.\(^42\)

When you consult Masonic sources, you begin to see the symbolic significance of the obelisk. In 1872, Albert Pike, a leading Mason, wrote an 861-page Masonic handbook called \textit{Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Rite of Freemasonry} in which he said that “the obelisk was...consecrated to the sun.” Kenneth MacKenzie wrote in the \textit{Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia}: “Sun worship was plainly connected with the erection of obelisks...they were placed in front of temples of Egypt... (for) the worship of the sun.” Albert Mackey wrote in \textit{An Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry}: “Obelisks were, it is supposed, originally erected in honor of the sun god.” And Carl Claudy, in the \textit{Introduction to Freemasonry} wrote, that “in Egypt the obelisk stood for the very presence of the sun god himself.”\(^43\)


So, we see here, that as far back as the Babylonian era, the obelisk, a symbol of the male sexual organ, began to be used as a symbol of covenant to the sun god.

In the book *Sexual Symbolism: A History of Phallic Worship*, published in 1786, Richard Knight’s research indicated that the “ancient Celts and Scythians paid divine honors to the sword, the battle-axe, and the spear; the first of which was the symbol by which they represented the supreme god: hence to swear by the edge of the sword was the most sacred and inviolable of oaths.”

*The Woman’s Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects* states that the “connection between manhood and the phallic sword is shown in the Norse wedding ceremony of plunging a sword into the main beam of the house, as ‘proof of the virility of the bridegroom.’”

According to *A Witches Bible*, it indicates that the sword, which is used for casting or drawing, and banishing circles, “is essentially masculine. Hence...when a woman witch buckles on a sword, she is ritually assuming a male role and must be regarded and treated as masculine until she takes it off again.”

This information shows that the sword has represented the male sexual organ, as well as the representation of an oath, which we can see in the dubbing of a knight. The knight enters into covenant with the king who knights him. That knight would provide escort protection, guard the castle or even fight in a war.

I have gone through all of this to show you that the male sex organ was traditionally recognized as a symbol of covenant.

Now, let’s solidify that position. Adjoining the male organ are two testicles. The word “testicles” comes from the Latin *testiculus*, which comes from the diminutive *testis*, meaning “witness” (where the words “testify” and “testament” come), which by definition indicate an oath or covenant.

In his book, *The Power of a Symbol*, Dr. Lee Stone wrote that the “most ancient way of administering the oath was by placing the hand between the thighs, on the genitals. These were regarded as the Christian and the Jew regard the Bible, as being the most sacred of tangible things.”

Dr. P. C. Remondino wrote in his book, *History of Circumcision from the Earliest Times to the Present*: “It was partly this custom of swearing, or of affirming, with the hand under the thigh, by the early Israelites,” which led many to believe that their hand was being placed on the testicles.

And indeed, the Bible confirms this method of swearing an oath. In *Genesis 24:2-3* (and in verse 9) it says: “And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all

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that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell...” And also in Genesis 47:29 it says: “And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt...”

So now we can see that it was the entire male organ, along with its appendages, which, through the years, became known as a symbol of covenant.

Now ponder this. The Bible is sometimes referred to as a sword, which we now know to be a symbol of covenant. Ephesians 6:17 says: “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” The Word of God is made up of the Old and New Testaments...or the Old and New Covenants. Are you beginning to understand the spiritual significance of this concept?

Now, let’s go to the next step, and another blood covenant– the consummation of marriage. In the eyes of God, this act was a very serious thing. In Exodus 22:16 it says: “And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.” This act was scripturally mandated in order to create a marriage covenant. In Genesis 2:24, it says: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh;” and Ephesians 5:31 echoes that with: “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”

When a couple gets married, it’s not the marriage certificate, or the ceremony that actually marries them. And though the vows are very important, if the marriage is not consummated by sexual intercourse– the wedding can be annulled.

Now, upon marriage, the man becomes a husband, but he also becomes something else. He becomes the priest of his home. 1st Peter 2:9 (see also Revelation 1:6, 5:10) says: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a 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...” The husband becomes the spiritual head of his home. As such, he and his wife come together in union, and providing of course, his wife is a virgin, his sexual organ, an instrument of covenant, will be used to break the hymen, circumcising his wife, bringing them into covenant together. In Malachi 2:14, it talks about the “wife of thy covenant.” Not only is he pulling her into his covenant with God, but he is committing his seed, his forthcoming children, to God.

Even in the symbolic use of the wedding ring you can see the strong phallic significance, because the ring symbolizes the female sexual organ; while the third finger represents the penis, and the second and fourth the testicles. When the ring is placed on the third finger “it symbolizes consummation, or the marriage covenant.”

Now that sounds more like the eternal, enduring covenant God was talking about. But I think we can examine and analyze this even further.

In Galatians 6:14-15, Paul wrote: “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” Paul, in Colossians 2:9-17, wrote further:

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

50 Stone, Lee Alexander. The Power of a Symbol (pgs. 1-102). Chicago, IL: Pascal Covici, Publisher, 1925, pg. 42.
11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Here, Paul elaborates on why circumcision of the flesh was to be done away with. It was because of Christ. Jesus eliminated the necessity for animal sacrifice, because He became the Lamb of God who died for the sins of the world. This was powerfully illustrated when the Holy Spirit fell on those that heard Peter preach at Caesarea:

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost 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 Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” [Acts 10:44-48]

The Holy Spirit is no respecter of persons, treating Jew and Gentile the same. Now the circumcision of the flesh to be in covenant, had given way to a ceremonial baptism of repentance and purity; a washing that buries the old, and gives birth to the new creature in Christ, which is where we get the phrase ‘born again.’

Now, let’s look at the mechanics behind this spiritual application. When you talk about Christ, His name has become synonymous with the cross, which is why, according to tradition, when the Romans crucified Peter, he wanted to be crucified upside-down. He said he wasn’t worthy of being put to death the way Jesus was.

In The Power of a Symbol, it disposes the notion that the cross is a Christian symbol, and says that, “it is one of the oldest, if not the oldest symbol known to man. For ages the cross has symbolized the phallus and its appendages.”51 It also revealed that the cross was known “just

as much as a sex symbol as was the obelisk or pyramid, both of which, according to all authorities, symbolized the human genitals."52

In fact, the symbol of the cross has been used by sun worshippers ever since the time of the Babylonian empire.53

In an entry about "Magical Instruments and Accessories" in the Encyclopaedia of Occultism, it says that occult swords are to be made out of "unalloyed steel, with (the) copper handle in the form of a crucifix (or cross). Mystical signs were engraved on guard and blade and its consecration took place on a Sunday in full rays of the sun."54

Now, let's go back to the knighting ceremony. When the king bestowed knighthood, he used the sword, a phallic symbol which represents covenant. In the actual Adoubement or Dubbing, the king takes the sword and touches the right shoulder, the left shoulder, and the head, which in light of all the other Christian symbolism associated with the ceremony, is the sign of a cross.

The Catholic tradition of "crossing" one's self is a symbolic rendering of the sign of the cross in the form of a self-conferred blessing, which is also used in ceremonies of consecration to God. In the crossing, the head is touched, representing the Father; the chest is touched, representing the Son; then the left and right shoulders, representing the Holy Ghost. This signing of the cross is a blessing signifying covenant with God.

It is interesting to trace back the word "bless." It comes from the Middle English blessen, which comes from the Old English bletsen, the Anglo-Saxon bledsian,55 which came from the word blod, which was in reference to the use of blood in consecration.

So now we see that the sword, as a phallic symbol, the representation of an oath and covenant, is also aligned with the cross, which represents the same thing.

The cross, initially in the shape of a "T" was said to be designed by Semiramis to honor her son Tammuz. In the subsequent years, the cross has taken on many configurations, shapes and designs, but the common denominator is that it signified covenant with something. In Rome, when a victim was crucified on a cross, not only was it to punish them for their crime, but it was also considered a sacrifice to their pagan gods. Such was the case with Jesus. Satan believed that through the death of Christ, he was achieving victory. But wasn't he surprised. Not only was he wrong in thinking that Christ was defeated, but he was actually setting the stage for his own defeat.56

Jesus was crucified on a cross, a symbol of covenant, as a blood sacrifice; for without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22). And in that act, we were all brought into covenant with Christ, for in Matthew 26:28, Jesus said: "For this is my blood of the New Testament [the New Covenant], which is shed for the remission of sins."

Matthew 27:50-51 said: "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain [two] from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks did rent..." The tearing of the veil in the Temple was very

52 Ibid., pg. 50.


symbolic. This veil or curtain divided the holy place, or Holy of Holies, from the inner sanctuary. According to Jewish tradition, this veil was 4 inches thick and was so strong it could not be pulled apart by horses. The Holy of Holies was a windowless room, which made it pitch black. During this time, the Ark of the Covenant was no longer in the Holy of Holies, but in the past, the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies only once a year, on Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, where he sprinkled the blood of two sacrificed animals on the cover of the Ark. To insure that even the high priest could not see the Ark, he carried burning incense which filled the entire room with smoke.57

Israel had fallen into idol worship because they had trouble trusting in God they could not see, and needed something to look to. So God commanded the Ark of the Covenant to be made which housed the things that represented the actions of God for his people. The Ark became a place of the manifestation of the presence of God. This glory cloud mistakenly became known as the Shekinah.58

The Bible speaks of circumcising the foreskin of the heart (Deuteronomy 10:16, and others), and talks about the uncircumcised ear (Jeremiah 6:10, and others). These are spiritual circumcisions. And the tearing of the veil of the temple was a spiritual circumcision, but in a sense, it was also a physical circumcision. Now the blood of goats and bulls were no longer necessary to take away sin, only the blood of Jesus. Now everyone can enter the Holy of Holies, into the presence of God, circumcised or uncircumcised, Jew or Gentile.

You see, you’ve just now learned this, but Satan has known it all along. Is it any wonder that he has used sex as a weapon against us. Some time ago the Promise Keepers polled their members and found out that sexual immorality is the number one weakness of Christian men. Everywhere you look, sex is peddled, packaged and sold. On television, in the movies, on the radio, in magazines, and on the streets; Satan dangles sex in front of us in every conceivable form, to entice us, because he knows that if we succumb to the desires of the flesh, we have broken covenant with God.

In 1st Corinthians 6:16-20 it says:

"What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s."

By saying that the body is the Temple of the Lord, what does that mean? Well, you remember that Jesus prophesied that the Temple would be destroyed, and it was, in AD 70. So the Jewish Temple is no longer around. That means this verse has to be interpreted to indicate a place which houses the spirit of the Lord. If Jesus is living in your heart, then by extension, your body is that Temple. So in order to see how you’re to maintain that Temple, we should look to the original Temple as a type to see what that means.

A week before Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would leave his house to stay at a special apartment in the Temple to avoid the possibility of ritual impurity. The night before was spent in the company of other priests who would read Scripture to him and help him stay awake. The day would start with the sacrifice of a young bull as he confessed his sins, and


58 Ibid., pg. 58.
for the collective sins of all the temple priests. In keeping with Jewish law, throughout this special day, he would change clothes several times, bathe 5 times, and wash his hands and feet 10 times.\(^{59}\) This ritual bathing and washing was done in a mikveh, and was more for a spiritual cleansing, than a physical cleansing.\(^{60}\)

In 2\(^{nd}\) Timothy 2:22 it says: “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” And in Titus 1:15-16 it says: “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.”

Purity is a key component to maintaining a covenant relationship. Purity comes with heeding the word of God. Jesus said (John 14:15): “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Proverbs 3:5-7 says: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.” And you can’t receive any better advice than what Joshua gave the Israelites (Joshua 22:5, see also Deuteronomy 10:12): “…love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul.” Jesus echoed this when He said (Mark 12:30): “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength…”

It is this act of total submission that has been put before us; and it is further exemplified by the challenge in Romans 12:1-2, when Paul said:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

When we submit to the fires of His will, it hurts, and the flesh bleeds, and this sacrificial giving of ourselves helps establish our spiritual covenant with the Father.

We are covenant people. As Christians, this is an inescapable truth. And for this reason, as Rev. Bill Anderson says, we can have everything our Bible says we can have. God said that He would bless them that bless you, and curse those that curse you (Genesis 12:3), and He said that He would fight for you (Deuteronomy 1:30). If God is for you, who can be against you. (Romans 8:31)

God gave us a free will, and you can choose not to walk in the covenant that He destined for you. But know this—there are dire consequences if you choose this path. Just as we are punished for breaking man’s laws, we will also suffer the consequences of violating God’s laws. In Romans 6:23 we are told that “the wages of sin is death;” and Deuteronomy 28:20 says: “The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.”

Disobedience to God gives Satan the legal authority to spiritually attack you. In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus said:

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\(^{60}\) Ibid., pg. 141.
“Not every one 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. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

James 1:8 says that: “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” And Jesus said: “No man can serve two masters...” In Matthew 6:24 Jesus said: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” And in Revelation 3:15-16, He also says: “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.” It is the pull of the world that helps create conflict, because we are to be separate from the world. Though I have already given you this verse (James 4:4) it bears repeating: “...know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” You don’t want to be an enemy of God. Choose now whom you will serve.

As I said earlier, God created man with a free will. You can choose to follow Him, or you can choose not to— He won’t love you any less. We are God’s children— all of us. Let’s say one of your kids decides he wants to quit school and leave home, and there is nothing you can do to stop him. Just because he leaves, you’re not going to love him any less. You want to help him, but since he’s not there you can’t. However, when he comes home, and submits to your parental authority, then you can help him and show him your love. That’s how it is with God. If you don’t want to accept his authority, and you go off and do your own thing, He can’t help you. But He still loves you, and wants you to come ‘home.’

If you are a Christian, and you’re walking with the Lord, you’re in covenant with Him. If you’re not, you need to know that He made you, and you are special to Him. He has a plan and purpose for your life. We serve a loving, Heavenly Father who wants the best for His children, and wants to see them grow and become the men and women of God that He intended them to be.

I believe it is important to isolate and begin to identify some of the ways that Satan comes against us; so that victory in these areas can be achieved. The experience from this trench warfare will help fortify and strengthen us for what lies ahead.
CHAPTER SEVEN
SPIRITUAL ATTACK

The bottom line to being susceptible to stress and burn-out is plain and simple—it is a Satanic attack. Without a doubt, Christians are under intense attack in order to thwart our witness and our testimony, and to stop the Gospel of Jesus Christ from being spread throughout the world. The brunt of his all-out attack against you is to do everything he can to take your focus away from God, to get you discouraged, and to make you break covenant with Him.

As an action movie kind of guy, I always liked the ones where somebody overcomes insurmountable odds to achieve victory. These kinds of movies are popular because we, in some way, try to identify with these characters to motivate and inspire us.

In the movie, the Game of Death, kung-fu film legend Bruce Lee fought his way to the top of a pagoda, where each floor was guarded by an adversary specializing in a different style of martial arts. In real life, Lee had studied all forms of self-defense, and utilized the techniques of other fighting styles, such as boxing, judo, and fencing, into a fighting style of his own, called Jeet Kune Do. On the screen he was unbeatable—the perfect weapon.

Spiritually speaking, that should be our goal as Christians—to be the perfect weapon. We make references to being Soldiers of the Lord, or Prayer Warriors; and as my Pastor, Rev. Melodye Hilton has said, we see ourselves as being Arnold Schwarzenegger Christians, running through enemy fire, without getting hit—perfect spiritual weapons. However, the reality of the matter is that sometimes when we get up in the morning, we’re not sure whether we can even face the day, let alone be able to pray down demonic strongholds.

Whether you realize it or not, this is part of a carefully orchestrated plan by the devil to drain your effectiveness—to steal from you. This plan is rooted in lies. John 8:44 says that the devil “is a liar, and the father of it.” Satan will stop at nothing to separate you from the Father, to neutralize your testimony, and to destroy your destiny.

The devil knows the legacy that has been passed down to us as Christians. He knows we’ve been given power and authority over darkness. It is the devil’s job to try and erode that truth so that we don’t have the faith to walk in our spiritual inheritance.

One way he does this is through lies, and the development of ungodly beliefs. We must be able to identify and isolate any thoughts that come to us, which are intended to hinder us, and keep us from seeing who we are in Christ.

One mindset we have in the Body of Christ, which has caused many people to leave their church for another, is the following statement: ‘If I am not moving forward, I am spinning my wheels— I am becoming stagnant.’ This is an ungodly belief. Though a person may not be moving forward, or advancing, to say that it’s because of being stagnant is a lie from the pit of hell. The truth is, you may not be stagnant—you may be just ‘standing.’ There’s a big difference.

Organizations like the Masons, as well as other secret societies and cults, have degrees that their members move up through. As they move higher and higher, it doesn’t bring the fulfillment hoped for. In fact, when they get to the proverbial ‘top,’ the power that was promised doesn’t seem to come, and they have the same emptiness that was there when they began.

A relationship with God is much different. There is no ‘top,’ but there are levels of spiritual maturity. The time we spend at each level depends on us. Taking the time to build relationship with God by praying, studying the Word, and surrendering to His will, are things that make us teachable, or as pliable as clay in the hands of the potter.

When you move from one level to another, you know it in your spirit. But if spiritual advancement doesn’t seem to come, that is when we feel as though we’re languishing—helplessly mired in a place that we will never get out of. That’s the time when our prayer life begins to falter, and that’s when our relationship with our Heavenly Father is affected. We
develop a chink in our armor, and that’s when the enemy begins to take advantage of our weakened spiritual condition.

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

This is such a powerful scripture. What it’s saying, is that after you have done all that you can do, all that is within your power – then just stand. It doesn’t say to cover up, to back off, to back down, to sit down, to lay down, or to take a break – it says to stand. Standing is not a passive act – it is an act of spiritual aggression. There is a line in Steven Curtis Chapman’s song “Believe Me Now” (from the 2004 album All Things New) which says: “I know that you don’t have the strength to fight, but do you have the faith to stand and believe me now.”

First of all, by standing, you’re saying that you can no longer do it on your own, that you are going to rely on God, and trust in Him to take care of you. When the Hebrews were backed-up against the Red Sea by the Egyptians, Moses said (Exodus 14:13): “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.”

You see, by simply standing, you make the devil mad. In his great devotional, William Gurnall (1616-79) wrote: “It is the image of God reflected in you that enranges hell; it is this at which the demons hurl their mightiest weapons.”

In the movie Rocky III, during the rematch with Mr. T, there comes a point in the fight when Rocky goads him to come after him. He takes a barrage of punishing blows, but he does not go down. Because Rocky defiantly continued to stand, and would not be intimidated, Mr. T lost his temper, deviated from his strategy, and lost the fight.

A real-life example of this occurred on October 30, 1974, when Muhammad Ali defeated Heavyweight Champion George Foreman during their title fight in Zaire, Africa. He did it, by standing. To be more precise, he employed a tactic he called the “Rope-a-Dope,” where he would lean against the Ropes, and allow them to absorb the tremendous body shots thrown by Foreman. Because he wouldn’t go down, Foreman got mad, and punched himself out, which enabled Ali to knock him out in the eighth round.

This is kind of like the parable (Matthew 7:24-27) that Jesus told about the foolish man who built his house on the sand, and the wise man who built his house on the rock. When the storms came, the house on the sand crumbled to the ground, but with the other “...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.”

When you stand firm, you will be able to bear the brunt of the storms or the attacks of the enemy – if your foundation is on the rock. Jesus is that rock, as you can see in 1st Corinthians 10:4: “...for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ.” In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said: “...upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The Catholic Church teaches that Peter was being referred to as the “rock,” which is why he is considered the first Pope. However, in the Greek, the surname of Peter meant “stone.” Make no mistake about it, Jesus is the rock, and being able to stand, hinges on your relationship with Him.

When you take a stand on an issue that means your opinion will not move or waver. It’s the same when you take a spiritual stand.

Before a fight, when the combatants meet at the center of the ring, they have what is called a ‘stare down.’ They look mean, each trying to intimidate the other. Poker players are another example. When someone is dealt a good hand, they can’t telegraph that fact to the

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other players, or they might fold, and not allow the pot to be bid up. That is called a ‘poker face.’ The Bible even talks about that. It says in Isaiah 50:7— “For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

So, you got up this morning, and you didn’t exactly feel like a spiritual dynamo. So what! Don’t allow the devil to feed you any lies. When a star quarterback has a bad game, he doesn’t stop being the best. Neither should you. Even though you may not feel like it– you still have the power and authority that is available to all Believers.

When the Israelites were returning the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem (2nd Samuel 6:1-7), they had put it on an ox-drawn cart. This was contrary to the Law of Moses (Exodus 37:5, Deuteronomy 10:8) which mandated that the priests were to carry the Ark; and that if anyone would touch it, they would die (Numbers 4:15). When the Ark became unstable, and began to slide off the cart, Uzzah put his hand on it to steady it, but was struck dead.

Even though Uzzah, in his mind, was doing a good thing– he was still disobedient. But even more than that, the Ark was where the Spirit of the Lord resided, and the command to not touch it, was a warning that stemmed from the sheer power of the anointing that was on it. Erich von Daniken, in his book Chariots of the Gods? said that this story was the evidence that proved the Ark was actually a power source, much like a large battery.62 However, the Ark did not represent physical power– it represented spiritual power.

The Spirit of God lives in you, and that same anointing is upon you. Plus, that same warning is applicable today. In 1st Chronicles 16:22 (as well as Psalms 105:15) it says: “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.”

As long as you are standing– you are the perfect weapon. You are trusting God, and you are letting your light shine. The devil can see Jesus in you, and you continue to remind him that he is defeated, which is why he comes against you all the more harder. But you will stand, just like the Nike slogan, “Just do it.”

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” [James 4:7]

“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.” [Romans 14:4]

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” [1st Corinthians 16:13]

So where do you begin? You start with small victories. You have to come to the point that you’re mad AT hell, and you’re not going to take it anymore.

Winning a war is the product of a number of small victories. You do it one step at a time. Start with one thing, pray about it, speak favor over it, and claim victory. Through prayer, faith, and authority, you’re telling the devil that you are claiming what is rightfully yours.

I’ve always had a problem with my weight. Up and down, up and down– The old yo-yo effect. At the beginning of 2000, I embarked on another period of weight loss. And even though I was losing weight, I still felt terrible. I would go to work feeling lousy, and I got tired of that. The Lord impressed upon me the simple fact, that if I wanted to feel good, I was going to have to eat better, and it had to be a lifestyle. You are what you eat. So I decided to begin eating healthier. I began eating less ice cream, cakes, pies, cookies, pretzels, chips and other favorites; and

began eating more natural things like fruits, nuts, and vegetables, instead of processed foods. In addition, I began a physical fitness program of walking, running, exercising and lifting weights.

This victory, enabled me to look better, and feel better, and brought additional victories, in the form of an improved self-esteem, having a more positive outlook and more energy.

You start with small victories and build upon those. Depending on where you are, even the smallest thing could be perceived as a victory you can build on. The following examples may seem to be pretty petty, but when you’re burned-out, every little thing aggravates you, and the least little thing can set you off; likewise, the least little thing can also make you feel better.

On our local Christian radio station, I would hear a song from a particular Christian artist. I kind of liked the song, but they would never give his name. This went on for a couple months. Now, I could have given up. But, I was beginning to learn the value of small victories. So, the next time I heard him, I wrote down the time, and the next day I called the station, and they were able to look at their playlist and tell me that it was David Meece, and the album was Learning to Trust.

Then I began to call around to record stores to look for it. Nobody had it. In fact, being that it was released in 1989, it was out of print. A girl at one of the record stores said that she was trying to find the album herself. Well, if she couldn’t find it with her resources— how would I. Then I started surfing the Internet to look for it. Lo, and behold I found a Christian music site that specialized in music from the 70s and 80s, and they had it. In a little over a week, I had my CD.

Small victories add up to big victories.

There’s a particular kind of pen that I like to write with. Its quality is comparable to pens costing up to $100. As far as I am concerned, when you can buy a pen for less than $1.00, and you pay more than $10.00 for one, it should last awhile. Well, mine didn’t, and I didn’t have the money to go out and just buy another one. Again, I could have just fluffed it off, but I decided that I wanted to walk in victory. So I wrote to the company, returned the pen, explained their design flaws, and asked for a free replacement. A couple weeks later, they sent me a certificate to get another one.

Kind of along this line was something that happened just a couple months ago. I finally got a chance to stop at a small office supply store in a rural area a short distance from where I live. They happened to have a clearance section, and there I found a pen and pencil set that I had been trying to find for a long time. It was no longer made, and when something is discontinued, vendors will jack up the price of their remaining inventory. I found just the pen online for $50. But here, in this store, the set was $10.00.

When I look at this now, it is a reminder of how good God is, and how small victories will make a big difference.

I believe that when you reach out to God, and get stronger spiritually, victories in the natural will mount, and you’ll find yourself pursuing God with a renewed vigor; and believe it or not, because you have a more positive outlook, you’ll find it easier and easier to resist the devil.

An important factor to remember in all of this is your focus and your priorities. Allowing the distractions of life to take your eyes away from God, and to be led away from the direction and destiny that He has for you, will cause you to regress and go back into a spiritual rut— which is where the enemy wants you. The devil wants to take away your power, and make you think that you have no authority. Because then, you become ineffective.

I believe we can find a real good illustration in Mark 5:22-34 about distractions:

22 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,
23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

24 And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched [Matthew 9:20; “the hem of”] his garment.

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

Imagine the scene—Jesus, walking down the street, with a large crowd of people pushing against Him and the disciples. A woman, off to the side, had one thought in her mind. If she could get to Jesus, He could heal her of the disease that had plagued her for many years. Perhaps because of this hemorrhaging of blood, she was weak and she wasn’t able to move that well. As she looked around the street, besides the throng of the crowd, maybe there were also animals moving down the street, pulling carts behind them, and even Roman soldiers milling about to keep an eye on things. She began thinking that it wasn’t going to be possible to make her way through the crowd. They had needs, they weren’t gonna let her through.

But then it came to her, if she got down on her knees and crawled, she might just be able to squeeze past people’s legs to get to Jesus. She didn’t care if she got stepped on, or got pushed. She didn’t even think about being able to get Jesus to lay His hand on her. All that mattered to her was only to get close enough to reach out and just touch the hem of His garment. If she could just get close enough to stretch out as He walked past to have the material brush against her fingers, she knew that she would be healed. And that is what she did, and her faith was so strong that she pulled her healing out of Jesus.

If you’re looking for a move of God in your life, if you’re looking for your miracle, you cannot allow yourself to be separated from God, to have your affections compromised and to be
drawn away from your first love. There can be no room for distractions. It is important for you to get moving in the right direction. In order to do that, we sometimes have to return to our roots, and review fundamentals so that our spiritual foundation can be buttressed with truth.

To achieve spiritual victory you must be more receptive to the things that God wants to do in your life, because He desires to have an intimate relationship with you. He knows that relationship establishes a firm foundation, builds strength and brings freedom.
CHAPTER EIGHT
THE MAKING OF A MAN OF GOD

COMING TO THE END OF YOURSELF

When the Lord began dealing with me some years ago, I began to see some changes. Of course, old habits die hard. I remember one night at church, I went past the literature rack, and there was a newsletter sticking in one of the bins. The title was *Coming to the End of Yourself*. A couple weeks after that, I was on my way home from church and I heard a broadcast on a Christian radio station. What was it about? Coming to the end of yourself. So I guess that sort of answered my question about what was happening to me.

As Christians, it is sometimes hard for us to trust God— to have faith and believe that He is going to take care of us, to empower us, and to give us strength. So, we try to do it ourselves. You’ve heard the saying (which doesn’t come from the Bible), “God helps those that helps themselves.” However, when we try to do things in our own strength, that’s when life overtakes us. We get tired. We walk around depressed, without the joy of the Lord. We get burned-out. The longer this goes on, the more doubt arises. Finally, we just get spiritually swamped. When that happens, you’re no good to God, you’re no good to yourself, and you’re no good to anyone else.

A good example of someone coming to the end of themselves is found in the story of the prodigal son in the book of Luke. I’m sure you know the story. One son took his father’s inheritance, left home and lived on the wild side. Sin is fun— for a season. Let’s read what happens:

“And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” [*Luke* 15:14-21]

His father forgave him, and welcomed him home with a celebration. But first his son had to humble himself and submit to the will of his father. He had to come to the end of himself.

In the Old Testament, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against their wickedness. Not only did he refuse to do it, but he ran in the opposite direction. Bad move. While heading to Tarshish on a boat, God sent a storm, and ultimately, Jonah was thrown overboard, where God had a holy taxicab waiting for him. *Jonah* 2:1-10 relates his feelings during the time of his attitude adjustment. Remember, when Jonah was swallowed by this large fish, he had no way of knowing how long he was going to be ingested. In fact, for all he knew, he was going to die. So he came to the end of himself— real quick.
God knows how to deal with us. He knows how to correct his children. Job 5:17 says, “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty...” As you can see by these two examples, when God brings you to the end of yourself, it can be a painful experience. Depending on the level of our obedience, we can do it the easy way, or the hard way.

I had read an article about an unconventional style of single-set weight training that used the term “lift to failure.” That means to lift enough weight that your muscles give out after 8 to 12 repetitions. It seemed an odd choice of words, to use “failure” to determine achievement. But that is actually what happens, because in “failing,” you are at the point where the muscles are developing microscopic tears in the fibers, and it is during the healing process that the muscles grow. So, in failing, you’re actually getting stronger.

That gave me an idea when I ministered this message at church, so I used the following example to illustrate what God wants to do through us: I gave someone a 45-pound dumbbell and told him to lift it as many times as he could. So he lifted it till he could no longer raise his arm. That is us doing everything under our own strength. Then I grabbed his hand, and lifted his useless arm and the weight, a few times. That is God giving us the strength to get by. How do you access that strength? You do that by letting go, and letting God; or by letting God be God.

God will take care of you, but first you have to come to the realization that you can’t do it on your own— that you need God.

When you keep trying to do everything on your own, you’re going to be tired and dragging all the time— physically and spiritually. And you’re going to be ripe for the enemy. Galatians 6:9 says, “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.” In the original Greek, the word “weary” was translated from the word ekkakeo (Strong’s #1573) which meant to fail in heart.63 Basically, the verse is telling us not to lose heart. What happens when a boxer loses his heart? He loses the will to win.

As Christians we must guard ourselves against this type of spiritual heart failure by learning to trust and rely on our Heavenly Father.

SHAPING WHAT HE WANTS YOU TO BE

As a parent, it is our responsibility to form and shape our children into what we want them to grow up and be. Within the confines of our relationship, our Heavenly Father also desires to do the same with us. Jeremiah 18:6 says: “O House of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Saith the Lord, Behold as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O House of Israel.” There has always been such a picturesque image in the mind of most Christians, as they sang, “You are the potter, I am the clay.” But they have put the ox before the cart.

In my high school Sculpture class, I had made a large bust of a man. I spent a lot of time on it, detailing the face, and the hair. I was very proud of it. This was going to be my crowning achievement. It also represented a large portion of my grade because of the time that was involved. After I was done with it, I handed it in to be fired. I expected to go back the next class and get my museum-quality piece. Instead, I got pieces. It looked like it took a shotgun blast. The problem was that the clay had not been prepared properly by removing the air bubbles.

When you make a commitment to God, to allow Him to mold you and make you into the image He desires, you don’t start out being turned on a spiritual potter’s wheel. You start out as a lump of clay. And God pounds you, and kneads you, and mashes you, to get out your air

bubbles— all of those spiritual voids in your life that prevents you from having an intimate relationship with Him.

When you reach the point of full surrender, when the flesh is broken, when you are able to let go and let God—then He will begin to mold you, and shape you into what He wants you to be. Though to you, what may seem to be a low point, is actually a period of spiritual renewal and strengthening. Because He wants to know that when you’re under fire, that one of those voids isn’t going to cause you to self-destruct. It’s how we gain spiritual maturity.

Did you ever see how a sword is made? That’s what God is doing to us. We get put into the fire (trials and tribulations) until we are softened up, and submissive, to where the Lord can do something with us. Then He pulls us out, beats us with a hammer to smooth us out. If something isn’t right, then we go right back into the fire, and we get pounded out some more till we’re sharpened. Till we’re the weapon He wants us to be. A warrior ready to fight—ready to stand up against the enemy. Paul said in 2nd Timothy 4:7– “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

During the massacre at Columbine High School (Littleton, CO) in April, 1999, when the two killers entered the library, they found 17-year old Cassie Bernall praying out loud. One of them held a gun to her head and asked, “Do you believe in God?” She responded: “Yes, I believe in God.” Then she was shot. Joshua Lapp, a 16-year old sophomore who was hiding about 25 feet away said: “She was scared, but she sounded strong, like she knew what she was going to answer.”64

Her parents later found this note in her bedroom: “Now I have given up on everything else— I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought Him back to life again, and to find out what it means to suffer and to be with Him. So, whatever it takes, I will be one who lives in the fresh newness of life of those who are alive from the dead.”65 Her father, Brad Bernall said: “This is what Cassie was being prepared for. This was her mission.”66

And let’s not forget the shooting in West Paducah, Kentucky in December, 1997, where a 14-year old teenager walked into the lobby of Heath High School and fired upon a group of about 35 students who were meeting there for prayer just before classes. Three students were killed and five were wounded—just because they were Christians.

You may think that this sounds a little far-fetched, but what did Jesus say (Matthew 10:22): “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: But he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” When Jesus ascended into heaven to sit at the Father’s right hand, He left the vanguard of the movement which would bear His name. Those disciples, charged and commissioned to establish the Church, were targeted by the forces of hell, as Satan directed the full extent of his power against them.

Stephen, who was a deacon in the first Christian church in Jerusalem, was stoned to death in AD 29; James, the son of Zebedee, was beheaded in Jerusalem in AD 45 (another source says AD 44); Philip was tied to a pillar at Phrygia in AD 54 and stoned (another source says he was scourged, imprisoned, then crucified); James, the son of Alpheus, was dragged from the Temple, stoned, and beaten to death with a club in AD 63; in AD 64, Mark (author of the Gospel which bears his name) was seized by a mob of pagan priests and idol worshipers,

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who tied a rope around his neck, and dragged him through the streets of Alexandria until he
died; Paul (Saul of Tarsus) was persecuted, then beheaded in Rome, in AD 69; Simon Peter
was crucified upside-down in Rome in AD 69; and Andrew, the brother of Peter, was tied to a
cross, and left there three days before he died (the two ends were fixed transversely in the
ground, at right angles like an X, from which comes the symbol known as the St. Andrew’s
Cross).

Bartholomew was severely beaten in Armenia in AD 70, then beheaded (another source
says he was crucified); at Calaminia, in AD 70, Thomas was thrown into a furnace, then speared
to death with javelins; at Nad-davar in AD 70, Matthew (author of the Gospel which bears his
name) was nailed to the ground, then beheaded (another source says he was slain with a battle
axe in Nadabah in AD 60); Simon, the Canaanite, was crucified in Syria in AD 70 (another
source says it was AD 74); Judas Thaddeus (Jude, brother of James) was beaten to death with
sticks in AD 70 (another source says he was crucified at Edessa in AD 72); Matthias (who
replaced Judas Iscariot as an apostle after Judas committed suicide) was tied to a cross,
stoned, and then beheaded in AD 70; Luke (author of the Gospel which bears his name) was
hung from an olive tree in Greece in AD 93; and Timothy was stoned to death by idol worshipers
in AD 98

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being that Rome, who ruled the known world, was under the influence of a form of Baal
worship, Christians who refused to worship the Emperor were persecuted, beginning with Nero
in the middle of the first century. They were arrested and put to death in various ways, such as
crucifixion, being tied inside animal skins and attacked by wild dogs, fed to lions, and tied to
stakes to be burned as human torches to light Nero’s gardens at night. These persecutions,
which lasted until early in the 4th century, caused the Christians to literally go underground, to
worship secretly. They took refuge in the subterranean catacombs of Rome, which extended for
miles underneath the city. There are said to be over two million Christian graves in these
caverns. This persecution of the Christians was Satan’s attempt to get rid of Biblical teaching.

Although the Christians were persecuted, their faith in God stood fast. John, the brother
of James, the last of the disciples, was exiled to a penal colony on the island of Patmos in AD
97. It has been said that he was instrumental in preserving our Holy Bible, by informing
Christians which of the manuscripts were inspired by God. These manuscripts were then hidden
by Christians in the cellars of the great monasteries.

And that’s why things may sometime seem so tough. That’s why everything may seem to
be against you. God is preparing you to be the man (or woman) He wants you to be. He is
training you to be a spiritual weapon, someone who will be able to stand up against the attacks
of Satan, one that will be able to stand in the Last Days. Paul said (2nd Timothy 2:3-4):

“The therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth
himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

This kind of relationship will come only with obedience, commitment and getting serious about
this God of ours. Right now, to be one who will stand in the Last Days, you have to begin
standing now; so that you’re prepared for what you’re going to be facing then.

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67 Bracht, Thieleman J. van. The Bloody Theater (Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians). Scottdale, PA:

GOD MAY BE PRUNING YOU

John 15:1-2 says: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” Here we have a picture of God wielding a spiritual pruning shear. In verse 5 it says, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” Here we find another process that God uses to bring us into line with the plan He has for each of us.

When you became a Christian, you brought a lot of excess baggage with you. Things that, on your own, you may have tried to get rid of— but couldn’t; or things you are doing, that you like to do, but are things that God doesn’t find pleasing. This causes a conflict to arise between your spirit man and your flesh man. In order for God to take you to the place in Him where He wants you to be, those things have to be removed.

The Pruning Process, though similar to “coming to the end of yourself,” is a distinct and separate situation. It can happen in conjunction with it, but it can also take place independently of it.

The Pruning Process is comparable to God, as the potter, molding us and shaping us into the man or woman of God He wants us to be. This would be a general explanation of what God is doing. However, with pruning, we find a more detailed and more defined program of dealing with certain issues in our life.

Pruning is a little more involved than just trimming, such as “trimming the fat,” which is a short-term cosmetic fix. In A Guide to Successful Pruning we find that: “Pruning is a regular part of plant maintenance involving the selective removal of specific plant parts. Although shoots and branches are the main target for removal, roots, flower buds, fruit and seed pods may also be pruned.”

Because pruning involves the cutting away of live vegetation, and not necessarily dead matter, it seems to be a cruel method. However, “plants respond differently to wounding than animals. In plants, damaged areas are covered by callus tissue to close wounds. Simply put, animal wounds heal, plant wounds seal.” And when you apply that concept spiritually, the things that are cut away from you may be painful, but the manner in which it will be done, will seal and protect you.

In looking at the various reasons for pruning in the natural, we can see a wealth of spiritual applications:

1) Pruning is done to improve the appearance or health of a plant by removing diseased, damaged or dead plants by speeding the formation of callus tissue. For trees, pruning a dense canopy permits better air circulation and sunlight penetration; while the removal of cross branches prevent them from rubbing against each other, thus eliminating future problems.

Spiritually speaking, God prunes us to get sin out of our life; and He improves our appearance by separating us from the world, and the things of the world. He removes things from our life that we tend to put before Him, and things which may be a temptation later and detrimental to our Christian walk.

2) Pruning is done to control the size of a plant so it remains in better proportion to the landscape.

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When we get puffed up with our own accomplishments, and seek to bring glory to ourselves, instead of God, He has a way of getting rid of that pride. *Proverbs* 16:18 says, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” It is important to remain humble, to be pliable and receptive to the voice of the Lord, so we can truly be a servant.

3) Removing dead or hazardous low limbs to make underlying areas safe by preventing personal injury or property damage.

This is one that someone in a leadership position has to worry about. Someone who may be talking the talk, but not walking the walk, and thereby not presenting themselves as a Godly example; or someone who has a personal agenda, rather than allowing God to move the way He wants.

4) Pruning is used to train young plants for future growth. It is easier to shape branches while they are still young, rather than waiting till they are older, and the branches larger.

This would pertain primarily to new Christians, because God wants the things of the world to be broken off, as well as bondages and strongholds which will affect their relationship with Him.

5) Pruning is done to influence fruiting and flowering, because proper pruning of flower buds encourage early vegetative growth. Selective pruning is used in some species to stimulate flowering, and to help produce larger (though fewer) fruit.

I’m sure each of us has asked God for more. We may think that we’re ready to move to a higher level, or a higher realm of authority, or to a position of leadership. But God advances us and promotes us in His time. Where we think our growth is being stunted, it is actually God scaling us back till a time when we are better equipped and stronger.

6) Pruning is done to rejuvenate old trees and shrubs. As trees and shrubs mature, their forms may become unattractive, and pruning can restore vigor and enhance the appearance of these plants.

As people progress in their Christian walk, some tend to fall into a trap of programmed activity and regimental behavior—serving just to help out. There’s not much concern for planting seeds and producing fruit, only to do their part and get the job done. It’s easy to lose sight of God’s plan by becoming complacent. One of the major enemies of our relationship with God is complacency. That place of comfort where many long-time Christians unknowingly seem to get mired. Nothing can affect a relationship and destiny faster than a Christian languishing in a spiritual rut.

When you begin thinking in the context of being a Spirit man, and wanting that Spirit man to grow and flourish, then you open yourself up to a place in God that you had trouble getting into before. When you are in that place, it is easier to read and understand the His Word, to pray, and worship.

In the fifth chapter of the book of *Luke*, the people had gathered on the shores of Lake Galilee, and Jesus, wanting to minister to them, asked Peter to take Him out on the boat so He could speak to them from a better vantage point. Peter, and his men, had been out fishing all night, without catching anything, and were in the process of cleaning and mending their nets. Nevertheless, he agreed to take Jesus out into the water, away from the pressing crowds.
When Jesus was done ministering to them, He told Peter to take his boat out into the deep water, and there he would find some fish. Now, here’s Peter, a seasoned fisherman, being told by a young preacher, who conceivably knew nothing about fishing; to not only take his boat and his nets back into the water, but to go into the deep water.

Usually, during night fishing, they would stick close to the shore—in shallow water. When they saw any fish, they would put their dragnet down, just throw out a small net, or even use a spear. Going out into the deep water was something that just wasn’t done. Yet, Jesus told him to do it.70

I’m sure Peter was very apprehensive, but he wanted to be obedient. And when he lowered the net, he caught so many fish, that he had to have his men bring out another boat. There were so many fish that their nets were ripping, and their boats began to sink because of all the weight.

The spiritual lesson here, is when you go into the deep water, and you show God that you want to go farther, that’s where God is really able to do something in your life. Going into the deep allows you to surrender all, and enables you to pursue God with reckless abandon.

If you want God to do something inside of you— you have to do something. You have to want it. We serve a very proactive God. Though it may sound simplistic—if you scratch His back, He’ll scratch yours. For every action, there’s a reaction. You have to take the initiative and ask God to help make you into the man or woman of God He wants you to be.

That’s where relationship comes in. If you don’t have a relationship with God, how can there be growth. If you don’t take time to talk to God, how is He going to talk to you. When a husband and wife are fighting, a by-product of that is the ‘silent treatment.’ It’s not broken until someone talks. So, if you are giving God the silent treatment, don’t wonder why He’s not talking to you.

The very foundation of our Christian walk is our relationship with God. You establish and nurture that relationship with prayer.

In 1999, I felt led to prayer-walk a 9-mile stretch of the mountain near my home. I put it off for a while, but it soon became impossible to resist. Each week, for a few months, I walked a portion of it. Even though there were roads that went up to the path at the top, I didn’t feel a release to drive up. Instead, I had to walk up. Week after week, rain or shine, I walked and prayed. My intentions were to do spiritual warfare against any occultic activities that had been done there. But I later began to realize that God was beginning a process of breaking me, so He could further develop my character, and begin molding me into something He could work with.

I saw the fruit of that with my neighbor. At the time, I wasn’t getting along with the family who was living in the other half of the double. With five young children, it was very noisy next door, and their parents didn’t seem willing to control them. It would literally sound like a stampede, and it would cause things to vibrate in our house.

My attempts to convince the parents gave way to argument, and calling the police. Yet, the problem remained. Some weeks after I started my prayer walking, I was upstairs on my third floor, contemplating what to do with a large metal desk that I wanted to get rid of. The thought came to me to give it to my neighbor. Even though we had stopped speaking to each other, I decided to knock on their door and ask

them if they wanted this desk. When the young lady came to the door, she said she
didn't have a way to get it into the house. I offered to carry it in and set it up. Believe
me; I really wanted to get rid of it.

As I was setting the desk up, I just felt led to apologize to her for everything
that had happened. And she in turn apologized to me, and said she understood the
situation. Just that quick, our relationship began to normalize.

You see, when you build and develop a relationship with God, through prayer,
you build character. Christian motivational speaker and author John Maxwell said:
“Charisma can make a person stand out for a moment, but character sets a person
apart for a lifetime.” When you build character— you develop leadership. And when
you develop leadership, you begin stepping into the destiny that God has planned
and purposed for your life.

So what causes this spiritual rut that I talked about earlier? It’s a lack of
commitment, because it causes you to neglect your relationship with God. When you
stop seeking after God, when He is no longer a priority in your life; and when you no
longer have time for your Heavenly Father, your spiritual life is going to come to a
screeching halt. Henry Blackaby said in his Experiencing God course: “You cannot
stay where you are and go with God.”71

I know that I want to go on with God. I have come too far to turn back, or stay
in a spiritual rut. Yet, there are churches where some of the membership seems
hopelessly entrenched in a rut that seems to affect the entire church. Why go to
church if it’s going to be the same old thing week after week.

When people talked about the Toronto and Brownsville revivals, everyone said
that God was doing a new thing. Not true. God’s not doing a new thing. You see, God
doesn’t change. He’s the same, yesterday, today, and forever. We are the ones who
have changed. Some people are now starting to let Him do what He’s been wanting
to do for a long time. He wants to move in your life. He wants to move in your family.
He wants to move in your church. But it won’t happen until there is relationship.

Breaking out of a rut usually involves something drastic. In baseball, when a
hitter goes into a slump, he has to do something different to break out of it. He
chokes up on the bat, or shortens his stance. He changes the way he had been
doing things. Do you want revival in your church? Then you have to break out of your
spiritual slump. To do that, you have to do something different. You have to begin
building relationship. What better way to do that corporately, than to gather together
and pray before the service. Isn’t God’s house a House of Prayer?

Often when we first get to church, we find ourselves talking about everything
else except Godly things— it’s just a social time. There’s nothing wrong with
fellowship, but if you ever get to a baseball game early, what’s happening out on the
field? The pitchers are warming up, and there’s batting and fielding practice. What
would happen if the players would come to the ballpark a couple minutes before the
game, suit-up, and just go out and play. They probably wouldn’t have a very good
game performance.

So how can you go right from talking about the movie you just saw, to praise
and worship, and expect the Lord to move? We need to ‘warm-up’ our Spirit man. We
need to let God know that we want Him to move— that we want His anointing to fall.
Just think what would happen if, as a church, instead of coming in and talking to each

71 Blackaby, Henry T. and Claude V. King. Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God. Nashville, TN:
other, you would come in and talk to God, and call on Him. I think something sovereign would happen in your church.

I know I spent a little more time with this aspect of pruning, but I feel that the matter of complacency needs to be addressed because it affects the Spirit of God from being able to effectively move in many of our churches. This type of spiritual pruning will refocus and redirect you.

In breaking things down like I did, to explain the intricacies of spiritual pruning, you can see how difficult and painful it us. For instance, Luke 18:18-25, gives us the story of the rich young ruler who wanted to follow Jesus, yet he could not give up his wealth to do that. He was captive to his riches. His god was money, and that is what Jesus plainly pointed out to him. Often, until we are pruned, we are not able to move ahead into the place where God wants us to be.

OBEEDIENCE

Part of relationship is obedience. If we are to become what God has intended for us to be, then we have to heed to what He is telling us to do. When you are receptive to God, He has a way of making His will known. But, if you are being rebellious and running from God, know that in 1st Samuel 15:23 it says: “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft…” So, if you’re living in disobedience, you’ve got to be miserable. Is that what you want? Colossians 3:6 says: “For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience…”

Have you wondered why you haven’t been able to get satisfaction from the things you’ve put your hand to? Have you wondered why things just seem to go wrong, or seem to be overly difficult? Maybe it’s because the Lord is not pleased with what you are doing, and has not ordained it. Maybe it’s because you are out of the will of the Lord, and you refuse to follow His direction.

I have found that my preference would be to receive God’s blessings. In Deuteronomy 28:1-2 it says: “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.”

Do you want to start receiving God’s blessings – then obey Him. Do you want a peace that passeth all understanding– then listen to His voice. Do you want your life to have meaning– then serve Him.

Our appetites, whetted by our “fast-food” mentality, have created a quest for instant gratification, which has now extended to nearly every aspect of our society. Materialism and status have created a preoccupation with self, and the need for its satisfaction, that, in so many ways, the potential exists for the Lord to take a backseat in our lives and in our hearts.

But that was just the tip of the iceberg. In my own spiritual walk, the Lord began to open my eyes and direct my attention towards other things that were standing in the way of an intimate relationship with Him. Things that were time-suckers, things that were ungodly, and things that had no place in a life that needs to be totally submitted to the King.

DIVERSIONS

One of the biggest obstacles to an intimate relationship with God is diversions. Just as too many diversions in the form of things like career, employment, and recreation can get in the
way of a productive relationship with your wife and children. The same kinds of diversions can also get in the way with your relationship with God. They aren’t wrong in and of themselves, but, if in pursuing them, you are not putting God first in your life, then you are self-centered, and not God-centered.

We are not to be caught up in the things of the world. Even though we are in the world, we are not to be of the world. In 2

\textit{Corinthians} 6:14, 17, it says: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?...Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

We are living in a generation that is very materialistic. We have to keep up with the Jones. We are consumed with our stuff. Again, there’s nothing wrong with having things, but do your things have you.

I was a very big Whitney Houston fan. She had a great voice. I had all her albums, and listened to her music all the time. And I do mean— all the time. I also had the sheet music to all her songs, the album songbooks, the program books from her concerts, an autographed picture, memorabilia, and a scrapbook. I videotaped her when she was doing an interview or when she was performing. I bought videotapes of music, and her movies. I went to her concerts when she was in the area. I was a big fan. I was even a member of her fan club.

Even though she didn’t say a lot about it, I know my wife was very uncomfortable with this worship. Oops, did I say worship? Well, isn’t that what it was. That means that Whitney was an idol to me. Of course, I didn’t think so. But, the Lord showed me that when there’s something that completely dominates and controls you to the point, that you have to continue to feed it, then it’s pretty safe to say that it is an idol in your life. What did I do? I got rid of everything. Was it hard? Sure it was. But it was necessary to show the Lord that He was more important to me than Whitney Houston.

I was also a collector of other things. Yes, I loved my stuff. I collected stamps, coins, football cards, and boxing cards; Batman, Zorro, Captain America, Tarzan, Indiana Jones and Phantom comic books; I collected die cast ’57 Chevys and Tuckers; and I was always searching for things to fill the gaps of my collections. It took time. It took money— and it dominated me. But, I went through everything, and got rid of anything that I considered to be a distraction to my walk with the Lord.

\textit{Matthew} 6:21 (see also \textit{Luke} 12:34) says: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” What do you treasure?

Now don’t get me wrong. At that time, I didn’t get rid of everything I own. I believe that God does want us to have nice things. But what I did keep, no longer has a hold on me. Whatever I have, if the Lord would tell me to give it to somebody; I would not hesitate to do so.

In the months prior to finishing this manuscript, I believe God put me to the test in that regard. I was sitting in my chair, just looking around my den, and I focused on something and began thinking, what do I need to keep that. And then I looked at something else and wondered why I still had that. Pretty soon I had a sizeable pile of things on the floor; and when it was all said and done; I had given away, consigned, sold and listed on Ebay, about a third of my books and DVDs, and a large part of my knick-knacks and collectibles. For example, I had a couple Bibles from the 1800s. They were so fragile that I couldn’t really handle them, so what good were they if I couldn’t even read them. I had a couple autographed pictures of Charlton Heston as Moses (my favorite actor, and my favorite movie). They are no longer in my possession. I began looking at things as to what their real value was at this point in my life and if there was any reason why I needed to keep it. I got rid of so much stuff that it began to worry my wife and kids. But now, there’s less clutter and less things to dust; and a renewed commitment that nothing is more important than God.
When I was younger, my mother couldn’t afford to buy a television. So when I was old enough to get a job, one of the first things I bought was a TV. From then on, I was consumed by Hollywood—addicted to Hollywood.

A while back, I bought a TV with a larger screen. I was just finishing up the initial work to self-publish my first book, and I was looking forward to relaxing and being able to watch TV and videos again. Looking back, I wish that I would have bought a more affordable television, because that is one of the first things that the Lord took from me—my love of watching television. The television thing actually took care of itself, because you can’t research and write while you’re watching television.

Technological advances enabling the Entertainment Industry to fill our theaters, televisions, DVD players, radios and stereos with an endless supply of material, has probably done more to rob valuable time with God, than anything else. So, is it any surprise that we find in Ephesians 2:2 that Satan is referred to as the “prince of the power of the air?”

It is so easy to get caught up in television. On cable, you can have nearly a hundred channels, but on a satellite system, there are many more. On top of that, you have the ability to buy, or rent thousands of movies. The extent of everything that is available is overwhelming. But with the cursing, sex and violence that dominates the entertainment industry, most of what you have access to, as a Christian, you shouldn’t be watching anyway.

One Sunday at church, many years ago, my Pastor began sharing the reasons why that Christians shouldn’t be renting or watching R-rated movies (because we guys like our action movies), and as a church we made commitments to avoid watching these kinds of movies because of the seeds they plant. But even as I listened to his words, I felt the Lord speaking to my heart. I decided to not only get rid of all the R-rated videos that I had, but also any video that I would not let my children watch.

As adults, why should our standards be any less than the ones we set for our kids. If it’s too violent for our kids to see, it’s too violent for us to see. If there’s too much bad language for our kids to hear, then there’s too much for us to hear. If it isn’t any good for our kids to see, how can it be any better for us?

Sure it was extreme, but I was being obedient to God, and with obedience, comes blessing.

Make no mistake about it—your actions are very important as a demonstrative measure of your faith.

Sure, there’s some good stuff on TV, and there are some good movies. That’s not the point. Rev. Glenn Miller of Lion’s Share Ministries has said that people are more interested in “entertainment, rather than attainment.” Just look at everything that is out there to entertain us: movies, television, computers, radio, sports, music, the internet, books, magazines, newspapers, and video games. The point is, you can’t allow your life to revolve around these things, or anything else that is going to keep you away from the things that God has for you, or wants you to be. We must begin to realize that we are Spirit people. We need to increasingly eliminate the influence that the physical and the natural have upon us. We can’t allow the world system to mold us in its image and control us, because it will cause us to lose focus.

PURSUING EXCELLENCE

Paul proclaimed (Philippians 3:14), “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” It is God’s desire for you to make a commitment to press on. When you do that, you enable God to do more things in your life— to tear down and rebuild, and help you establish priorities in your life. Remember, Psalm 127:1 says: “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it...” Let Him build you, let Him direct you. The important
thing about walking in the will God has for your life, is to be farther along tomorrow, than you were today; and not to let anything stand between you and God.
CHAPTER NINE
FIGHTING TO WIN

From the time you became a Christian, recommitted your life, or made the decision to get serious in your relationship with the Lord, your status was similar to the rookie who just signed onto the team. The rookie doesn’t get put into any crucial game situations—because he’s untested and unproven. So, he sits on the bench. Once in a while, he gets into the game. But when it comes to matters involving the ability to operate under pressure, it is the veteran who is called upon.

During this time, the rookie finds out what is expected of him. He trains to build his endurance. He practices to gain skill. He finds out the areas that he’s weak in— and he works to make himself stronger. He determines his strengths—then capitalizes on them.

In time, he comes in as a replacement late in the game. As he produces for his team, trust in him grows. And one day, when the opportunity arises, he becomes a “starter” or full-time player.

As a Christian, there are things that are expected of us...criteria that we must meet. Part of that criteria is the understanding of basic fundamental principles that form the foundation necessary to operate spiritually. When you get stronger, when you begin producing fruit, when you obediently begin stepping out in faith, it is then that God knows He can accomplish His work through you.

It takes commitment to build relationship. So therefore, to nurture a strong relationship with God, you need a firm commitment to follow Him. That first step toward a strong commitment is your witness.

WITNESS

Oliver Goldsmith said: “You can preach a better sermon with your life than with your lips.” In other words, if you’re gonna talk the talk, you better be walking the walk. It is very important to have a lifestyle to back up what you have to say. You make the devil mad by letting your light shine. It says in Matthew 5:16—“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Whether you know it or not, people are watching you. They’re watching how you live your life, and how you react to adversity. The simple fact of the matter is, you can tell a Christian, not by how they act at church, but by how they act when they’re at home.

Being a good witness for Christ, means speaking of Godly things (see Malachi 3:16). Jesus said in Matthew 12:36, “that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement.” By lifting up the Lord, and giving glory to Him in everything you say or do, you are subjecting yourself to an accountability that is so important in maintaining a Christian walk.

According to 1st Thessalonians 5:22, we are to avoid “all appearances of evil,” and it says in 2nd Corinthians 10:5 that we are to be: “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ...” This is a very daunting task.

I’m sure many of you have sung the old standard that told you to “keep your eyes upon Jesus.” It is this kind of focus, and keeping your mind on Godly things, that is so important to establishing an intimate relationship with the Lord. The devil uses the things of the world to draw our attention away from God and create distractions which hinder us spiritually.
TESTIMONY

From developing your witness, it is a normal progression to the second level, which is your Testimony. This is the point where you begin to verbally express your beliefs.

I’m sure you have seen Awards shows, where an entertainer wins an award and when they go up on stage to receive it, they sometimes thank God, before launching into a long list of acknowledgments to those who they feel have contributed to their success. Their mention of God almost seems to be a formality and not a sincere effort to truly thank God for His blessings. However, there are celebrities, who have been up-front about their faith, and have trusted God, because they know that they could not have done it on their own.

During the 1994 American Music Awards, Whitney Houston, while accepting the first of eight awards, said: “First and always first in my life, I’d like to thank my Heavenly Father, my Lord and Savior Jesus, for blessing me so.” Later in the show, when she received the Award of Merit, she said: “I couldn’t have gotten here alone, and once I got here, I couldn’t have stayed here had I been alone. So, to God is the glory. I sing because He blesses me.” Those same sentiments were expressed that year when she won three Grammy Awards. And later that year at the World Music Awards, where she won five awards, she said: “I have to first give honor to my Heavenly Father, and my Lord and Savior Jesus; for without, I am nothing, with, I am everything.”

In November, 1996, when Evander Holyfield stunned the boxing world by defeating Mike Tyson; all who watched the fight heard Holyfield give God the glory for his victory. He said: “God was with me, and it was He who gave me my power and direction.” To show his commitment to God, he used his celebrity status, as a three-time heavyweight champion, to be a witness for the Lord. Proverbs 3:6 says: “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”

Being a Christian means standing up for your faith— even when it isn’t popular. You should be a Christian out of commitment, not convenience. Remember, you can’t have a testimony without a test. As a Christian, you should be using the talents and abilities that God gave you to glorify and lift Him up, and to take advantage of whatever platform He blesses you with, to be a testimony and a witness. Luke 9:26 says: “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.”

THE POINT OF ATTACK

When you became a Christian, and established a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you gained a friend— a friend who will never leave you or forsake you. But, you also gained an enemy. An enemy who will use any means necessary to keep you from having everything the Lord wants for you. In Luke 22:31, Jesus told Peter: “Behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat...” The word “sift” comes from the Greek word sinazazo (Strong’s #4617) which means “to riddle,” or fill with holes. A modern connotation would be that Satan is shooting at us, and confirms the common saying that Satan has Christians in his crosshairs (what you see when you look through a rifle scope).

It is important to know how to fight in the spiritual realm because of the increased attacks against you when you are obedient to God.

Obviously, every war has an opponent— an enemy upon which an attack is to be directed. You should never lose sight of who your enemy is. Your enemy is not the church down the

street who doesn’t believe the same as you; it’s not that flashy preacher on TV, it’s not that annoying neighbor of yours, or even your boss. Your enemy is the devil— or Satan, and his demons from Hell. In 1st Peter 5:8 it says: “Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil (from the Greek diabolos, Strong’s #1228, where the word “diabolical” comes from),73 as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour...” This is exactly what Satan (from the Greek satanas, Strong’s #4567, meaning “adversary” and “the accuser”) does,74 this is all he does— kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10).

It’s like a real life horror movie, where the monster is described as some creature that does nothing but kill, and he will stop at nothing in his attempt to achieve victory. The Apostle Paul called him the “god of this world” (2nd Corinthians 4:4), and the Bible plainly points out that his plan is to control the world, and to get enough support to make another attempt against God. So, yes, Satan has declared war on you.

As a child of God, you are a combatant in a spiritual war of epic proportions. Ephesians 6:12 says: “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.”

Let’s not lose sight of who Satan actually is. In Isaiah 14:12-14, and Ezekiel 28:11-17, we are told about his original inception as Lucifer (the “light-bearer”), an angel (an anointed cherub, the highest classification of angel) who ruled over the earth, and led the heavenly worship of the Almighty God.

Lucifer became proud, and wanted to be above God. In an attempt to accomplish that, he led a third of the angelic host (Revelation 12:4) in a battle for supremacy, which destroyed the earth. When God restored the earth, and gave Adam dominion over His creation, it was the crowning achievement that signaled the defeat of Lucifer. But when Lucifer was able to deceive Adam and Eve into disobedience, he began formulating a plan that would enable him to again rule this world (see Revelation 12:12).

So, doubt it not, Satan, along with his demons, has declared war against you. But just remember, if you jump ahead to the end of the Book, Satan is defeated.

I’m sure you have seen crime dramas on television where someone takes hostages, and when the police surround the scene, and the suspect knows he won’t get out alive, he begins killing as many hostages as he can, before he himself is killed. Well, that is what Satan is doing. He knows that he’s going down, so he’s going to try and take as many people with him as he can.

When we think of good and evil, by extension we think of God and Satan, putting them on par with each other, only at opposite ends of the spectrum. But that is wrong, because just as God created the angels, He also created Lucifer. So obviously God has authority over him. That means WE have authority over him. But you see, Satan tries to convince you otherwise. That is why you need to know the rules of engagement.

The sooner you realize and understand what you are up against; that we are indeed engaged in spiritual warfare— then you can begin to take the steps necessary to tear down enemy strongholds. Satan’s fate has already been foretold— he is defeated. The more we proclaim this, the less control, power, and influence Satan is able to wield. Your job is to take his victory from him.


74 Ibid., pg. 1319 (64).
In *Romans* 8:31-35, we find that:

1. Satan is against us.
2. Satan stands before God to bring charges against us.
3. Satan is condemning us.
4. Satan wants to separate us from the love of Christ.

*Revelation* 12:10 calls Satan “the accuser of the brethren” because he accuses “them before God day and night.” You can find an example of this in verse 9 of the book of *Jude*. When Moses died, Satan tried to claim his body, presumably because he murdered an Egyptian (*Exodus* 2:12). He was unsuccessful in his attempt, and God secretly buried him in the land of Moab.

*Zechariah* 3:1-2, also talks about Satan’s efforts against us: “And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan...” So when Satan unjustly comes against us, and doesn’t have the legal ground to do so, God himself can turn him away. *Isaiah* 59:19 says: “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” Remember, “the battle is not yours, but God’s,” (*2nd Chronicles* 20:15) because it is “God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you...” (*Deuteronomy* 1:30)

Satan stands before God to accuse us, in order, more or less, to get permission to attack us. And God allows him to attack us? Yes, in a way. *Job* 5:17-18 says: “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.” *Hebrews* 12:6 says: “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” In *Jeremiah* 5:15 and *2nd Kings* 13:3 are just a couple of examples where God used the enemies of His people to bring correction. And *1st Corinthians* 5:5 speaks of delivering “one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” You can see examples of this in *1st Samuel* 16:14 and *1st Timothy* 1:20.

Satan is an accuser before God, but he is also an accuser to others, and to ourselves. Remember, Satan is the father of lies (*John* 8:44), but if you serve the Lord, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (*John* 8:32).

If you are disobeying God by being rebellious and committing sin, your spirit is weakened, and you are allowing yourself to be open to a demonic attack. In this war, we cannot give up any ground to the enemy, because to surrender and submit, no matter how slight, will be just enough to let Satan get his foot in the door of your soul.

It is absolutely imperative that we are armed for spiritual battle, because Satan will attack any weakness, any chink in our armor. In a spiritually weakened condition, it is easy for us to get overwhelmed.

In a boxing match, when one fighter is tired and finds himself overpowered, he starts covering up his head, because that’s what his opponent is going for. He’s a headhunter, and he’s going for the quick knockout. And that’s what some Christians are doing. They’ve practically shut down spiritually, because they’re in a defensive mode, trying to keep from being knocked out. But in covering up your head, you’re leaving your body open to attack.

When I was in eighth grade, a book called *The Contender* (by Robert Lipsyte, a sports reporter for the *New York Times*) was required reading for English class. It remains the only school book I’ve ever read word-for-word, cover-to-cover. It’s a novel about a young man from the ghetto who wants to learn how to box. One thing I never forgot was what his manager told
him: “The stomach is more important than the chin. Hit the chin and you may break your hand. Kill the belly and the head will die.”

You see, the devil is not an idiot; while you’re covering up your head, looking for the big knockout punch— you’re leaving your body unprotected, and the devil is taking advantage of that with multiple body shots— each one taking its toll. If you continue taking these shots, and absorbing this punishment, just like a boxer, it will wear you out, and bring you down.

As Song of Solomon 2:15 says, it’s “the little foxes that spoil the vines.” Each little body shot, each little setback, if left unchecked, can spell spiritual disaster.

Let’s look at some of the ways Satan attacks, and how he is able to gain entry to operate within your life:

1) Mental and emotional oppression; incest and abuse
2) Sexual desire, lust and pornography
3) Occult practices
4) Peer pressure
5) Anti-Christian and occult-driven music
6) Movies of the horror genre, movies containing violence, and movies presenting a message of false theological teaching which is contrary to the Word of God.
7) Worldly desires and fleshly drives
8) Rape or spousal abuse
9) Focus on self; the drive to excel and succeed
10) Mid-life crisis
11) Sibling rivalry and family instability
12) Pain, sickness and disease

Once Satan is able to find an opening, then he begins to develop it, and establish a stronghold in your life, which (among other ways) he is able to maintain through:

1) Quarreling, arguing, complaining, and rivalries
2) Walking in unforgiveness
3) Sexual neglect in a marital relationship
4) Times of trial and tribulation
5) Rebellion and the inability to exercise self-control
6) Temperament, anger, and rage
7) Unbelief, and the inability to accept the truth
8) Relying on our own strength, rather than God’s
9) Depression and discouragement
10) Promoting division
11) Fear
12) Shame

If you are under spiritual attack, and suffering from the casualties of being a prisoner of war, you are being held back from God’s blessings, and you are being robbed of everything that God has for you. You do not have to live in bondage, because the Lord paid the price for your salvation and deliverance at Calvary when He died for your sins. You are— because He is! If you feel as though you have been under spiritual attack— it’s time to fight back. It’s time to be a victor— not a victim. There’s no need to cower, because you have the power. It’s time to learn the authority that you have in Christ and begin taking the upper hand.

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THE BASICS

The key to winning a spiritual war is the same as it is in a conventional war. You have to destroy the enemy’s base of operation or supply source. You have to eliminate whatever is feeding a spiritual attack against you. For that, you have to go back to the basics—a spiritual basic training.

As Christians, there are some theological basics that are central to our faith. They are elementary truths that one must understand, and grab a hold of, in order to form the core belief system that is the backbone and fiber of our relationship with God. You probably already know them. But knowing them and doing them are two different things.

1) Study  
2) Prayer  
3) Praise  
4) Fellowship

STUDY

The Study of the Word of God is of paramount importance because it contains the truths you need to stand firm in your faith. In Psalm 119:105, we find that the “word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” It is the Word of God that defeats the lies of the enemy. In 2nd Timothy 2:15, it says: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Where preaching and teaching are like spiritual vitamins and minerals, it is the Bible that should be your main spiritual sustenance, because it nourishes your spirit and helps you grow in the Lord.

We must read, study, learn and memorize God’s Word so we can be armed for spiritual battle, and be able to witness and minister. Make it part of you. Psalm 119:11 says: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” The Apostle John wrote in 1st John 2:14, that, “…because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”

In light of the earlier chapter, it goes without saying that it is the King James Version of the Bible you should be using.

PRAYER

The most powerful weapon in your spiritual arsenal is prayer. Where the Word of God nourishes your spirit, prayer exercises your spirit. And the two, working together, will strengthen your spirit.

Prayer is absolutely necessary to have a relationship with God, because it is how you communicate with Him. If you don’t talk to Him, why would He think you would want Him to talk to you? In 1st Thessalonians 5:17, it says we are to “pray without ceasing.” Obviously, that is not possible; but what it actually means, is that we are to have a lifestyle of prayer. What this does, is allow your spirit man to be more open and receptive to God, and the things He wants to do for you and through you. James 5:16 tells us that we are to “pray one for another, that ye may be healed.”

What a lifestyle of prayer does is to constantly have your thoughts focused on the Lord, and for your words to reflect that. For instance, (if you’re a guy) let’s say that there is a girl that
you like, but every time you’re around her, she’s talking about another guy that she likes. It wouldn’t take long for you to get the message, would it? Well, with prayer, and the name of Jesus on our lips, demons aren’t gonna want to stick around us either.

In addition to this attitude of prayer, some Christians have a regular, established prayer, or devotion time, where they get alone to be with God. Although this can be done at any opportune time, I like the analogy that Joyce Meyer makes with eagles.

At the beginning of each day, before the eagle does anything, he preens his wing feathers. In a process that can take up to an hour, the eagle will sit on a rock and systematically pass each wing feather through his mouth and blow on each one of them. There can be up to 1200 feathers on each wing. The eagle has a gland in his mouth that secretes an oily substance which will waterproof his feathers so he can fly in the rain, or dive into the water. So, in effect, the eagle is steam-cleaning his feathers to restore them from the previous day’s activities, which may have left them matted and separated.  

Morning prayer or prayer at the beginning of your day, whenever that is, allows you to spiritually arm yourself to face the day. Part of the spiritual protection for the impending day, has to include following up on yesterday, or the past. This protects your back door.

As Christians, we are not perfect. Romans 3:23 says: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...” This is one of the ways we start tearing down strongholds— through repentance. By confessing the sin(s) and disobedience by name, renouncing them, asking God for forgiveness, then changing so you no longer do that thing, this takes away Satan’s legal right to you and puts you back in the driver’s seat. I’ve heard this referred to as: Repent, Revoke, Replace.

I want to make a couple comments about this new concept of “centering” and “contemplative” prayer that has found its way into the churches. It seems like churches now are just latching onto to anything that comes down the chute in an effort to get some kind of spirit moving in their services. First of all, it’s not in the Bible; and secondly, it comes from the Catholic Church, a pagan-based religion. First they take their Bibles, and then they take their prayer. And then you want to know what God is not moving in your churches. If it doesn’t line up with Scripture, then we shouldn’t be lining up to follow it.

Contemplative prayer is differentiated from meditation (prayer from your head; 1st Corinthians 14:15), because it is defined as prayer from your heart. It begins with centering prayer, when someone takes a particular word and constantly repeats it, while sitting completely still, for the purpose of emptying their mind and entering into an altered state of consciousness. The purpose for this is so that they can hear God speaking to them and feel His presence. From the centeringprayer.com website we find this definition:

“Centering Prayer is a method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God’s presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.”

The origin of contemplative prayer can be traced back to Thomas Merton (1915-1968), a Trappist monk at the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky, who wrote a well-known book on the subject called Contemplative Prayer (1969); and to 1974 when Father William Meninger, a Trappist monk, found a 14th century book, by an unknown author, in the library of St. Joseph’s Abbey in Massachusetts, called The Cloud of Unknowing, that introduced this concept as a way for a person to receive a direct experience with God.

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76 Meyer, Joyce. Mount Up With Wings As Eagles (6-Tape Set ALB-149). Fenton, MO: Joyce Meyer Ministries.
This is clearly a New Age concept that the Bible specifically warns us about in Matthew 6:7 when Jesus said: “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.” Even Wikipedia got it right, because it identifies this concept as being part of “Christian mysticism.” This type of prayer is not of God, and should be avoided, because you are actually inviting demonic spirits to interact with you.

PRAISE

Probably the most neglected of these areas is Praise and Worship. We know from Psalm 22:3, that God inhabits the praises of His people. Which means when you praise Him, He’s gonna show up, and His spirit is going to move. Just like prayer, praise should be a lifestyle to you, so that God’s presence can be with you all the time. David said in Psalm 34:1 that “I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

The opposite of praise is to complain, or in the vernacular of the Scriptures— to murmur. In 1st Corinthians 10:10, Paul writes: “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.” You can see here that complaining opens you up to Satan.

In the sports entertainment field of professional wrestling, the trick of the trade is for wrestlers to ‘sell the move’ by either overly exaggerating an attack to emphasize its potency, or over-reacting to an attack to give the impression that they are hurt, in order to make it look real and believable. By comparison, in professional boxing, when a fighter is really hurt, he doesn’t want to show it, because that is where his opponent will focus his attack, because he knows it is a weak point.

Steve Dollins, an ex-Satanist high priest, while speaking on behalf of the Prophecy Club in December, 1999, said that when a person becomes a Christian, they are assigned 1 or 2 demonic spirits, whose job is to find some way to disrupt your Christian walk. These spirits, according to the 28th chapter of 1st Samuel, are known as “familiar spirits,” because by being around us, they become intimately “familiar” with us. It is these demons which are conjured up by mediums that masquerade as the spirits of dead people.

By complaining, we are ‘telegraphing’ ourselves, and giving Satan a plan of attack against us. We are giving him everything he needs to wage war. You see, he cannot read our mind, or our thoughts. But these spirits can hear your words, and see your actions.

This is why we have to constantly keep our guard up, so that Satan is not able to take (2nd Corinthians 2:11) “advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” To quote a popular deodorant commercial: “Never let them see you sweat.”

FELLOWSHIP

Hebrews 10:25 says: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

You are not an army of one. You’re not going to do anything through your own strength. It is Christ in you, working through you. You are part of the army that is known as the Body of Christ. Just as in a conventional army, there are many different levels, commissions, positions, assignments, jobs, and anointings. They all contribute to a support system that allows this army to perpetuate itself.

What happens when individual members of a sports team begin concentrating on their own personal accomplishments, rather than concentrating on the goals of the team? Victory eludes them.
For example, it is the bottom of the 9\textsuperscript{th} inning, there’s 2 outs, the score is tied, there is a runner on third base, and the league’s leading homerun hitter comes up to the plate. If he was preoccupied with personal accomplishment, his first thought would be to try and hit it out of the park. However, because of over-swinging, he stands a chance of striking out; or, if he can’t get a good pitch, he might just fly out. But, if he was a team player, he would choke up, shorten his swing, and try to slap the ball through the infield, just to score the run.

Just like a conventional war, there is strength in numbers. As a Body, we stay strong by supporting each other, and praying for one another.

THE FORCE MULTIPLIER

In Matthew 14: 14-21, after ministering to a crowd of well over 5,000 people, the disciples wanted to send the crowds away so the people could eat. But Jesus said they should feed them. Unfortunately among all the people, there were only five loaves, and two fishes, which were taken to Jesus. He only needed one loaf and fish; yet he asked for everything. Whoever had that food, willingly gave it up, not knowing what was to become of it. That is sacrificial giving. So those that gave, gave everything they had, and after they gave everything they had— it was multiplied. Sacrificial giving is one of the ways that you can break the power of your flesh from having control over you.

In spiritual warfare, you must do everything you can do, to gain an advantage. Through fasting, you break the flesh, to mend the spirit; and starve the flesh, to feed the spirit. Fasting, or not eating for a specific period of time, enhances you spiritually, and makes you more receptive to the things of God, giving you a spiritual edge. Fasting is the force multiplier. David wrote (in Psalm 35:13 and 69:10): “I humbled my soul with fasting,” “I... chastened my soul with fasting,” and in Joel 2:12 it says: “Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning...”

Mark 9:28-29 specifically deals with fasting in regard to spiritual warfare: “And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.” In Matthew 17:19-21, there is a bit more detail: “Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”

We can read in these passages that the disciples had already prayed for the man’s son, and were unable to cast out the demon; and when they asked Jesus why they were unable to do so, He said this “kind” only comes out through prayer and fasting. This word, in the Greek, is genos (Strong’s #1085) and refers to diversity, nation, offspring, or stock.\textsuperscript{77} This seemingly points to the fact, that just as there are different ranks of angels, it is the same for demons. So, this demon may have been more powerful, requiring more authority for it to be cast out.

When you go over to Mark 9:25, where you get a more graphic description, Jesus says, “thou dumb and deaf spirit...” You almost get the impression that there were two spirits, yet in the 26\textsuperscript{th} verse, it identifies the entity as a “spirit.” So, when Jesus talked about this “kind” of spirit, was He referring to a spirit that had more than one assignment, in this case, a spirit who took away speech, as well as hearing, and thus had more power; or maybe was just a high-ranking demon.

What Jesus was teaching, is that prayer and fasting builds spiritual power. In spiritual warfare, you never know what you’re going to be up against, so this is how you can be better prepared for battle.

And just as I wrote in the first chapter of this book, why is it that the NIV and other modern versions of the Bible remove the reference to fasting in Mark 9:29, and remove the entire verse of Matthew 17:21. How can you trust a Bible version that removes this kind of crucial information— a Bible that would send you into a spiritual battle unarmed? Satan is trying to take your power to resist him so you’ll give up without even putting up a fight. Do not give up the authority we have in Christ.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)” [2nd Corinthians 10:3-4]

DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

In sports competition, it’s been said, that the best offense is a good defense. The same holds true in spiritual warfare.

One of my favorite movies when I was growing up was Enter the Dragon. In one particular scene, as the fighters are on a Chinese junk (which is taking them to an island where a secret competition is being held), a participant from Australia is bullying other passengers on the boat. He walks up to martial arts legend Bruce Lee and takes a couple intimidating swings at him. Lee does not flinch. He asks Lee, “What’s your style?” Lee says, “It’s the art of fighting, without fighting.” Well, needless to say, the Australian wants to see it, to which Lee says that there isn’t enough room on the boat, that they should take a smaller boat to a nearby island. So, as they both move towards a small boat which is being pulled behind the ship, Lee lets him go first, and when he gets in, he unties the boat, and allows the line to play out so that the small boat is buffeted on the churning waves. That is a good explanation of the kind of defensive strategy that should be used in spiritual warfare.

Ephesians 4:26 says we are not to “give place to the devil,” because when we do that, we allow ourselves to be unknowingly receptive to the works of the enemy, by exposing areas of spiritual weakness in our lives, so they can be exploited for Satan’s gain. In the original Greek, the word “place” is translated from the word topos (Strong’s #5117), which means a spot (as in a space), or location (as in position or home), and figuratively refers to condition or opportunity.78 Webster’s Dictionary says that it is “to give advantage to; to yield to the influence of.”79

The proper name for the rudiments of preparing a table for a meal is a ‘place setting.’ When you are having a guest over for dinner, you set up an additional ‘place’ for them at the table. So, if you are giving “place to the devil,” you are inviting him to come in and make himself at home— giving him the right to have an influence in your life. So, it is obvious that our primary defensive strategy is NOT to do things which will allow the devil to come in and have his own way. Remember, never give the devil a ride, because he will always want to drive.

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The Word of God outlines various methods we are to use, so that we don’t open ourselves up to the attacks of the enemy. Some of these “golden rules” can be found in the following Scriptures:

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7)

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (Ephesians 5:11)

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2nd Corinthians 6:14)

The many facets that make-up the defensive armor that we all must have, are not built-up overnight. The development of these defensive strategies comes with spiritual maturity, a strengthening of character and a commitment to an intimate relationship with God that breeds faith, obedience, and sacrifice.

PUTTING ON THE ARMOR

While you are living in a physical world, around you is a spiritual realm. From here, angelic protection is available. But also from here, demonic attacks originate. This is your battlefield. Ephesians 6:12 says: “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.” There is no way to physically protect yourself from a spiritual attack, therefore it must be done spiritually.

They say that life is not fair, but in reality, it is the devil that isn’t fair. The devil just doesn’t play fair. He’s out to kill, steal, and destroy. He’s out to take your joy. He’s out to take your victory. The things I have outlined in this book are to help you with what you’re going through now, and to prepare you for what’s to come; because, as a Christian, you should constantly be on guard against a spiritual attack.

Ephesians 6:11, 13 says: “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...” You see, when you begin putting all of these spiritual elements together to work in your life, you have begun to wear the whole armor of God which is described in Ephesians 6:14-17. These symbolic representations are the spiritual defense mechanisms that every Christian should walk in. In fact, Bob Larson, a nationally-known deliverance minister, who deals in cases of demonic possession and bondage, actually goes through the motions of symbolically putting on this armor.

The Apostle Paul is believed to have written the book of Ephesians between AD 60 and AD 64, and when he envisioned the armor he wrote about in spiritual terms, most likely he used the armor of a Roman Legionnaire as an example. So, let’s take a look at each piece, what Paul likens it to, and what it means.
“Having Your Loins Girt About With Truth”

Around the Roman soldier’s waist was a belt, from which hung a metal apron which extended to the mid-thigh. This lower abdominal area is referred to in the Bible as the “loins.” In both men and woman, this is the area which harbors the sexual organs of reproduction. Because of its importance as far as covenant and our relationship to God, it is one of Satan’s areas of concentration. As I said earlier, a poll taken by the men’s group Promise Keepers a few years ago indicated that its members revealed that pornography and lust were their areas of greatest weakness.

Matthew 5:28 says: “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” Satan knows that if he can get these thoughts into your mind, he’s won half the battle. To one of weak flesh, these thoughts can be a cancer. James 1:15 says: “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Romans 6:23 says that “the wages of sin is death...” If you knowingly watch movies containing nudity and sexual situations, look at pornographic magazines and even “swimsuit” magazines, you are exposing yourself to attack. Believe me, when you’re looking for it, the devil is more than happy to oblige you.

This is well illustrated in 1st Timothy 6:9, 11, which says: “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition...But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.” James 4:7 mirrors this sentiment when it says: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Submitting and focusing on God is the key to guarding against enemy attack. In 2nd Corinthians 10:5, it says: “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ...” We are to have the mind of Christ (1st Corinthians 2:16)– to be spiritually minded. Galatians 5:16 tells us to “walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

Let’s go a little deeper. The groin area, in men, is a very vulnerable area. Though, in places, the Bible uses the word “loins” in a general sense, there are also references specifically relating to men, and it being the origin of the seed, or children. With the man being the spiritual head of the family, this girdle of truth also refers to the spiritual protection of our children. Proverbs 22:6 says: “Train up a child in the way he shall go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” John wrote (3rd John 1:4): “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

The girdle of truth is to guard our sexual purity, and to spiritually fortify us to raise our children to be Godly. We are to take them to church, and to stir within them a hunger for the things of God. We are to protect them from the wrong kind of books, the wrong kind of television shows, videos and movies, the wrong kind of music, and the wrong kind of friends.

“Having on the Breastplate of Righteousness”

The breastplate of righteousness is symbolic of the armor which covers the chest area. 1st Thessalonians 5:8 refers to the “breastplate of faith and love.” As Christians, we know that Jesus is in our hearts. Jesus said in Matthew 12:34 that, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” Therefore, we need that spiritual covering to keep our heart right before God. Matthew 5:8 says: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”
“Your Feet Shod With the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace”

Our feet should be protected with the “preparation of the gospel of peace...” Again, let’s equate this to literal armor, and we can see that this would be the solerets (protective metal covering the top of the feet) and greave (which covered the shin and the top of the foot). So while the person was walking, they were protected against things falling on their feet, and hitting against their legs—things that would trip them up.

So we have spiritual protection against things that would come against us, to trip us up, and hinder us in our walk with the Lord. We can walk in confidence, and in strength, knowing that the Lord is protecting our path. In Psalm 119:105, David writes: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” It is the Word of God, or the Bible, that will direct and guide our path, giving us protection from the attacks of the enemy.

But let’s go a bit deeper here. It says "preparation.” If we look at Romans 10:15 (which echoes Isaiah 52:7), it says: “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Webster’s Dictionary says that preparation is “the act or operation of preparing or fitting for a particular purpose, use, service or condition” As Christians we have been instructed to do that. We have been told in 2nd Timothy 2:15: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” We are to be prepared, so when the Lord is ready to use us, we are equipped to go where He sends us. Proverbs 6:13 uses the term, “he speaketh with his feet,” which shows that our actions are an indication of our obedience.

“Taking the Shield of Faith”

While the other defensive pieces of the armor are in fixed positions, the shield is a piece of ‘armor’ that can be moved in all positions, to ward off attacks from every direction. God knows that we are not perfect and that there will be chinks in our armor—so the shield is there to help guard those exposed areas or places where we are weak. Used in a blocking or defensive capacity, the shield represents passive faith.

However, you’ve seen in some medieval-period movies, that the shield can also be used offensively, by slamming it against an opponent to knock him off balance. Using the shield in an offensive capacity represents aggressive faith.

The Bible (Hebrews 11:1) says that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” and that (Romans 10:17) “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Psalm 56:10-11 says: “In God will I praise his word: in the Lord will I praise his word. In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.” God told Abraham (Genesis 15:1): “I am thy shield...” and Psalm 28:7 says that the “Lord is my strength and shield...”

The shield of faith is to trust God, and believe on his Word, rather than looking to man, and to the world, for your provision and security. Remember that old church hymn that told us to “stand on the promises of God.”

“Take the Helmet of Salvation”

The helmet of salvation generally indicates the submission to Jesus Christ, accepting Him as your personal savior, and giving Him authority in your life. In 1st Thessalonians 5:8, it says that the spiritual helmet is the “hope of salvation.” But the spiritual ramifications actually go much farther than that.

Think of a helmet on your head. The primary reason for a helmet is to protect your head. It protects your brain against the trauma of a direct blow to that area. Spiritually speaking, it is to protect your mind, and your thoughts against temptation by Satan, for we are to have the mind of Christ. It is to protect your ears, so that foul language, word curses, false teaching, and Satanic music, which you might happen to hear in the course of a day, won’t affect you.

Again, picture a Roman helmet being on your head, with the large hinged cheek pieces hanging down below your chin. You can’t see very well, can you? You can’t really use your peripheral vision because of the confines of the helmet which is also designed to protect your forehead and ears. Basically, you can only see straight ahead. And spiritually speaking, that is what God wants you to do. He wants you to keep your eyes straight ahead, and focused on Him. He doesn’t want any circumstances or temptation to distract you, and cause you to lose sight of Him by looking to the left, or to the right.

Proverbs 4:25-27 says: “Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.” When Peter was walking on the water, he was okay as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus; but he became afraid because of the wind and the waves, and when he looked around him, taking his eyes off the Lord, and he began to sink (Matthew 14:25-31).

In horse races, they put blinders on the animals so they can’t see the encroachment of the other competitors on either side of them. They can only see straight ahead, in the direction of the finish line. The same goes for human runners. One of the most important guidelines in track competition is that you never look back, because it affects your concentration and can cause you to break your stride—thus affecting your performance.

Paul, in Philippians 3:13-14, even compared his Christian walk to a race: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

“The Sword of the Spirit”

When you’re standing up against spiritual attack, constantly parrying away blows, and blocking thrusts from the enemy. How long should you keep that up? One of my favorite lines from a movie comes from the movie F.I.S.T. when the union leader, played by Sylvester Stallone says: “You don’t win a fight taking a punch. Nobody ever won a fight by taking a punch.” And God doesn’t expect you to do it either. 1st John 5:4 says: “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” That’s why, along with the defensive capabilities, He gave you a mighty offensive weapon— the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12 says: “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of sword and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” If you don’t read, and study your Bible, you are going to be an unarmed Christian.
In a vision he received, Dumitru Duduman saw Satan’s army advancing against the Christians: “As they began to close in on us, a powerful light appeared and encircled us. Then, an angel of the Lord spoke. ‘Take out your swords and fight. Defend yourselves and be victorious over the enemy…the Word of the Lord is your sword’...When we understood what the angel meant, we began to quote verses from the Bible.”

Rick Joyner, in his book *The Final Quest* in describing a similar vision he had, said that “everyone had swords named the Word of God...” He elaborated later on its importance: “Then, because the ledge I was standing on was so narrow, and becoming so slippery, I drove the sword into the ground and tied myself to it while I shot at the enemy. The voice of the Lord then came to me, saying: ‘You have used the wisdom that will enable you to keep climbing. Many have fallen because they did not use their sword properly to anchor themselves.”

YOUR AUTHORITY

In the movies, it was the character in armor that presented an imposing, intimidating and authoritative figure. As a Christian, you have the authority to wear this armor and exercise the power of Christ. *Luke* 9:1 says: “Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.” You have the power! You have the authority!

When my children were growing up, they always wanted a nightlight. That little nightlight was able to protect them from monsters, vampires, ghosts, and a myriad of other products of the imagination. That same principle applies spiritually. Jesus is the “light of the world” (*John* 8:12, 9:5), and He gives you that authority. Jesus said in *John* 14:14: “If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.” In fact, you should be able to do more, because Jesus said in *John* 4:12 that we would do even “greater works.” So, through your authority, you can rebuke the devil, take authority over him in Jesus name, bind him, demand that he lose his grip, and command him to leave.

In *John* 1:1, Jesus is referred to as “the Word,” and as you have already read, the Word of God is your sword (*Hebrews* 4:12). A sword is not just an offensive weapon, it is also defensive one, in that it can be used to parry away blows. By using this verse as an example, and applying it spiritually, we can better understand the dual authority that Jesus represents. Where one edge of the sword is the name of Jesus, an offensive weapon; the other edge is the blood of Jesus, a defensive weapon.

Our sins have been forgiven because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ (*John* 1:29, 36), who is the “Lamb of God.” We have been “sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ,” (*Hebrews* 10:10) because without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (*Hebrews* 9:22). Jesus became the physical embodiment of the prophetic sacrificial lamb. It is the blood of the lamb which was applied to the doors of the Hebrews, to protect them when the death angel passed through Egypt, killing the first born of each house (*Exodus* 12:7).

There’s power in the blood of Jesus, and Satan knows it. That’s why various new Bible translations have removed some references to the blood of Jesus; and a hymnal was published for use by a major denomination which has substituted the word “love” for “blood.”

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83 Ibid., pg. 28.
Revelation 12:11 says that “they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the lamb...” and it is important to plead the blood of Jesus, and for Jesus to cover you with his blood of divine protection.

No sports team can be effective by being strong defensively, and weak offensively; or being weak defensively, and strong offensively. The power of Jesus, with its duality visualized by the sword, is both an offensive and a defensive weapon, and as such, is complete and all-encompassing.

So what happens when you walk in the authority you have in Christ? When the devil attacks, you’ll be like Teflon—nothing will be able to stick to you. That is what your spiritual armor will do for you.

WALKING IN POWER

Since June 25, 1962, when the Supreme Court began the process that would remove prayer from school, this has become the most Anti-Christian time in America history. In these Last Days, people will be against you just because you are a Christian (Matthew 10:22). You will have to put up with a lot, and perhaps, in the near future, even experience the same kind of persecution that missionaries in foreign countries have been suffering for years. But Jesus said (Matthew 10:22) he that would endure “to the end shall be saved.” To endure will take spiritual fortitude that is developed only through spiritual relationship, maturity and strength.

In Matthew 5:38-39, Jesus talked about what you’ll be up against, and how you are to respond. He said: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

I grew up believing that this verse meant that you had to tolerate any aggression directed against you. Not true. Let’s look at the word “smite” that comes from the Greek word rhapizo (Strong’s #4474) which means to “slap with the palm of the hand.” If the word “fist” had been intended in this passage, the word plesso (Strong’s #4141) would have been used, which means “to pound” (and is associated with the term “buffeting”).

According to the book Manners and Customs of the Bible, slapping was done as an insult, or to hurt a person’s feelings— not to do physical harm. When children are young and you have to punish them, sometimes you only have to hit their bottoms hard enough just to hurt their feelings and that is all. And when they get a little older, and they are too big to use the “rod” on, you do other things to “hurt” them, like grounding them, or suspending their television or computer privileges.

When someone tries to hurt you, often they will use others means, because they don’t want to hurt you physically. But they do want to hurt your feelings, they want to annoy or aggravate you, or they want to goad you into a particular response.

That is what this Scripture is referring to. If someone is coming against you to physically hurt you, you are justified in defending yourself. But if someone is just trying to offend you, hurt your feelings, embarrass you, or make you look bad, that’s when you are to turn the other cheek and not let it affect you. In fact, 1st Peter 3:9 says: “Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for

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85 Ibid., pg. 1314 (58).

railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." And what do you do instead of retaliating or seeking revenge? Proverbs 25:22 says that you treat them as if nothing happened, and even go out of your way to bless them. By doing that, you “heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.” Remember, vengeance belongs to God.

Earlier I had talked about a suspension that I received at my job. What happened was that one of our customers owed us money, so their account was put on hold, and they had to pay cash. While he stood at my desk talking to our Credit Manager over the phone, he was told that if he made his account current, his account would be reopened. He paid what he owed, but his account was not opened. He was lied to. He was kept on a C.O.D. basis and I was told not to take any of his checks—only cash.

Not too long after that, on a Saturday morning, this customer had an emergency call from one of his customers, and came in to buy some things. Since the bank wasn’t open and he couldn’t bring in cash, he asked if I would take his check. I felt bad for him because I knew the company had lied to him, and I felt like I wanted to personally separate myself from what our company did to him. So I took his check. Well, someone in my office found out, and soon that person told our Credit Manager, and I was given a three-day suspension for insubordination. The President of the company actually wanted to fire me, but my boss went to bat for me.

When I got home, I was very upset. I called this person up, trying to find out why they did it, and they took the company line— that I was an employee and my responsibility was to follow the directive I was given no matter what. Were they right? Yes. Was I wrong to stand up for what I thought was right? I still ask myself that question.

During those three days, I ran the full gamut of emotions. But I knew that when I went back to work, I had to treat this person as if nothing happened. A person that almost got me fired, and I was supposed to act like nothing was wrong. Can you say...grace?

When I returned to work, everyone in the office was walking on eggshells because they didn’t know how I was going to react. I didn’t talk to this person right away, but eventually I did. I didn’t act hostile and I didn’t give them an attitude. One of my other co-workers couldn’t believe that I was able to do that, after everything that happened. Because God gave me the grace and the strength to endure, that gave me one of the best witnesses I have ever had on the job. You can talk about the Lord all you want, but if your words are not backed-up by action, it means very little.

The relationship with my co-worker eventually returned to, and ultimately passed its previous level.

I believe that the ability to overcome this situation came because I knew that I had to trust God to get me through it. I knew that I had to walk by faith, not by sight. I was able to use the spiritual armor that is available to every Believer.

Let me digress here quickly just to give you a little personal tidbit about myself. I have been referred to by different people as the pen king, because of my penchant for collecting classy pens. Not real expensive ones, but some nice-looking ones. I have a wooden pen, a pewter pen, and a gold Cross pen, as well as some other expensive-looking pens. For some reason, I have always felt that an attractive writing instrument gave a person an air of credibility and distinction.

Sometime after this situation, this same co-worker came up to me and gave me a Mont Blanc pen that somebody had given him. This is a top of the line pen that runs about $100. He said that he didn’t like the fact that it had blue ink, because he used black, and just the refills cost over $10.00. Plus, he didn’t care that much about pens, and he knew that I did. I believe that this was God’s reward for ‘turning the other cheek.’ Hey, God knows that it don’t take much to make me happy.
I still have that pen today. I don’t really use it though, because I can’t afford the refills either. Not really. It’s something that serves as a constant reminder of God’s goodness. That He is a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Everyday, we are going to face situations that are going to offend us. But we can’t look to the left, nor the right, we can only look to Christ, and Him crucified. We can appropriate the power of the Cross, and walk in the spiritual authority and confidence that God has granted us, for this enables us to face the enemy—fully armed. So when the enemy comes in like a flood, all you have to do is get out your spiritual surfboard.
CHAPTER TEN
LEGACY LIVING

Back in 2005, country music artist Tim McGraw won two Grammy Awards for his song *Live Like You Were Dying*. Isn’t it nice for once to hear something positive coming out of secular music. This song really hit home for a lot of people. It really made an impression on me, because you always think in the context that you have plenty of time left— that you shouldn’t have to live your life under a constant cloud of having to do get certain things done. But you see, your life could end in an instant, and important things left undone could wreak havoc on your family.

A few years ago, in the area where I live, a tractor trailer driver lost control of his rig, hit a car, and knocked it off of a bridge. The driver died immediately. And about a year before that, when a guy was driving under a bridge, unknown to him, a construction vehicle had rolled off of the deck on top and fell on his vehicle. He died instantly. Our life could be snuffed out in an instant, so the mindset that you’ll always have time to do something, is misguided.

Part of the feeling of being stressed-out is the inescapable notion that you have totally lost control of everything around you, and procrastination is a way of life. Things that are important don’t matter because you have entrenched yourself in a shell of self-preservation that is impervious to responsibility. The things that you do to address the matter are half-hearted efforts, while the others which are ignored pile up, and contribute to your already convoluted mental state.

It is a methodical approach that has to be utilized here. Again, it is small steps and small victories. However, to do this job, you need the right tools.

I believe that a person is a product of their environment. The Bible says in *Proverbs* 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” St. Francis Xavier said: “Give me the children until they are seven and anyone may have them afterward.” Time and time again, we have found that the actions we take as adults, more often than not, stem from childhood experiences.

For example, if parents are overweight, chances are that their children will also be overweight. This is because their children are subjected to the same over-indulging eating patterns. In cases of child or spousal abuse, it is common for the accused to have been the recipient of such treatment during their childhood. On the other end of the spectrum, the child of overachieving parents will probably be an overachiever.

When it comes to handling money, and your personal affairs, if you grew up in a home where these issues were not dealt with in a responsible way, then you were not equipped to deal with these matters in a responsible way; and it is likely that you are lacking in the skills necessary to be effective. As an adult, you have become set in your ways, and old habits die hard.

The keystone of my philosophy lies in the fact that there is one personal attribute that is the basis for almost anything you want to do in your life. And that is the possession of organizational skills. The level you have determines the amount of success you will achieve.

There are many people who will admit their weakness in this area, and there are others who won’t admit it. There are some people who are willing to learn how to improve, while others could care less about whether they can improve. Either they think it is too hard, or they would rather just stay where they’re at.

And then there’s that other .01% of the population who defy all logic by operating on some internal subconscious system of mental vectors and logistics. My former boss was like that. He didn’t just have one desk. He had two, and both were a mess. Or so I thought. There were many times, when I needed something, and he was able to go to one of those desks, reach his hand into a pile of paperwork, and extract what I was looking for. His organizational
system was seemingly based on some intricate archaeological filing system that only he understood. Instinctively, he knew where he put it, and when he put it there. Since he was the boss, it wasn't necessary for anyone else to know his system.

Unfortunately, only a small fraction of the population possesses this kind of intellectual capability. So, therefore, we need an edge.

In a situation where you are asking someone to completely disregard the system upon which they have been operating, in order to adopt something completely new, they have to be convinced that they need to do it. Once they are convinced of that, in order for them to stick with it, they have to be reeducated, and to have their priorities realigned. They have to want to do it.

Space will not permit an extensive elaboration, and rather than just tell you that you need to do this, or you need to do that; I'm just going to plant a seed that you can allow to grow in a way that will be applicable to your situation. For instance, you can nurture it to grow just enough to provide you a springboard for what you need to do, or you can allow it to grow unabated so that your thinking is completely realigned.

When a parent is teaching a child that it is wrong to put their hand on a hot stove, they don't just tell them, they take their hand and put it close enough to it, so they can feel the heat, but far enough away so that they won't get burned. This way they know that the reason they're not supposed to touch it is that they will get hurt. If that is not done, then their natural curiosity will motivate them to discover the painful truth for themselves.

Adults are no different. When we are accustomed to doing something, we have to be shown why we need to change. And, if it involves a new concept, something needs to be done so that it is easily brought to our remembrance to do.

One way I did that was with the use of an acronym which represents my four-point program to help isolate the various elements of my system. It is called the R.O.P.E. System.

(R) RATIONALIZE (Step One)

This is the "tell me why" stage. If you are not convinced about why you need to do a certain thing– you won’t do it. All of you, not just part of you, needs to have a reason to feel as though this thing is important enough, before a stage of total mental cooperation is achieved. I'm sure you've heard the saying: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

When you want to break a habit, sometimes willpower just isn't enough, as evidenced by people who have quit smoking, only to resume the habit later, just as I did (a long time ago). You need to do something for all the right reasons.

Case-in-point: I needed to reconcile to myself, just exactly why I needed to quit smoking. So, I sat down and rationalized it, and came up with a list similar to the one below.

Why I Need to Quit Smoking

1) Cigarettes are detrimental to my health because they cause lung cancer.
2) Cigarettes stain my teeth, and cause my breath to smell ("Kissing a smoker is like licking an ashtray.")
3) Cigarette smoke causes my hair and clothes to stink.
4) I get ashes all over the place.
5) I have to empty the ashtrays all the time.
6) Cigarettes are expensive.
7) Smoking stinks up the area where I am at, and irritates non-smokers, as well as places them in jeopardy with "second-hand smoke."
8) My friends are always bumming cigarettes off of me.
9) I am a slave to this habit, and therefore I am not in control.
10) My mother will kill me if she finds out.

So, I was finally able to convince myself why I needed to quit— and I quit. This rationalization process needs to hit deep enough that it affects your subconscious, so your thinking processes can become your ally.

(O) ORGANIZE (Step Two)

This is Phase One of the Planning Stage, which is devoted to the compilation of a list of what you need to accomplish a specific task. This entails the recording of your thoughts and ideas, doing research and consulting pertinent sources, gathering and collecting information and documentation. From this preliminary work, you can begin to map out your strategy.

(P) PRIORITIZE (Step Three)

This is Phase Two of the Planning Stage. This is the point where you begin to sift through and analyze the material to decide the angle upon which your emphasis is going to be placed. This will be your plan of attack. The most important aspects will rise to the top of the list, while the least important will fall to the bottom, or even be discarded.

This stage is especially important when you are dealing with multiple tasks and responsibilities, which have to be grouped together into related areas. Also, big jobs should be divided into smaller, more manageable tasks, so that it can be approached in steps that will allow the forward momentum to continue.

This is where you should establish a timetable for accomplishing each step, or to set a deadline for the overall project.

(E) ENERGIZE (Step Four)

This is the final step, where you, as Captain Jean Luc Picard (from television’s Star Trek: The Next Generation) would say, “make it so.” This is the final product— your plan put into action and carried out. This is the actualization of the concept you have envisioned.

Of course, you must remain flexible enough to know, that you might not be totally finished with it. Once you start implementing your idea, there may be a period of redesigning and refining it, to fit a growing and changing need.
The R.O.P.E. concept can be applied to nearly every situation you face. You can merely use it in your thinking process when you need to make an immediate determination on something, or you can use it in an extensive way, when you have a large project that will need planning, preparation, and implementation.

Think of R.O.P.E. as being similar to the manner in which a court case is prepared for trial. Trial preparation is an excellent example of organizational strategy. There are staff meetings, job assignments, project responsibilities, and filing deadlines, which all come together to achieve clearly defined goals. It is highly structured. The ability to effectively accomplish designated tasks certainly has a bearing on the success of the presentation of a case.

I have applied the R.O.P.E. System to a number of my personal projects, as well as things on the job. It is a viable system that can also be adapted for your own use.

With a clear format to begin applying it to your own life, you now have the potential to systematically attack all of those things that have been on the back-burner. All of those things that you have been meaning to get to. Things, that for some reason are not important, you are ignoring, or you just don’t care about. Nevertheless, they are things that weigh on your mind, because you know that sooner or later, you’re going to have to deal with them. Having a plan to do that is half the battle, wanting to do it is the other half.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” [Matthew 6:19-24]

Your household and how you administrate it is the very root we have based our lives and everything flows from that. It represents the front lines in the natural, because it is where you live and the base of operations for everything you do. If it is in shambles, then that condition will radiate out to every aspect of your life to affect everything you do.

The word “mammon” is the Greek word *mammonas* (Strong’s #3126) which means “wealth.” Wealth is subjective. When you buy a brand new car, and drive it off the lot; its value immediately depreciates by about 10%. So, is the investment in a brand new car really necessary? Some people buy cars, boats, houses, and vacation homes just for appearances—to show off the fact that they have a lot of money. That is their treasure, and that is where their heart is.

For the past five years the A & E Network has run a show called *Hoarders*, about people, who for various reasons, lost the ability to manage their household and needed professional help to restore normalcy to it. Obviously these are extreme cases, but even situations on a much smaller scale can present itself as being insurmountable, and become an obstacle for someone to be able to function on the level that God intended. If you’ve lived in a house for a long time, no doubt you’ve accumulated a lot of things, especially if it’s out of the way; but when it’s so much that it begins to encroach upon your entire house, then extreme measures have to be taken. I believe that situations like this happen because of emotional, psychological and spiritual reasons.

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My mother, in preparing to move into a smaller house, had to go through 35 years of stuff in order to get rid of the things. Many times she would say how depressed it made her because of how overwhelming it was. She didn’t have a plan. A man without a plan is like a ship without a sail. And because she didn’t have a plan, it never happened; and I had to move it all into her new house. After a couple years, with no clearly defined plan, she is still getting rid of that stuff; but at least she finally came to the realization of how things got out of hand.

She asked me one time what I would do with her stuff if she would die suddenly, and I told her that I would probably have a big yard sale. She wasn’t happy about that comment.

A few years ago, when my father passed away, he left a lot of stuff that wasn’t in very good condition. He didn’t even leave any perceivable items to remember him by. I ended up hiring a company to clean out his whole house for the cost of what they could salvage; so I’ve see what happens to your stuff when nobody wants it. In many families, when loved ones pass away, they leave a lot of stuff. Some of it is worthwhile—most is not; but it still takes time to go through everything to ascertain which is which.

As someone who likes to watch movies, listen to music and read books; I ultimately ended up with a large library of books and later an expansive CD and DVD collection that were kept in my den which was also cluttered with all kinds of knick-knacks sitting all over the place. If I wanted it, I bought it, or to be precise, I charged it; and through the years the stuff justaccumulated. It took my father’s passing to come to the realization that most of the stuff I had was only valuable to me, and not to anyone else. Since then, I’ve spent a lot of time getting rid of stuff. I threw things out, gave things to my kids, took things to the Goodwill, sold things at a local consignment shop, sold things on eBay, sold things to co-workers at my job, and sold many of my books to local used book stores.

Through the years I had bought things for their value as a collectible, only to discover that when I sold it, I got back a fraction of what I paid for it. Plus, when you buy collectibles, as they get older, they deteriorate, the value decreases, and your fulfillment for having it in your possession continues to decrease because you can’t even handle the item because of how fragile it is.

Even though I was getting rid of stuff, I was still buying other stuff. Even though I was being more selective, it still indicated a problem. When I got to the point in my life that I began to seek God about His will for my life and started to get serious about it, I saw a shift in my mindset and I knew that God was breaking the spirit of materialism within me.

After I had gotten rid of a lot of stuff I had accumulated, I thought I was done, but then in a couple months I would get rid of a couple other things; and then a couple months later I would get rid of more stuff. I started to get tired of that. I wanted to be done with it once and for all.

I sat in my chair and looked around my den, and said to myself, if I would die tonight, what would I want to leave behind. The things that people find of yours after you die represent what and who you are, and will be what your family remembers about you. I began thinking about what I wanted my legacy to be. I want to leave things that they can look at and think of me—things that can inspire and motivate. These are true family mementos and treasures. When they can look at something that conjures up a mental picture of you, and the kind of person you were, then you have something that’s powerful and valuable. A ceramic cup from Ocean City, Maryland that has a picture of a crab on it is probably not going to do that.

Secondly, I began to look at those things which have no bearing on my Christian walk and my relationship with the Lord; or have no contributory factor in helping me to accomplish my goals. That meant that a lot of movies and books had to go. Right now my library has been gleaned down to a real nice Bible study library, and my DVD collection is a shadow of its former self. I only have a few knick-knack/decorative items around, which I have kept only as things to pass on to my kids.
When you start thinking about Kingdom things, and how God wants to work through you to accomplish His will, you'll be surprised as to how unimportant your stuff will become, and how your priorities will shift and become realigned. You wouldn't believe the freedom that I have felt since I've done this.

That need to have the newest thing, the latest fashion, and the most advanced technology is a distraction which, in the end, has very little, if any, spiritual value. Having a materialistic spirit is what gives you the obsession to buy and have all of the unnecessary stuff that you purchase. But what makes it worse is if you use a credit card to buy something you don't need with money you don't have. It is this spirit that has to be overcome so you can gain victory over the things in your home.

More important than this aspect, is how you handle your household and financial records. When I started getting rid of things, I had boxes of files with old paystubs, checks, bank statements, bills, correspondence and records that went back thirty years. I don't know why I still had them, because it really isn't necessary to keep that stuff. I believe the Law requires you to keep seven years of certain records, but I decided to just keep five years. Getting rid of unnecessary personal information makes it a whole lot easier on your family when you die. You should have all of that information organized in a way, so that records which are vital are easily accessible. This is important in case there's a fire, so you can quickly grab necessary family records.

Every year I have a regiment that I follow so that my organizational strategy doesn't become compromised. I make new files for the coming year, and then I go back and destroy (burn) the oldest files from five years before. And then I look at my personal belongings to see if there is anything that have lost their appeal; as well as books, DVDs and CDs to see if there's anything that isn't being utilized; and if there is, then I get rid of it. When you do it once a year as part of a regular maintenance program, it will keep you from getting overrun and overwhelmed.

A part of my organizational strategy has to do with my finances. Many years ago, because I didn't make much money, I created a method of keeping track of bills and expenses with a system of monthly charts that enable me to budget my income. I print these sheets out once a year and keep them in a binder so I can enter everything throughout the year. At the end of the year I am then able to calculate where every penny went, that way I can control my spending. This is something that will be particularly important in the Last Days.

Though this chapter may seem out-of-step with the rest of the book, I wanted to highlight the importance of where to start to get your life in order, and to get those things done which have been hanging over your head. As the song says, I believe that living like you were dying will make a big difference in your mental outlook, and how you approach those mundane things which we would all like to avoid, but have a bearing on the foundation from which we operate. Having a handle on this part of your life represents a huge step in reinventing who you are, and helping to activate your spirit man and revitalize your relationship with God.
CHAPTER ELEVEN
BEING MORE THAN YOU CAN BE

"...I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he also do; and greater works than these shall he do..." (John 14:12)

A while back, I was a big fan of Randall Cunningham, who, at that time was the quarterback of the Philadelphia Eagles. Here was a man who put everything he had into the game. He could hurt you in so many different ways. He could throw the ball, he could run the ball, and he could even punt the ball. Back then, I liked to surround myself with memorabilia of people who symbolized the competitive spirit that I wanted to exemplify. So I engaged myself in the project of collecting all of his trading cards.

I got books so I could find out what cards were already available, and magazines to keep up on what was coming out. I scoured all the card shops, looked at ads in the magazines, and went to all the sports card shows. Over time, I had nearly all of his cards. Besides the run-of-the-mill cards, I had his rookie card, special cards, and chaser cards. However, in order to complete the collection, I would also have to get the obscure cards.

Now, I knew that with my limited finances, I would never be able to get every single card. For instance, there was a limited-quantity gold-leaf card that booked for a couple hundred dollars, which I never even found. It was probably good that I didn't. Anyway, I was committed to getting as many of his cards as was humanly possible.

I found out that he had two cards in a special “Smoky the Bear” set put out a few years before, by the U.S. Forestry Service and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources. I got in touch with the Forestry Service, and nobody had any of the cards. I called the Department of Environmental Resources, and was passed around till I found a guy who still had a small quantity left in the back of one of his drawers. He invited me to come to his office to look through them.

Well, I went, and met with him, and it turned out that he had one of the two I was looking for. He asked me to leave my phone number so he could call me in case he found the other one. So I did. A day or two later, I got a call from him, and he said he admired the aggressiveness I had, and he wanted to talk to me about a job. I was thinking that maybe he was going to offer me a job in state government, or get me an interview for some other job that was more suited to my abilities.

He came to my house, and he asked me about some of the things that I had done. Of course, since my employment record didn’t really contain any jobs of distinction, I had to fall back on my extra-curricular activities and potential. I concluded my dissertation by uttering the statement that I wanted “to be more than I could be.” I don't know where those words came. My wife looked at me like I was nuts. With that statement, I knew that I had reached the saturation point where I couldn’t possibly suck-up to this guy any more.

Well, as it turned out, this guy was trying to recruit me to sell Amway. Unbelievable. This was something I did not want to do at this point of my life, and needless to say, I was a little disappointed and upset that I was deceived in such a way, and that my time was wasted. But one thing that came out of it was the truth that had eluded me up to that point. And that was the underlying factor that had served as the basis for everything that I had ever attempted. It was the motivation that provided the fuel for my endeavors. I wanted to be more than I could be.

You might be wondering what that actually means, and if it is even possible. I'm sure you’ve seen the old recruiting commercials for the U.S. Army that invited you to sign up, so that you can “be all that you can be.” They had that slogan for a long time, so it must have been successful. I don’t know, maybe it's just me, but I interpreted that slogan as being one that limited a person’s potential. To me, it meant to take what comes, and make the best of it. In
other words, when you reach a plateau, you just stay there and do the best you can at that position. It’s called following the path of least resistance.

I have always adhered to a different philosophy. I conditioned myself to be different. You don’t take what comes— you make what comes. Hannibal, the legendary Carthaginian general (247-183 BC) said: “We will either find a way, or make one.”

I had attributed this attitude to various factors. My parents were divorced when I was ten years old, so because I was raised by a single parent, money was not plentiful, and we had to live in a small apartment. Though it wasn’t in a ‘bad’ neighborhood, if we had a choice, it certainly would not have been at the top of the list. Needless to say, I had to develop a measure of savvy and street smarts to ‘survive.’ I didn’t have the best of clothes, slept on a mattress which rested on apple crates, and for a while, we didn’t even have a television. I grew up not having the resources that others kids had; and I wasn’t able to do the things that other kids could do. So it is safe to say that growing up with these kinds of obstacles certainly made an impact on me, and helped mold my personality.

Even though I had to go without, I certainly did not lack love and encouragement. In fact, when I was a teenager, I remember my mother had given me a mini-poster of a child on a swing, and underneath were the words, “I want to be somebody.” I had a piece of glass on top of my desk, and I put that poster underneath it, so it would serve as a constant reminder of how I felt. That of course brings to mind the message that the Rev. Jesse Jackson had often drummed into the minds of children that he spoke to: “You are Somebody!” My life became a pursuit of that dream.

I soon realized, that what I lacked in education and skill, I made up in drive and determination. I have always been a motivated person, and I would constantly look for ways to stay motivated. I would watch movies where the hero had to overcome incredible odds to win. I would hang motivational sayings all over the place. I would listen to music soundtracks from action movies, and I would buy motivational books. I would do anything to help me accomplish the goals that I set for myself.

In 1996, I received a prophetic word from the Lord, part of which said: “I formed you out of adversity. I formed you and I built the tenacity within the midst of you. I built a fervency thereto. Now I’m renewing it, that it might rise up afresh...” That day was a turning point, because I realized that who I was, was not by my doing. God had confirmed that He indeed had a plan and a purpose for my life.

Being more than you can be, goes far beyond achieving personal success, because being successful doesn’t necessarily bring with it fulfillment, or a feeling of knowing you are making a difference.

To truly be more than you can be, means to deny yourself, and make a commitment to God; to dedicate all you are to God, and to submit to His will. Debbie Koppenheffer, our church’s Children’s Ministry Overseer, said that the Lord told her that the “degree of her submission, would indicate the degree of her commission.”

_Romans_ 12:1 tells us to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Today, we no longer make animal sacrifices to God, because Jesus, the Lamb of God, became sin for us, and was sacrificed so that we could be Saved and have everlasting life (_Ephesians_ 5:2). However, God still demands a sacrifice from us.

_Hebrews_ 13:14 says that we are to “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” But as a “living sacrifice,” we should not only offer the fruit of our lips (praising, praying, testifying, witnessing, teaching, preaching); but also the fruit of our hands (to use our talents and skills for the work of the Lord), and the fruit of our feet (to go where He wants us to go, to do that work).
Deuteronomy 6:5 says: “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Some of the ways we show that love is by keeping His words (John 14:23), keeping His commandments (John 14:15), and doing the will of God (Mark 3:35).

Galatians 5:16 says that we are to “walk in the Spirit,” so that we won’t “fulfill the lust of the flesh.” When the Bible refers to a “living sacrifice” we need to understand what that means. The word “sacrifice” refers to the burnt-offering. Psalm 51:16-17 says: “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.”

So when we willingly and humbly present ourselves before God, fully dedicating and committing ourselves to Him, by offering all that we are, on His sacrificial altar; then we are allowing our flesh to be burned, and our will to be broken. We are breaking down the walls, and removing the obstacles that prevent a relationship with our Heavenly Father. When He is pleased, and finds favor with that offering; it is then, that we are truly being more than we can be.

But there is another principle at work here. When the Law of Moses introduced the concept of animal sacrifice, it specified, many times, that the sacrifice was to be “without blemish.” You see, God’s standard is perfect, and when you offer yourself to Him, as a “living sacrifice,” you must make sure that you are giving all of you. God knows that we are not perfect, and we never will be; but if we offer ourselves to Him, He expects us to be a “perfect” sacrifice, in that we are laying ALL that we are on the altar, to be used by God. He doesn’t just want half of us, or just the part you feel like giving to God. He wants all or none. Check out what Jesus said in Revelation 3:15-16: “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.” If Jesus is not Lord of all, then He is not Lord at all. God wants your best. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might…”

Being more than you can be is not something you can do all by yourself. You can’t do it with your own strength. It’s not going to be something that you are going to be able to pull up from within yourself. It’s something that will only come through the grace of God, as well as His strength and wisdom; and it will come with obedience, sacrifice, and right relationship with God.

Never limit the potential within you to do what you perceive to be the impossible. What is your potential? Webster’s Dictionary says it is the capability of “development into actuality.” What does God’s Word say? In Philippians 4:13 it says: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” That is your potential. In 2nd Chronicles 16:8, the prophet Hanani told Asa, the King of Judah that he was delivered from the Ethiopians and Lubims because he did “rely on the Lord.” Moses told his people (Deuteronomy 1:29b-30a): “Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you…” David prayed to the Lord (Psalm 56:3): “What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.” Time and time again, throughout the Bible, we can see that when men prayed for God’s help, and relied on His strength and power, God would deliver them. And what about the impossible? Luke 1:37 says: “For with God nothing shall be impossible.”

I’ve realized that I can’t solve anything, but when I take Me out of the equation, a whole lot more is possible. There is nothing that can hold you back from being more than you can be. But, the only way to be more than you can be, is by being all that God wants you to be.

The Lord wants you, just as you are. He wants to use the things He put in you. There are things that are only within you, that will be able to speak and minister to certain people that haven’t been able to be reached by others.

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In January, 2000, this prophetic ‘word’ from Sister Ching Co of Cebu City, in the Philippines was Emailed around:

“I am raising up in the midst of the nations a very special remnant. They will not be attractive from the outside, but you have to see them through my eyes of faith to know them. For many of them have been through many battles and have won...Each one of these precious ones have given up their best and their all, as they pass through many rivers, raging fires, wild storms, and great whirlwind. All of them in one way or another have walked as Job walked. The path has not been easy but now they have arrived. They are the ones that I have chosen to represent me before the nations and out of them will flow my blessings, for my glory rests upon them. Many awaiting for the unveiling of my army will not recognize them when they come, but to those who are continually seeking me. They will recognize who they are and will welcome my army with open arms and great will be the blessings that will come to them. Many of them will speak not with eloquent words or act in glamorous ways, and in fact their physical appearance, their ways and their manner will be offensive to many...But they are mine and I will confirm the words that they speak with a mighty show of my power and majesty as in the days of old.”

A similar ‘word’ was given by Mary Baxter in her book *A Divine Revelation of Hell*:

“Behold, I am preparing a holy army. They will do mighty exploits for me and destroy your high places. They are an army of holy men and women, boys and girls. They have been anointed to preach the true gospel, to lay hands on the sick and to call the sinner to repentance. This is an army of working men, housewives, single men, single women and school children. They are common people, for not many noble have responded to My Call. In the past they have been misunderstood and mistreated, abused and rejected. But I have blessed them with boldness in holiness and in spirit. They will begin to fulfill My prophecy and to do My will. I will walk in them, talk in them and work in them. These are they who have turned to me with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. This army will awaken many to righteousness and purity of spirit. I will soon begin to move upon them, to choose for My army those I desire. I will search for them in the cities and in the towns. Many will be surprised at those I have chosen.”

At different times when I would look over my Resume, and see the things that I have done, I have wondered why I have never been able to parlay my skills, talents, and abilities into a good-paying job. I finally realized that what God has put in me, has been intended to be used for His purpose and His glory. To step out of His will, is to turn away from my power source. Without that power source, I cannot hope to be empowered to do what I want to do. But there will be a grace and an anointing to do the things that God wants me to do.

I made the decision to use whatever resources I had to be a blessing, and make a difference. To do any less would be unacceptable. To do any less, would be to disobey my Heavenly Father, and ignore the Call that He has on my life. I have resigned myself to the fact that my life is not my own— that I have been purchased with a price and prepared for such a time as this.

When it’s all said and done, how many people end up being totally fulfilled in their career— satisfied that they have accomplished something worthwhile in their life? I can truthfully

say that until I committed myself to God, and then began to achieve balance, nothing gave me the sense of fulfillment that I was looking for. Because being part of something that will not endure, or stand the test of time, becomes an exercise in futility. Knowing that I have become an integral part of God's plan and purpose, gives me satisfaction far beyond what I could have ever gained in pursuit of empty dreams.

Again I say to you—God does not want you to be overwhelmed by life. He cannot use you, if you are burned-out. That is why it is Satan’s plan to keep you in bondage— to keep you overworked and stressed-out. If we allow ourselves to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and God's will, rather than our own; then we are able to operate on a higher, spiritual level that will allow us to more easily achieve balance in our life. Knowing that it is God working through us to give us the strength to battle adversity, the Spirit Man within us will act as valve to help us make decisions that will prevent us from engaging ourselves in ways that will ultimately be detrimental.

When I was undergoing Counseling at my church a while back, one of the things I had to do, was to create a list of Godly beliefs to counteract the ungodly beliefs that I was operating under at that time. Declaring these Godly beliefs was a valuable tool in realizing that God wanted me to have His best. It helped feed and strengthen my Spirit Man with Biblical truth. After you pray; saying this, out loud, every morning is a great way to help you focus and set the tone for the day.

Declaration

“There is nothing that can happen to me today that my God cannot handle. When I go to my knees, God will help me stand up to anything. And because I walk by faith, and not by sight, I know that with God, all things are possible. I go where others fear, fight where others fall, and triumph where others fail. No weapon that is formed against me shall prosper, and when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

I bend, but I will not break. I will go on to the end. I will never give up, and I will never surrender. What doesn’t kill me will only make me stronger. I have no fear in what man can do to me, because through Christ, I am more than a conqueror. I am an overcomer and I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

It is not important that I be the best, only that I do my best. Without Him I am nothing, with Him I am everything. Champions are not men who never fail, they are men who never quit. Remember, it’s hard to beat a person who never gives up. Expect to win. I am a winner and I will walk in victory, because I have put my trust in God. He is my Deliverance and my Salvation. He is my Fortress and my Defense. He is my Shield and my Buckler. He is my Rock and my Strength. It is He, who fights for me, and I shall not be moved.”
CHAPTER TWELVE
PREPARING TO BE A TRIBULATION CHRISTIAN

At the beginning of this book I laid out the premise that I don’t see anything in the Scripture that indicates a Rapture that is going to save Christians from the Tribulation. So it is something that we’re going to go through and experience. When many Christians can’t even deal with life now, it’s pretty safe to say, they’re going to have a pretty tough time later. My purpose in writing this book was to encourage Christians to get their spiritual house in order now, to make a firm commitment to God and enter into a complete relationship with Him to activate the Spirit man that will enable us to endure till the end. I want to stir the passion within you to get back to your first love.

Remember when you first became a Christian, when the weight of sin was lifted from your life, and you felt such an incredible joy. You wanted to read His Word, seek His face, and serve Him. Your faith was firm, and you looked to God for guidance and insight. We have to get back to that level of relationship. That place where nothing else mattered and you relied on God to help you make it through— and He did. It is going to take this level of relationship to make it through the Tribulation; and if you’re not able to do it, there’s a possibility you will compromise your faith out of self-preservation.

WHY THERE WILL BE TRIBULATION

In my previous book Final Warning (which you can read free on my website), I dealt at length with the movement toward one-world government in this country; which they have slowly implemented behind the scenes. When you understand that Satan is behind it, then it becomes clear where it’s all heading.

For years, the government has become a dominating force in the affairs of this country, and with the Healthcare Reform legislation of President Obama, that has never been more evident. As the government gains a stranglehold on its people, they have initiated measures to disarm Americans by taking away their guns. This will make it impossible for citizens to defend themselves against a tyrannical government.

After studying all of this for over 35 years and finding out about the manner in which they were able to get a foothold into the financial structure of America through the Federal Reserve; it is quite apparent, by looking at the crushing debt this country is under, that they are going to purposely crash the economy. This is the only way they are going to be able to initiate a Socialistic government.

I don’t think this is imminent, but I certainly think it is going to be within ten years. But since the evil men (Illuminati) behind one-world government do control the economy, they could do it at any time, just like what they did to the Stock Market in 1929.

However, I don’t think they are far enough along in their plan. In the Healthcare Reform legislation, twice they tried to introduce wording to provide the impetus for the biochip in the guise of its medical application. But it was taken out both times. The argument is that the biochip is needed for the Healthcare industry as we move towards Socialized medicine to save time in being able to process patients through the system. Well, you can bet that’s not the only reason for it.

In addition, I believe that there will be an increase of military traffic throughout the country as equipment is prepositioned in major cities. The reason for that is that when the economy crashes, there will be martial law.

If the government is unable to operate, workers won’t be paid, and entitlements won’t be sent out. This means that the millions of people who rely on welfare, unemployment and
disability payments won’t get their checks. It is a common fact that most people only keep about a week’s worth of food; while grocery stores only stock a three-day supply, which disappears in a matter of hours during an emergency. You’re going to have a lot of people looking for food. One only has to look at the 2005 events surrounding Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans to see what martial law is going to be like when it comes. The primary mission for officials there was to go door-to-door to take people’s guns, so people were unable to protect their homes. The more guns they can take now, they less they will have to go after later.

The prevailing belief by financial experts is that when this time comes our financial system will have to be completely overhauled. No doubt banks will close for a time until a determination is made in that regard. We’ve been able to get a little insight into what could happen at this time with what is going on in Cyprus now with the banking crisis caused by the huge amount of that government’s debt. They were initially going to levy a tax on all depositors to take a portion of the money that had on deposit; but then because of the outcry against it, they planned on just taxing those that had more than 100,000 euros on deposit. You can see the mindset of the government, so you should plan accordingly, because the same thing may happen here.

Prior to this development, the consensus was that the money supply would be revalued. For example, it might take five old dollars to buy one new dollar. And really, either way, your money will be stolen, your security jeopardized and your quality of life threatened.

The political ideology of this country at this point will very quickly segue into full-blown Socialism, with the government taking full control and part of that will be biochipping the population. Revelation 13:16-17 says: “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” This chip will enable you to have access to your money, and if the economy is converted from a paper currency to electronic one, then as the Bible says, you won’t be able to “buy or sell.” This seemingly indicates that the Mark of the Beast, that ties you to the Antichrist system, will be the biochip. It’s going to be voluntary at first because they will have to get the technology fully implemented and the network completely established. When that is done, it will become mandatory, and then they will start hunting people down who have refused to comply.

On June 25, 1962 the Supreme Court ruled against school prayer, and since then Christmas carols have been taken out of the schools, the ten commandments have been removed from court houses, nativity scenes have been taken away from town squares; and Christians who are anti-abortion, pro-gun, who oppose same-sex marriage and support conservative candidates are considered domestic terrorists.

With the election of Barack Obama, and his partiality to Muslims (because he may be one), we have seen that our society is turning away from God. In 2006, at the Call to Renewal conference in Washington, then Sen. Obama said: “Whatever we once were, we are no longer a Christian nation. At least not just. We are also a Jewish nation, a Muslim nation, and a Buddhist nation, and a Hindu nation, and a nation of nonbelievers.” In April, 2009, at a press conference in Turkey he said: “And I’ve said before that one of the great strengths of the United States is, although as I mentioned, we have a very large Christian population— we do not consider ourselves a Christian nation or a Jewish nation or a Muslim nation. We consider ourselves a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values.” For many years, as the “shining city upon a hill,” we’ve been recognized as a Christian nation; but now President Obama is changing that.

I believe that Christians are being bullied and intimidated into accepting homosexuality, gay rights and same-sex marriage, because if they don’t, they know they will be ostracized by their peers. Of course, our increasingly ecumenical churches are doing their part to water down doctrine to produce spineless, gutless, and powerless Christians who are willing to go with the
flow in an attempt to stay above the fray. I’m pretty sure that Jesus called these people luke-warm and said in Revelation 3:16: "I will spue thee out of my mouth."

A majority of the people who refuse to take the chip will be Christians, and by this time, society will not be favorable toward Christians. Christians who stay true to the faith will be considered an ‘enemy of the State.’ How are you going to eat when you are unable to buy food in a store? Where are you going to live when the government is going to be looking for you? What are you going to do when you need medicine? How are you going to buy clothing and other necessities? Your entire way of life is going to change during this time.

There are people, referred to as “preppers,” who are preparing for this now. But there will be many people totally unprepared, because of what our economy will do to rob savings of its citizens and put them in a position to not have anything extra to put back for that time. Conceivably, you may even have to leave your house and all your belongings. Therefore you should begin thinking in terms of having to be mobile—probably on foot. That means Christians will have to establish some sort of support system. I believe that just as God provided for the Hebrews in the wilderness, He is going to provide and take care of His people at this time.

THE MIDDLE-EAST WAR

The Arab war against Israel in Ezekiel 38 and 39 (and Daniel 11) may possibly occur before these events, and even be the catalyst for it. I see this as the next major event on the prophetic timetable. Scripture isn’t clear if it’s caused by a preemptive strike, as Israel has threatened against Iran; or if it’s just an out-and-out attack as was done in 1948, 1967 and 1973. At any rate, this conflict will bring with it a disruption in the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf. And although we have alternative sources, you can be sure that the price of a gallon of gas will skyrocket. Plus, if gas has to be rationed, as it was during the Oil Embargo, business will be disrupted.

The role of the United States in prophecy is not really spelled out, so it’s not clear what part, if any, they will play in this conflict; especially now when the Administration of Barack Obama has shown support for the uprising of the Muslim Brotherhood to displace old-line Arab leadership. To believe that Muslim countries are going to adopt democracy is fantasy, and I firmly believe that the actions of Obama are helping to set the stage for this War against Israel.

This conflict will escalate into a larger War, when, after the Arabs are defeated, Russia gets involved, seemingly in support of them, though they may have ulterior motives. I believe that the world leader that emerges at this time will be the Antichrist; and world government will begin solidifying around him.

ENDURING TILL THE END

So you see, during these extraordinary times, passive Christianity is not going to cut it. Being solidly grounded, firmly committed and spiritually prepared is what it is going to take to make it. If you’re not where you need to be now, then you need to make adjustments now to get there. If you wait, it may be too late. People that are perceived as threats and people labeled as anti-government are going to be picked-up, questioned, detained for re-education or possibly imprisoned. Christians will be on-the-run, and will have to meet secretly in home churches. Sacrifices will have to be made, and there will be repercussions from decisions that will tear families apart. There will traitors, and family will turn on family. You won’t know who you can trust. There will be government informants, constant surveillance, and our society as we know it will become an oppressive police state.
This has been planned by Satan since the beginning of this world when man was given dominion. He is so close now, and nothing will prevent him from making another attempt against heaven. It is inevitable that prophecy will be fulfilled and all your Dominion Theology will not change that. Tribulation is coming and the Bible is clear that a time like this has never been.

You can no longer look at your life the same way again, because whether you like it or not, whether you want to admit it or not; you will have to step out from where you are now to become a spiritual warrior whose life is not their own. You must be willing to have the chaff burned away, to die to self, and to sacrificially give yourself over to the unrelenting pursuit of relationship with the God who wants you to endure to the end. Anything less may result in dire consequences for you and your family.

“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.” [2nd Corinthians 11:4]

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” [Galatians 1:6-9]

God is calling End-time leaders. With ministers wanting to preach self-serving messages of sunshine and rainbows, refusing to preach against sin; and churches intent on accepting false Bibles and reaching out to another Christ; the people of this world will need someone to turn to for the truth. Will you be one that says (Isaiah 6:8): “Here am I, send me.”

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Spiritual leadership is not won by promotion, but by prayers and tears.
It is attained by much heart-searching and humbling before God;
By self-surrender, a courageous sacrifice of every idol;
A bold, uncompromising, and uncomplaining embracing of the cross;
And by an eternal, unflinching looking unto Jesus crucified.
This is a great price.
But it must be unflinchingly paid by him who would be a spiritual leader of men.
A leader whose power is recognized and felt in Heaven, Earth and in Hell.

Samuel Logan Brengle
BIBLIOGRAPHY


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Allen Rivera has been studying and researching the New World Order and its relationship to Bible prophecy for over 35 years. He has an Associate in Arts (Paralegal) Degree from the Harrisburg Area Community College, and majored in Psychology and Public Policy at the Pennsylvania State University. As a young man he was very active in grassroots politics and held various positions in the local Party. He was the recipient of the 1979 and 1981 ‘Outstanding Young Man of America’ Award from the U.S. Jaycees. He completed a 2-year Bible School program through Bill Anderson Ministries International and has undergone ministry training in his Church.