

JEREMY B. STRANG

Weapons of Our Warfare



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A brief exhortation for the church as to the God ordained means in the fight against spiritual and physical principalities for the ages.

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Weapons of Our Warfare

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I dedicate this book to -

My dear bride, for she has plowed the fields and has stuck by my side in sunshine and rain. She is my love, closest friend, and warrior in the battles of life. May we *press on* and into glory together.

My dear children, I love you and desire only your eternal best. May you come to see that there is tremendous strength and rest, hope and victory, peace and joy in the Lord Jesus. Never settle for the secondaries!

To the gentlemen I have shared the last 3 months with in study and hours of *iron sharpening iron* in Christ Jesus - My father, my Uncle Larry (Brother Lawrence the Younger), my dear brother in Christ, Pastor Brad Pittman. The meetings we have had will be cherished.

To my brothers and sisters, too many to name, may you all be blessed and encouraged to fight the good fight of faith. May this be a real help and encouragement to dig deep into the things of Christ while casting off the foolishness of this world.

May the Lord be honored, and His name lifted on high.

Amen.

Weapons of Our Warfare

Foreword

By Pastor Brad Pittman



If ever there was a time in history that the church needed to be reminded of its absolute need for God, it's today! We face a powerful enemy as Christians. This enemy, Jesus described in John 8:44, is one who has been *"a murderer from the beginning, one who does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. One who when he lies, speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."* In John 10:10, Jesus said that the enemy is a thief who *"comes only to steal and kill and destroy"*.

As we look at the condition of the world around us today, we don't have to look very hard to see that this enemy has been hard at work. His influence has spread far and wide and has inundated every part of our society (and in many cases, even the church itself). We live in a world where even the most blatant lies are accepted and told as absolute truths; a world that glorifies immorality; a world

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where even the most grotesque perversions are accepted as normal and good. This is the reality of the world in which we live.

A question I think many Christians are wondering right now is: *How do we as survive this?* However, is that really the question that we as Christians should be asking? Certainly, our survival is a good thing, but shouldn't our desire be for more than just to merely survive?

God has not called us to simply “survive”, He's called us to “impact” the world around us with the Gospel of Jesus Christ! He's called us to walk in holiness and to be a light to the dark world around us. He's called us to reject sin and pursue righteousness. I believe the big question is this: How can we accomplish this in a world that is so full of darkness right now? In a world where we face so much temptation and opposition?

In his book, *“Weapons of Our Warfare”*, my dear brother in the Lord gives us the answer in a beautifully composed way. By using the Word of God as his guide, Jeremy reminds us that if we want to have any hope of standing strong as God's people during this time in which we live, there are two vitally important disciplines we need to have in our lives. 1.) The Discipline of diligently seeking God in prayer. 2.) The Discipline of diving deep into God's Holy Word. As Jeremy puts it so well in this

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book, these are “*The Weapons of our Warfare*”. These are the instruments of war that God has given us to not only protect ourselves with, but these are also the weapons we have been given to fight back with! It’s through these weapons that we can even take back the ground that the enemy has stolen! With these weapons, “*not even the gates of hell will prevail against us!*” Without these weapons, we have already lost the battle, yet with them we will not only survive in this dark world, but we will thrive. And in doing so, we will be positioned to truly impact this world with the Glorious Gospel message of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!¹

¹ Brad Pittman serves as pastor and elder at Grace Fellowship Church in

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“Weapons of Our Warfare gives you the way to pick up your spiritual sword and to wage the good warfare in Christ. We fight from the winning side, Christ has conquered. The recommendation of Gurnall’s book, ‘The Christian in Complete Armour’, will introduce him to a new generation – this makes this book worthwhile in itself. Let this book change you and be a way forward in the midst of the obscurity of our times.”

Greg Gordon, Founder of SermonIndex.net

Introduction



“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.”¹

We are privileged, by God’s providence, to live in such a time as this. Many people, however, cannot help but to feel hopeless, lost, and void of all truth. They are overwhelmed by the surrounding darkness, consumed by constant opinions and voices, and spiritually paralyzed.

They ask,

“How can we be more than conquerors, victorious in spiritual battles and strongholds of various kinds? How can we make a stance? How do we

¹ 2nd Corinthians 10:3, 4;
NASB 95 version – New

American Standard Bible
1995

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live our faith with power when God seems so distant?"

There is little doubt that I need to tell you that evil seems to have tightened its grip on the world. If you have an eye to see and an ear to hear, you sense dark forces rising in all aspects of life. And although most of us know that this should not consume our thoughts and distract our focus, yet it seems we are content with secondaries, trivial entertainments, ignorance, and the inability to assert critical thinking.

Our purpose on earth is for a much higher calling, mainly, to honor, worship, and glorify the one true God by looking unto Him and willfully drawing near in authentic prayer and right worship. For this reason, this book has been written with the intent to exhort the reader to draw their strength in the Lord and His might, to take up the sword of the Spirit, and humbly draw near Him in prayer. In this way, we bring honor and glory to His mighty name.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds."

Please know that this writing has not come from some arrogant sinless perfection whereby I have everything all

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figured out. Nor do I wish to appear as if I do not still have to battle times of fear, doubt, and anxious thoughts, on the contrary. This has come about through my own failures, and victories, and my own need to further walk with God, and to be reminded of what has been promised regarding the weapons of my spiritual warfare. I see my own need for greater resolve regarding the topics discussed. I find that too often I *do not do that what I want but do that which I do not want to do*,¹ meaning, I do not show forth Christlikeness as I would like, especially during toiling, trials, and turmoil's of *various kinds*.² I am keenly aware that I need to *pray at all times* and be intentional in setting apart times of being *shut up*³ unto God and *drawing near* Him in the recesses of private communion. If I would like daily recharging, empowering, and fillings of His Spirit, and this with deep joy, then I must *set my face like flint*,⁴ and this towards our great God, for He will not disgrace me but help me in all manners of life. And by God's grace, His mercies, and His great love, I know that He will bring forth greater and greater workings of sanctification regarding these things.

¹ Romans 7

² James 1:2

³ Term used by 'old men'
from centuries prior

regarding our being alone
with God, His Word, and in
prayer.

⁴ Isaiah 50:7

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It must be said, this *drawing near* is not a work unto salvation, but a byproduct of a *new heart*¹ and with new desires to willfully, with great longings, know Him more. I not only see this need for myself, but I see the church needing the same, admonishment and encouragement to examine themselves regarding reality, *pressing forward*² in Christ Jesus, and to *plow up their own fallow ground*,³ specifically to being Bible saturated and intentionally resolved in prayer and communion with God.

Although I am writing this book with the aim of preaching to myself, and for the benefit of my fellow believers, I believe this will also benefit those who are questioning the *one true God*,⁴ and may be wondering how they might attain freedom, victory, and everlasting joy.

I dare say, the most difficult person for this writing to affect and awaken unto *the truth*⁵ may be the one who rests their faith on their own verbal and mental professions, religious duties, and morality in comparison to others. Sadly, I believe, today we have an abundance of humanistic and narcissistic teaching, even in churches leaning on biblical doctrine, that has left the great majority

¹ Ezekiel 36:25-27

² Philippians 3:12-16

³ Jeremiah 4:3; Hosea 10:12

⁴ John 17:3; Jeremiah 10:10;

Psalm 115

⁵ John 14:6

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of self-professing believers with an unknown mystic type of thinking and a Jesus conjured up in the mind.

William Gurnall¹ wrote regarding this very subject.

He said -

“It is harder to work on such a soul savingly, because he hath a form, though not the power, and this affords him a plea... But come to deal with one that prays and hears, one that is a pretender to faith and hope in God; here is a man in glittering armour, he hath his weapon in his hand, with which he will keep the preacher, and the word he chargeth him with, at arm’s length. ‘*Who can say I am not a saint? What duty do I neglect?*’ Again, it is harder to work on him, because he hath been tampered with already, and miscarried in the essay. How comes such a one to be acquainted with such duties - to make such a profession? Was it ever thus? No, the word hath been at work upon him, his conscience hath scared him from his trade of wickedness into a

¹ William Gurnall lived in the 1600’s and wrote a two-volume book on Ephesians 6:10-20, *The Christian in*

Complete Armour. I highly recommend this work and means of grace.

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form of a profession, but, taking in short of Christ, for want of a thorough change, it is harder to remove him than the other... In a word, such a one hath more to deny than a profane person. The one hath but his lusts, his whores, his swill, and dross, but the other [this one] hath his duties, his seeming graces. O how hard is it to persuade such a one to light, and hold Christ stirrup, while he and his duties are made Christ's footstool... such a one is deepest in condemnation. None sink so far into hell as those that come nearest heaven, because they fall from the greatest height."¹

Does this describe you?

It is my hope that these feeble words of mine might be used as a means of grace, and empowered of God, for everyone who reads. Please keep in mind, this is by no means an exhaustive study on the subject but meant that anyone might understand and for the setting of one's feet into the waters of the Scriptures. May it cause the reader to move in a forward direction on the journey to knowing, understanding, and making boasts upon our great God.²

¹ William Gurnall, *"The Christian in Complete Armour"*, Pg. 55, Vol. 1

² Jeremiah 9:23-25

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And may those who have never tasted the goodness of the Lord drink deeply and be forever satisfied.

Permit me a side note:

We should not despise the means of grace that God has given us for an undergirding of our sanctification. However, we ought to despise our elevation of any means that supersedes having a singular eye upon Christ and an intimate walk with God, including that which delights in true and right worship. Any means that does not lead us to the King of kings, Lord of lords, and Savior of the world should be taken with extreme caution. God forbid that we are *always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth*,¹ nor may we be those who the Lord is speaking, “*But when the Son of man comes, will He find faith on the earth.*”² Therefore, regarding the use of means and knowledge, any means of grace that we allow to take precedence over Christ in our life needs immediate repentance.

Having stated the prior, this work being not an exhaustive study, I call our attention to focus upon that which I deem

¹ 2nd Timothy 3:7; also see, John 14:6

² Luke 18:8

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of chief importance, and as I see grossly missing today, this being - 1.) strength in the Lord, 2.) the Word of God, and 3.) drawing near in prayer. This is not to minimize other specific graces and topics, namely the spiritual armor of which I shall later mention, rather, this is a call for our repentance, duty, and right usage of such. Let us not forget, *judgment begins with the household of God*,¹ therefore, let us herein take heed.

Throughout you will find key points and passages of Scriptures said various times over. This is strategic in that our minds need repetition and constant renewal. It is my hope and prayer that Christ would be close in our hearts, and we would respond in accordance, with Him held dear, He being our supreme treasure.

May we now move forward, asking God for understanding and application, truth and joy, power and victory, to search into His Word that we might not be a people found “*wanting*.”²

May you be *strengthened in the Lord and the power of His might*, and may God almighty be glorified through His people, both in our age and the ages to come.

Amen.

¹ 1st Peter 4:17

² Daniel 5:27

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“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.

Amen.”¹

¹ Ephesians 3:14-21

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“Give me a candle and a Bible and shut me up in a dark dungeon, and I will tell you everything that the whole world is doing.”

J.C. Ryle

“...the power of prayer can never be overrated. They who cannot serve God by preaching need not regret. If a man can but pray he can do anything. He who knows how to overcome with God in prayer has Heaven and earth at his disposal.”

Charles H. Spurgeon

Section One

Context



“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.”¹

Context is absolutely imperative to understanding the Bible and this particular statement made by the Apostle Paul is no exception. This first section will be a briefing of sorts, a strategic look at the experiential reality behind Paul’s bold declaration. Then we will look more closely at our main topic and ask ourselves questions along the way. Let us start by taking a step back to see if

¹ 2nd Corinthians 10:3, 4
NASB 95

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we detect any details that might cause us the need for further investigation.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.”

Immediately some weighty points leap out before us.

- 1.) Live in the world - *For though we walk in the flesh* (physical world)
- 2.) A war exists - *we do not wage war...*
- 3.) War is waged different than the world - *according to the flesh...*
- 4.) Weapons exist - *for the weapons...*
- 5.) Paul, and brethren, are engaged in this war - *our warfare...*
- 6.) The weapons are not of this world - *are not of the flesh...*
- 7.) Ultimate power exists in these weapons - *but divinely powerful...*
- 8.) These weapons destroy fortresses (strongholds, arguments, counsels) - *for the destruction of fortresses.*

Having laid out brief points regarding our subject, let us turn our attention to the context by looking at the

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environment in which Paul was writing to the church at Corinth. Here we will take into consideration two areas of context:

1.) Direct context - that which is in direct relationship to the statement and subject, both surrounding the passage and within the letter itself.

2.) Indirect context - within the Bible as a whole. I could easily add a third category here, that being of a global nature as to supporting documents and added means of grace outside of Scripture.

However, since this is by no means an exhaustive examination of 2nd Corinthians 10:3, 4, I will only add periodic quotes as I deem applicable to reason. Comments as to the prior eight points, along with personal application, will be made throughout the remainder of this discourse.¹

¹ Side note: If the reader is so interested, I would suggest that a thorough study be made. My goal is to present bits of solid food for

the believer to move to maturity, strengthened, and victorious in a Christocentric style of life.

Direct context.

“I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence [courageous against¹] as I count on showing against some who suspect [presume²] us of walking according to the flesh [who think we act from human motives³; live by the standards of this world⁴].”⁵

In the verse above, we see there are people, possibly embedded within the Corinthian church, that are “*suspecting*” Paul and the brothers with him of “*walking according to the flesh.*”

Here we get a glimpse of what Paul, and the brethren, are facing from those who are essentially accusing them of acting in a carnal, or worldly, manner. People are “*suspecting*” Paul and the brothers with him of “*walking according to the flesh.*” These people are spreading rumors that Paul (and brethren⁶) is *walking* (that is living,

¹ NASB 95

² BSB version – Berean Standard Bible

³ NLT version – New Living Translation

⁴ NIV version – New International Version

⁵ 2nd Corinthians 10:2; ESV version – English Standard Version

⁶ For simplicity of reading, from this point I will only mention Paul’s name as most of our context here

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moving, acting, basing their decisions) upon the foundations of the world's ways and basic human notions.

Now, do not bypass this detail too quickly.

Consider, if you were in Paul's shoes (as some of you may be this very day) how would you respond if false accusations were launched against you? Or maybe this has been your past, how did you respond? Did fear set in? Did you lash out in anger? Did you let your emotions take control even driving you to revenge? Did you respond in such a way that proves your guilty for the very things for which the *some suspected* of you?

Now, consider Paul's response once more with verse 2 added.

“I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of

demonstrates hardships,
difficulties, persecutions,

etc., against all the brothers
present with Paul.

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the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.”¹

Notice, Paul does not say that they are absent from living ‘*in*’ (that is “*we walk in the flesh*”) the world, but he has clearly stated that they do not act as though they are ‘*of*’ the world. Here we must come to clearly see and understand the difference of being ‘*in*’ the world and being ‘*of*’ the world.

In pertains to ones’ physical bodily living within the midst of humanity, culture, country, town, etc.; however, *of* contains the idea that one is living, acting, moving, responding, etc., by the workings, ways, teachings, philosophies, worldly premise, etc. Living *in* the world and living *of* the world are two totally different realities. Where we live and how we live differ in that one is locational, the other is applicational. The Apostle Paul is clear, he does not say, “...*we walk of the flesh...*”

This begs of us to ask, when we respond, do we do so in a way that says, “...walking *of* the flesh”? And if so, is not our response due to our style of life, meaning, how we live the totality of our lives on a daily basis? Do we live a style

¹ ESV

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of life that depicts *of* this world? Or do we live, *not of* the flesh, all while living *in* this world?

Far too often, and quite sadly, I see professing Christians live as though there is no difference between *in* the flesh and *of* the flesh. They like to quickly point out that Jesus ate with sinners¹ yet miss the whole point of what He was doing. He never became like one of them living *of* the flesh. He called them to godliness and to authentically turn to the Father. His eating with such people was not for His personal enjoyment to engage in a night of sin - NEVER!

The truth of our condition must surface and come to the light, especially if we wish to know the Lord in truth, understand His will, be strong and victorious, and wage war with “*divine power to destroy strongholds.*”²

Now consider the following passage (vs. 5, 6) that proceeds our main topic -

“*We destroy* [demolish³; tear down⁴; cast down imaginations⁵] *arguments* [proud obstacle⁶;

¹ Matthew 9:10-17; Mark 2:15-22; Luke 5:29-39

² ESV

³ NIV

⁴ BSB

⁵ KJB version – King James Version

⁶ NLT

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presumption¹] *and every lofty opinion* [every pretension²; high thing that exalts itself³] *raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete* [fulfilled⁴].”⁵

Here we see that *some* people, either unknown or not named, are casting pretensions, presumptions, arguments, and the like, against Paul and the brethren. These people are essentially calling Paul a liar to the faith, casting doubt inside the church, and seeking to cause damage by way of slander. These people are literally waging a war.

Again, we must stop and ask ourselves, do we have the same indictments being launched against us? From within the church? Outside the church? Let us here go even further to ask – if we are being talked about in such ways, could it be that the accusations are warranted? Have we been living *of the flesh*? Further yet, have we been such people to have launched untrue accusations, in our ignorance or willingly knowing, at others?

¹ BSB

² NIV

³ KJV

⁴ KJV

⁵ 2nd Corinthians 10:5, 6; ESV

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Maybe you have not been living and acting as *of the flesh*, and maybe your response has been somewhat like Paul, but let me ask, to what depth do you understand the weapons that are being described?

An interesting contrast and chain of thought should be pointed out. Taking the prior passage into account, now look at Paul's warning to the believers at Corinth a few verses later.

*"...when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding... But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ."*¹

Do you compare your faith with that of others? Has your thinking, your thoughts, your style of life, been *led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ*?

Allow me to divert and propose another thought for a moment. It is said that today we are in a 5th generation warfare. That is, we are under a global warfare for the mind, not really knowing:

¹ 2nd Corinthians 10:12, 11:3

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- 1.) Who our enemies are in full.
- 2.) Not knowing the truth from lies.
- 3.) Unable to discern reality from fiction.

We know that there is *nothing new under the sun*.¹ (I also see the great majority of people today are *always learning but never arriving at the truth*.² This is most obvious, and I would state, applicable to men, women, and children inclusively.³) Like Paul, we too, at some point, will be slandered, cancelled, discredited, and wrongly accused, although unlike Paul, not always for the sake of Christ. It could be said that 5th generation warfare is not all that new, for Paul had such hostilities launched against him over two thousand years ago. And based off the passages thus far, we do not know whether Paul specifically knew the *some who suspect* them of living *of the flesh*. Regardless, verbal slandering was thrust upon the brethren and against the *truth* itself.⁴ However, no one had more thrown

¹ Ecclesiastes 1:9

² 2nd Timothy 3:7; truth here speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (John 14:6)

³ Context of 2nd Timothy 3:7 does pertain to *weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various*

passions – and this is true. I would add, we clearly live in a time of mass ignorance, and addiction to that ignorance, on nearly every level.

⁴ Jesus Himself – John 14:6

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against Him in terms of false accusations than Christ Jesus.

Although this is not a study on Satan, we generally know that he is a deceiver and liar and goes by many names in Scripture (e.g., devil - when coming outward, loud, hard, furious, etc.) and millions more names in the world (e.g., Lucifer - as giving false appearance of eternal light).¹ I would add, although it would be good to make a study of all the names of Satan and to understand all of his deceptions found in Scripture, we must be very careful that our study of God, and that of Jesus (the) Christ and His Spirit, are exceedingly more examined. God's attributes, His will, His loves, His hates, etc. are of far more value than anything else. Remember, the Bible primarily is an unfolding, from front to back, of our great and almighty God and that through Christ Jesus.

As Robert Murray McCheyne has said regarding looking at self,

“For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ.”

¹ Only to name the most popular names for the deceiver.

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I would say to you, for every look at Satan, take a thousand looks at Christ, lest you fall into fear, rebellion, and eternal ruin.

From here let us move onward to our next point of context, for we shall see that there is even more raging against Paul in this war.

Indirect context.

Regarding Paul's response as to the presumptions of *some* people accusing him of *walking of the flesh*, let us consider a few passages within the surrounding context of the letter that is addressed to the church at Corinth. To have a better understanding of these passages, it would do you well to look at the local context of each as you are able. I believe you will see a violent spiritual war launched against Paul than mere verbal assaults.

“We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way:¹ by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships,

¹ To really understand Paul's usage of commending themselves, 2nd Corinthians

10:5-11:3 should be taken into consideration.

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calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger;

[note the realities of external trials]

by purity knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;

[note the response to the trials, this includes, “...*by great endurance...*”]

through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as imposters, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.”

[note the comparisons of the trials to their reality]¹

We clearly see that there is a war raging against the saints, and it is far greater than the verbal assaults of *some* people. This provides us assurance that Paul’s profession, understanding, usage, and even skill, with *the weapons of*

¹ 2nd Corinthians 6:3-10

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[his] *warfare are not of the flesh - but have divine power to destroy*. We see a glimpse in this passage alone that Paul's life and experiential reality is due to having warfare, spiritual with physical, thrust upon Him. Although I shall point out just a few more examples pertaining to the spiritual and physical warfare against Paul, it should come as no surprise that he would become a living example of a skilled fighter in such battles, for the Lord Himself had declared that he would suffer. God Himself would see it through, becoming his Commander and Chief in training (if I have liberty to say such a thing).

The Lord saying to Ananias -

“Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”¹

God not only predetermined Paul's future ministry and life training, He confirmed both Paul's commissioning (future) and validity to Paul's personal accounting - ...*we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh...* God's will, along with His perfect providence and timing, declared Paul to be the real deal. “*The Lord said...*” - it

¹ Acts 9:15, 16

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is, it will be, and it was! Paul's words of 2nd Corinthians 10:3, 4 were (are) indeed true.

Pause for a moment and ask, do you and I know the empowerment of these weapons for ourselves? If so, by what evidence are they demonstrated? (Note Paul's response during such trials, as we shall further discuss.)

Having seen some of Paul's context and warfare behind his response to the accusing *some*, we shall move onward and look deeper.

Note -

However, it is not for the proving of Paul's testimony that we move forward, we do so for the edification and encouragement that we might believe and further trust God, that we understand that we as well not only have access to such weapons, but we can experience the *weapons of* [Paul's] *warfare* as ours, that is, *if..*

“For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.”¹

¹ 2nd Corinthians 10:18

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Let us move onward so that we may learn to pick up, rightly use, and apply the weapons of warfare in our own lives. We need to take notice, not only of Paul's suffering and spiritual warfare, but greater yet, consider how Paul responded amid his trials and battles before him.

Look again at 2nd Corinthians 6 -

“...by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise.”

What an amazing reality Paul demonstrated in that His outward actions and responses gave proof that he did not war as *of the flesh*, with the flesh, nor by the flesh, but by *the Holy Spirit*, with *weapons of righteousness*. He showed forth His faith while extreme afflictions raged and did so in a way that defies secular humanism and worldly philosophies.

Weapons of Our Warfare

In speaking *like a madman*, Paul further responds to these so-called *servants of Christ* by saying¹ -

“...with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.”²

In speaking to the elders from Ephesus, he said -

“...constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I

¹ 2nd Corinthians 11:23

² 2nd Corinthians 11:23-28

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received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”¹

If Paul went through such trials and afflictions, yet responded with such Christlikeness, with humility, love, patience, and longsuffering, shall we not trust that what he said regarding that the weapons of warfare are exactly as he stated? They are powerful and destructive to the enemy. Why then do we treat these things as unimportant and not needed? Does not our inactivity and failure to cherish these *weapons*, these graces given of God, prove our discontent and blatant disregard? Very shamefully, it does indeed.

A right understanding and mature thinking regarding spiritual warfare, afflictions, and sufferings common to those who are in Christ (specifically differing among believers and even uniquely ordained), Paul says –

“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes

¹ Acts 20:22-24

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from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith – that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus had made me His own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way...”¹

“Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are

¹ Philippians 3:7-15

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transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”¹

There is but little doubt that Paul is the real deal, and his *weapons of war* are *not of the flesh*. This should cause us more than an increased interest; this ought to be a source of much trembling. For if indeed we profess to know Christ, to be a Christian, and yet we care not for the graces we have been given, pertaining to the *weapons* for spiritual combat, then we stand to be a people greatly pitied. No wonder we are weak, powerless, and empty. We cannot be complacent; we must repent and turn, admit our condition, lest we be told, *be away from Me, I never knew you.*²

Let us now turn our attention to the weapons themselves, mainly empowerment in God, the sword of the Spirit, and prayer.

¹ 2nd Corinthians 4:16-18

² Matthew 7:21-23

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“It is hypocritical to pray for victory over our sins yet be careless in our intake of the Word of God.”

Jerry Bridges

Section Two

Weapons of Our Warfare



“For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.”¹

In the first section we looked at the context of Paul’s reality as regards to his testimony and the nature of his weapons. He declared that they were armed with unique weapons, not as the world knows, but empowered of God and having destructive results.

In this section, you will notice that these weapons are not ends in themselves. They are given by the Master for living victoriously *in* the flesh and for carrying out His will. They are not something we conger up or generate by the arm of

¹ 2nd Corinthians 10:4

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the flesh. These weapons are opposed to the ways of the world and only those who know the Commander has access to the arms room. Once the recruit has been granted access and the arms have been commissioned, the recruit becomes a soldier quickly, and must train diligently, and mature in skill. There are no short cuts and back doors, no picking the locks and stealing the weapons. No physical strength or will of the mind can prevail over the Master, His will, and His prescribed ordination for using these weapons.

May we heed the Master's call, take up the armor, stand strong in the Lord and remain at the ready.

Our Battle Armor

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul begins by saying -

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...”¹

Paul reminds the believers that God has *blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing*. These blessings are *spiritual* and for those who are *in Christ*. Towards the end of Paul's letter, he discusses a few of these *spiritual*

¹ Ephesians 1:3

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blessings that the church may live victorious and mature. Paul writes this out of his own experiential reality for the eternal good of us who are *in Christ*, that *we should be holy and blameless before for Him* [Jesus Christ].¹ Take note of the points provided.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord [1. in Christ] and in the strength of His might [2. His power]. Put on [3. call to arms/duty] the whole armor [4. ALL or full] of God [5. His armor], that you may be able to stand [6. ability in God to stand and not sit idle and incapable] against the schemes of the devil [7. fight the enemy].

“For we do not wrestle [...our struggle is not, NIV] against flesh and blood [8. those in the world], but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness [9. those in working agreement with the devil and his schemes. NASB says, ...world forces of this darkness], against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places [10. Satan and his fallen demons].

“Therefore take up [11. 2nd call to arms/duty] the whole armor [12. ALL] of God [13. 2nd reminder that this is His], that you may be able to withstand

¹ Ephesians 1:4

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in the evil day [14. a promise that it will come. 2nd statement as to ability in God to stand and not sit idle and incapable] and having done all [15. everything possible], to stand firm [16. not be shaken or move from position].

“Stand therefore [17. rise up because of what was said], having fastened on the belt of truth [18. Christ Jesus, John 14:6], and having put on the breastplate of righteousness [19. Christ Jesus, 1st Corinthians 1:30; Romans 3:21-26] and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace [20. Christ Jesus, Acts 10:36]. In all circumstances [21. ALWAYS] take up [22. personal duty] the shield of faith [23. without faith cannot please the Lord, Hebrews 11:6], with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one [24. submit to God, resist the devil - James 4:7]; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God [25. sharper than any two-edged sword, Hebrews 4:12], praying at all times [26. praying in all seasons] in the Spirit [27. prayer that accords in unison with the will and Word of God], with all prayer and supplication [28. second exhortation unto prayer and to crying out to God with humility, authenticity, passion, etc.].

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“To that end [29. for the sake of the direct previously stated], keep alert [30. be cognitive and aware] with all perseverance [31. pressing hard forward without quitting], making supplication for all the saints...” [32. seeking and asking God, with humility, authenticity, passion, etc., for the needs of fellow brothers and sisters in Christ]¹

Throughout the letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul exhorts the believers to walk out their salvation in every aspect of their lives (live a lifestyle). He reminds them that they had been *dead in their trespasses and sins* and had walked in the *course of this world*.² However, they were now saved by grace through faith³ and they have been brought near Christ Jesus by His blood.⁴ Towards the end of the letter, he calls them to be strong in the Lord, to put on that which Christ has supplied for war, to understand their enemy, be armed with a weapon by which to destroy Satan’s strongholds, pray at all times, and to keep alert.

A side note: I find it very interesting where Paul placed this passage in the letter. Read through Ephesians and take notice of the various topics mentioned throughout. Especially note that of

¹ Ephesians 6:10-18

² Ephesians 2:1

³ Ephesians 2:8 (vs. 2:1-10)

⁴ Ephesians 2:13

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chapter five, all of which is under elevated attack today. How very interesting that relationships and responsibilities to one another are highlighted just prior to our passage above.

The emphasis upon being strong that we might pick up the sword and draw near to God in prayer is of utmost significance, and sadly, seems to be most absent in the church today. I noted thirty-two points in the passage above that would be beneficial for us to consider, however, there are three areas I want us to focus primarily: 1.) strength in the Lord; 2.) the Word of God [the sword of the Spirit]; 3.) prayer and petitioning. I believe you will see that these are closely intertwined in the Lord Jesus, thus, begging our attention.

I believe, without doubt, that being *strong in the Lord* contains our duty (better yet, that we would have a strong desire, in growing measure) to be in God's Word on a regular basis. Add to this, being in the Word of God, drawing near to God in a life of prayer, at *all times*, in special seasons, and specific intention to being *shut up* (alone in dedication) to God. In this way, we are led to an empowerment that the world does not and cannot access. In this God ordained fashion, the *weapons of our warfare*, here being strength in Christ, the sword of the Spirit, and

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prayer, we find that our weapons are *not of the flesh* and have *divine power* to *destroy* Satan's cunning.

Strong in the Lord

*“O LORD, my Lord, the strength of my salvation,
You have covered my head in the day of battle.”¹*

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might... here is the very doorway, if you will, that leads into the armor room that we might even be able to *put on* the armor and *pick up* the sword. It is the Lord and His strong arm that enables us, not only the entrance into the arms room but the strength to suit up for the battle(s) that lies ahead. Here we must come to recognize and have personal experiential reality as that of Paul when he says -

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”²

Ask yourself: Have I been saved (born again,³ been given a new heart, had the laws of God written upon my new heart,⁴ do I now love the things God loves and hate the

¹ Psalm 140:7

² Ephesians 2:8, 9

³ John 3:1-15

⁴ Jeremiah 31:33

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things God hates)? Do I understand that it was by Him, through Him, from Him that I was saved? Do I boast in my self-righteousness or in Him and His righteousness,¹ making much of knowing Him?²

Paul continues -

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”³

Although the verse above talks about good works, I would like for us to recognize that we are *His workmanship* and that we should *walk* in those good works. Here consider, how shall we effectively walk in good works if:

- 1.) ...we have never entered the narrow gate and are walking the broad path?⁴
- 2.) ...having entered the narrow gate, we refuse to be strengthened by Christ in and through His Word?
- 3.) ...we are negligent in drawing near to Him via prayer and empowered from on high?

¹ 2nd Corinthians 5:21;

² Jeremiah 9:21-23

³ Ephesians 2:10

⁴ Matthew 7:13, 14

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How does strength in Christ manifest itself in our lives? Strength in Him is demonstrated in the overflow of submission and humility, saturated by His Word, overflowing into prayer that draws nigh unto Him. In this we learn true *spiritual worship* and are *transformed by the renewal of our minds*, that we may be able to *discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect*.¹ Should we grow strong and mature in Christ, and when confronted with various evils of spiritual warfare, we will live through His strength and respond as demonstrated in the following passages.

“...by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left...”²

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one

¹ Romans 12:1, 2

² 2nd Corinthians 6:4-7

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another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."¹

"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."²

One last point I would like us to consider is that our *strength in the Lord* is not primarily that we would be strong for the putting on of armor and using the weapons in themselves, nor even for *good works*, but our strength is meant for Him.

"Jesus answered, "The most important is, "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."³

¹ Ephesians 4:1-3

³ Mark 12:29, 30

² 2nd Corinthians 4:16-18

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There are many more examples in Scripture that I could mention. I would like to add, because we are to rely on God's strength does not mean we are to simply *roll over and die*, so to speak. We are not called to 'be spiritual' with no outpouring into the physical. I will address this further in section four.

“The LORD is my strength and my shield, in Him my heart trusts, and I am helped...”¹

“The LORD is the strength of His people; He is the saving refuge of His anointed.”²

“Blessed are those whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.”³

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD.’⁴ ‘Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.’”⁵

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might...”

¹ Psalm 28:7

² Psalm 28:8

³ Psalm 84:5

⁴ Jeremiah 17:5

⁵ Jeremiah 17:7

God's Word

"...take up...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..."

I believe our first priority is to ask the question – What does God say regarding His own Word? This is of utmost importance. For if the Scriptures are indeed from Him, then what He says must be considered for the strengthening of our faith, our understanding to be in (all of) His Word, and our submission to His Word. Listen to the attributes of His Word –

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”¹

“And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from

¹ John 1:1

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God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”¹

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”²

“Every word of God proves true; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.”³

“Is not my Word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”⁴

“For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him whom we must give an account.”⁵

And why is the Word of God so necessary for us?

¹ 2nd Peter 1:19-21

² Matthew 5:17 (17-20)

³ Proverbs 30:5

⁴ Jeremiah 23:29

⁵ Hebrews 4:12, 13

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“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”¹

It would be good for us to pause here and re-read, highlight, and pray about these passages. Let me ask you, how have you been handling His Word? Have you been disregarding His Word with excuses of the flesh? A real part of being strong in the Lord is our submission and obedience to His Word. “*If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*”²

Let us be sure that we never tamper with God’s Word.

“Do not add to His words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.”³

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his

¹ 2nd Timothy 3:16, 17

³ Proverbs 30:6

² John 14:15 (15-31)

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share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”¹

I do believe that both Revelation 22:18, 19 and Revelation 1:3 could easily be applied to the sum of God’s Word, however, their context is directly regarding the *words of this prophecy* [Revelation]² and we should be extremely reverent and cautious in so doing. It is clear throughout the Bible that God does not tolerate the words and actions of false prophets, those claiming to represent and speak for Him, when indeed He never gave them permission nor the words to speak.³ Rest assured they will pay dearly. I would say that it would do us good to apply Revelation 1:3 to our own time of reading the Scriptures.

“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.”

If we approach the Bible keeping in mind what God says about His own Word and apply the verse above to our reading, a pathway is provided even for the least learned person among us. For our command, our duty, our responsibility, is to engage the written word, believe, and

¹ Revelation 22:18, 19

³ Jeremiah 23:30-32

² Revelation 1:3

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obey. It is God's power, by His Spirit, to train us and teach us, and this He will do.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”¹

“But the anointing that you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie - just as it has taught you, abide in Him.”²

Now, I am not saying that we do not need teachers, preaching, books, and other means of grace in our lives. For no doubt God uses such in our sanctification. However, I dare say, we have made too much of other men because we have so little *strength in the Lord and His might* and little to no biblical truth saturating our minds and affecting our lifestyles. In our Western culture, the reason for the later is not due to our access or inabilities, but our blatant disregard and ill treatment for

¹ John 14:26

² 1st John 2:27

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what we have been given – and let me warn, we will answer for the treatment of what we have been given.¹

“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”²

It is the *sword of the Spirit* (the Word of God) that stands apart from the other armor mention in Ephesians 6. All the armor mention before the sword (the belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, and helmet), although uniquely different, all have a very similar function – defense. The sword, however, offers both defense and offence (to a degree the same could be said of the shoes). Now if you have been given the strength to put on the armor and pick up the sword, yet you do not *take up* (pick up) your duty of

¹ Luke 12:48

² Luke 6:46-49

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obedience, then whose fault is it that you fail and fall and loose battles?⁹ For the command is – *be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might...[taking] up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*¹ Even if you are wearing all of the armor, yet are not in the Word of God for yourself, taking up the sword of the Spirit, then you are left with limited defense and no offense. You can only weave and dodge around on the battlefield for so long, then it is only a matter of time before you tire out and die. Without a sword, you cannot *destroy strongholds* and slay dragons.

“...if we intend to wield it [the Scriptures], we must wear it. We must be like Ezra: ‘*The good hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.*’² And we must get a heart like the saint who wrote the great love song to the law in Psalm 119: ‘*Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.*’³ Let us labor to memorize [I would apply the thought – to read, ponder, pray and apply the Word] the Word of God – for worship and for warfare. If we do not

¹ Ephesians 6:10, 13

³ Psalm 119:97

² Ezra 7:9, 10

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carry it in our heads, we cannot savor it in our hearts or wield it in the Spirit.”¹

*“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.”*²

Prayer and Petitioning

*“...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...”*³

Here is where the Word of God meets up with reality of prayer, meaning, we must submit ourselves to God in prayer and supplication with His Word, the sword of the Spirit, in our hands, on our hearts, at the forefront of our thoughts. If we expect to be empowered to rightly use the sword, our life must be drenched in truth and authenticity, reality and actuality. There is no better training in the Word than when submitted to the Master for instruction, guidance, and application for spiritual warfare.

Regarding the word and reality, consider 2nd Chronicles 7:14 -

¹ Dr. John Piper, *Desiring God*, Pg. 154, 2011

² John 6:63

³ Ephesians 6:18

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“...if my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray... then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Many today are spouting this verse, quoting it as a meme for their social media circles, and some making this their banner for political narcissism. First, I would like to point out that I hear of very few people being affected to the point of calling the saints together and starting a prayer meeting where there are people meeting and praying with fervor to be more like Christ. Although I have been privileged to be a part of many such meetings, they seem so few and far apart. Second, and most importantly, I dare say, this is all that most people (professing believers specifically) know concerning the verse from 2nd Chronicles 7:14. They know nothing of the truths that were left out, nothing of context, nothing of reality.

Here is what has often been left out -

“...if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

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You see if we are willing to stop at selected parts of truth, we then stand in a very dangerous place of ignorance and foolish thinking, for even Satan does this. The promise mentioned above is contingent upon the whole truth and not merely cherry-picked morsels that are only tongue-and-cheek. The reality of *seeking God's face and tuning from wicked ways* (repentance) is an absolute command and necessary as to the promise. Lifestyle must match word; deed coincides faith; for the true Christian, the Word of God is married with prayer.

“For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.”¹

Let me ask - have we (the Western church) really been suffering so much as so many perceive? I mean, if there is little emphasis on meeting for the purposes of God being glorified in prayer, then really, are we suffering at all? Are the trials that bad? I believe the problem is two-fold:

- 1.) We know little of suffering for the name of Christ.
- 2.) We do not seek God and repent of our wickedness.

¹ 1st Corinthians 4:20

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If only we would first *seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness*,¹ so much would be given to us. Sadly, and far too often, we seek after all the secondaries forgetting God, who Himself is the primary and chief end of all ends, Giver of all good things.

Jesus prays to this very end -

“And this is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”²

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation,³ and our declaration to His Gospel entails both word and reality, that is, our usage of language and the authentic lifestyle matching our language.

Paul says,

“Of this Gospel, I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of His power.”

He goes on to say,

“...though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the

¹ Matthew 6:33

3

² John 17:3

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unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.”

This was to do so that -

“...through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”

Think about this for a moment, God worked power in Paul so that the *rulers and authorities in the heavenly places* would know the wisdom of God. If God does this for these *rulers and authorities*, how much more in coming to us and bringing forth the Gospel with power, shall we come to such a powerful end - *to know Him, the one true God.*

Paul continues by offering up prayer for the saints in Ephesus -

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith - that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

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may have strength to comprehend with all the saints with is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”¹

Many have made profession to Christ, but are absent of reality to the new birth; there are some who believe they have their hope in Christ, yet are powerless because they disregard the Word; there are some who make the Word of God their focus, but deny prayer and the power of God; there are but few who are strong in Christ, who live in and by His Word, drawing near Him in prayer, with supplications and *groanings too deep for words*, rightly using the weapons of warfare, with divine power to the slaying of spiritual strongholds.

I believe the words and example of George Müller is a good encouragement for us as we seek to be strong in the Lord, take hold of the sword, and draw near in prayer.

¹ Ephesians 3:14-21

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Müller describes a life submitted unto God, ravished by the Word, and a life of prayer lived out in authenticity. Although originally written in 1841, I believe this is just as relevant and applicable for us today.

“While I was staying at Nailsworth. it pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, irrespective of human instrumentality, as far as I know, the benefit of which I have not lost, though now, while preparing the eighth edition for the press, more than forty years have since passed away. The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit. Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten

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years previously, as a habitual thing, to give myself to prayer, after having dressed in the morning.

“Now, I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reproved, instructed; and that thus, whilst meditating, my heart might be brought into experimental communion¹ with the Lord. I began, therefore, to meditate on the New Testament, from the beginning, early in the morning. The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessing upon His precious Word, was to begin to meditate on the Word of God, searching, as it were, into every verse, to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word; not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon; but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul. The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that though I did not, as it were, give myself to prayer, but to meditation, yet it turned almost

¹ reality of being very close

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immediately more or less into prayer. When thus I have been for awhile making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it; but still continually keeping before me, that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation. The result of this is, that there is always a good deal of confession, thanksgiving, supplication, or intercession mingled with my meditation, and that my inner man almost invariably is even sensibly nourished and strengthened and that by breakfast time, with rare exceptions, I am in a peaceful if not happy state of heart. Thus also the Lord is pleased to communicate unto me that which, very soon after, I have found to become food for other believers, though it was not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word that I gave myself to meditation, but for the profit of my own inner man.

“The difference then between my former practice and my present one is this. Formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible, and generally spent all my time till breakfast in prayer, or almost all the time. At all events, I almost invariably began

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with prayer, except when I felt my soul to be more than usually barren, in which case I read the Word of God for food, or for refreshment, or for a revival and renewal of my inner man, before I gave myself to prayer. But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even an hour on my knees, before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc.; and often, after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then began really to pray. I scarcely ever suffer now in this way. For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into experimental fellowship with God, I speak to my Father, and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy of it!) about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word.

“It often now astonishes me that I did not sooner see this. In no book did I ever read about it. No public ministry ever brought the matter before me. No private intercourse¹ with a brother stirred me up to this matter. And yet now, since God has

¹ fellowship or private conversation

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taught me this point, it is as plain to me as anything, that the first thing the child of God has to do morning by morning is to obtain food for his inner man. As the outward man is not fit for work for any length of time, except we take food, and as this is one of the first things we do in the morning, so it should be with the inner man. We should take food for that, as everyone must allow. Now what is the food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God; and here again not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts.

“When we pray we speak to God. Now, prayer, in order to be continued for any length of time in any other than a formal manner, requires, generally speaking, a measure of strength or godly desire, and the season, therefore, when this exercise of the soul can be most effectually performed, is, after the inner man has been nourished by meditation on the Word of God, where we find our Father speaking to us, to encourage us, to comfort us, to instruct us, to humble us, to reprove us. We may therefore profitably meditate, with God's blessing, though we are ever so weak

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spiritually; nay, the weaker we are, the more we need meditation for the strengthening of our inner man. There is thus far less to be feared from wandering of mind, than if we give ourselves to prayer, without having had previously time for meditation. I dwell so particularly on this point because of the immense spiritual profit and refreshment I am conscious of having derived from it myself, and I affectionately and solemnly beseech all my fellow believers to ponder this matter. By the blessing of God I ascribe to this mode the help and strength which I have had from God to pass in peace through deeper trials in various ways than I had ever had before; and after having now above forty years tried this way, I can most fully, in the fear of God, commend it. How different when the soul is refreshed and made happy early in the morning, from what it is when, without spiritual preparation, the service, the trials, and the temptations of the day come upon one!”¹

¹ George Müller,
*Autobiography of George
Müller: A Million And A Half
In Answer To Prayer, Pgs.*

230-33, Originally written -
May 7th, 1841

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“Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His presence continually!”¹

¹ Psalm 105:4

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“Is it not a proof that the Holy Spirit is to a great extent a stranger in the church when prayer, for which God has made such provisions, is regarded as a task and a burden? And does not this teach us to seek for the deep root of prayerlessness in our ignorance of and disobedience to the Divine Instructor, whom the Father has commissioned to teach us to pray?”

Andrew Murray

Section Three

Shall We Draw Near?



“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”¹

Now we arrive at the great *summum bonum*, the Chief of all, End of all ends, Him whom we must be diligent in tracking down, to know Him in greater and greater measures. For our heart beats and breath enters our lungs for this purpose – that we would be enthralled with Christ, and that the Lord our God would be glorified in all that we do, in that which we say, in the way that we live, and that the sweet *aroma of Christ*² would permeate the air and be left lingering everywhere we go.

¹ John 1:14

² 2nd Corinthians 2:15

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Jesus, the very *Logos* made manifest,¹ the doctrine in the flesh; *the way, the truth, the life*² has come to dwell among us;³ the eternal God come living, breathing, eating in the physical; He is our supreme example of how to live in the physical, in the light of the eternal, that regardless of peace or persecution, we might be a people for His great name. He is *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.*⁴ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;*⁵ *the Word became flesh;*⁶ and *in the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears.*⁷ He is the *true vine*⁸ grafting in those who would receive Him, believing upon His name. He gave the right to such as these to become *children of God, born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*⁹

How can we not draw near to Him as we seek to be strong in the Lord, wield the sword of the Spirit, and pray with fervor against our spiritual giants? For all these things culminate in Christ Jesus. Because of this, we look

¹ 1st John 1:2

² John 14:6

³ John 1:14

⁴ Ephesians 1:21

⁵ John 1:1

⁶ John 1:14

⁷ Hebrews 5:7

⁸ John 15:1

⁹ John 1:12

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towards Jesus and one of His greatest (as it is this authors opinion) teachings – His exemplary life of prayer.

In all the Bible no book talks more of Jesus and His life of prayer than Luke’s account of the Gospel. It would do you well to read and dwell upon every instance relating to Jesus and prayer.

If we are going to be Christlike in our lives, we should examine ourselves in His light, especially in the light of His communion with God, the empowerment in prayer, and His fulfillment of the eternal Word of God. In Him we will be strengthened to wield the sword rightly without accidentally cutting ourselves and wrongly cutting others.

Because of the love of God, He sent His Spirit to bring about our sanctification, that by Jesus (The) Christ we would be given new life. The Spirit gives life,¹ bearing witness to Christ, convicting us as to sin and righteousness and judgment to come. It is for our earthly and eternal good (and for our fellow man) that we are taught by Him how to live this new life. We need not only conviction of sin, but the power to respond in humility, that our desires would be set right, and He would make us holy, strong in Him, understanding His Word, and to see all this

¹ John 6:63

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beautifully and powerfully intertwined in intimate prayer and petitions, by the Holy Spirit, for ourselves and others.

The sword is not meant for us to cut each other up, but to destroy our spiritual strongholds and fend off spiritual enemies. Should we grow strong in the strength of God's might, picking up and living out His Word, and drawing near Him in prayer, it should come as no surprise that the sword of the Spirit will even pierce our physical enemies (Lord willing unto repentance and new life). However, we must not be lax as to our dutiful obedience in this matter.

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of truth.”¹

So then, let us also, like so many who have gone before us in faith² -

“...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the

¹ 2 Timothy 2:15

² Hebrews 11

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shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”¹

Therefore, let us look to Jesus, trusting Him, who this very day *lives to make intercession* for us.²

“Christ Jesus is the One who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding,³ making intercession for transgressors.”⁴

Praise God that we have a Savior who not only saves us, but will see its completion through to the end.⁵ He intercedes for us even when we will not bend the knee, sacrifice ‘our’ time, humble ourselves, and pick up the *sword of the Spirit* (primarily by saturating our minds with His Word and submitting ourselves in prayer). However, it is plain in Scripture, God does not have a bunch of illegitimate children running in opposition to Him, should we not see our great need to return to Him and chase truer affections for Him, we very well may be fulfilling the prophecy of Matthew 7:21-23. God disciplines those whom He loves⁶ – what a litmus test we have before us.

¹ Hebrews 12:1, 2

² Hebrews 7:25

³ Romans 8:34

⁴ Isaiah 53:12

⁵ John 17:15; Philippians 1:6

⁶ Hebrews 12:3-29

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Prayerlessness is a direct cancer to our strength, and I dare say, proves our faithlessness and rejection of His Word.

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life... I know that you do not have the love of God within you.”¹

May we hear this loud and clear. May we respond, both privately and corporately.

The pattern of His life.

I find it interesting that the Apostle Paul’s personal physician would go to such lengths to include how Jesus often prayed. I cannot help but to think that Luke had to have asked and researched this area of Jesus’ life. Luke must have come to a place in his own life that he recognized his need for the same power that Jesus availed Himself as He directly communed with God. I am personally grateful for Luke’s diligent attention to this very important detail. It is good to mention that Luke also writes of prayer 31 times in his letter to Theophilus accounting the early Acts of the Apostles (more

¹ John 5:39-42 (context Ch. 5)

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accurately, the Acts of the Holy Spirit). Clearly, prayer was of utmost importance to Jesus and a significant mark of the early church.

Let me ask, are our local churches significantly marked by corporate prayer that is Bible saturated? More specifically, is your life marked by the Word of God and prayer? God help us! May we repent and like Paul -

“...forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.”¹

Now we turn our attention, *pressing forward*, viewing Jesus, the *Word manifested*, being strengthened in prayer. For I believe, possibly now more than ever, we need our churches, and our lives, to be turned up-side-down by Jesus -

“And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, ‘It is written, “My house shall be a house of prayer,” but you have made it a den of robbers.’”²

¹ Philippians 3:13-15

² Luke 19:45, 46

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“Most impressive of all is His insistence on the closed door; which shuts in the solitary worshipper and shuts out the clamorous world.”¹

Take each of the passages below slowly, thinking and pondering deeply upon each, going back to the Bible for yourself viewing the context, then take these to Christ in prayer. The battles of our lives are won in the closet. Start here by taking the Word of God below and learning to wield the sword of the Spirit by being purposeful and intimate in prayer.



“Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove...”²



“But He would withdraw to desolate places and pray.”³

¹ David. M. M’Intyre, *The Hidden Life of Prayer and The Prayer Life of our Lord*, Pg. 131

² Luke 3:21, 22

³ Luke 5:16

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“...bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”¹ “And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’”²



“In these days He went out to the mountain to pray, and all night He continued in prayer to God.”³



“In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence.”⁴



“Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’”⁵

¹ Luke 6:28

² Luke 23:34

³ Luke 6:12

⁴ Hebrews 5:7

⁵ Luke 11:1

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“And He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, “Give me justice against my adversary.” For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, “Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’ And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to His elect, who cry to Him day and night? Will He delay long over them? I tell you, He will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?”¹



“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself,

¹ Luke 18:1-8

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prayed thus: “God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.” But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”¹



“Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”²

“My soul is very sorrowful, even to death... going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup

¹ Luke 18:9-14

² Luke 20:46, 47

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pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. ‘...could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”¹



“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”²



“...but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”³

¹ Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46

² Luke 21:34-36

³ Luke 22:32

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Also read all of **John 17** slowly and carefully, taking notes and asking yourself questions along the way.

What examples; what contrasts; what teachings! His life was a life completely dependent upon the Father, seeking Him in prayer, knowing Him, drawing from the eternal Fountain, walking with the Father in communion, speaking with Him in intimacy, intentionally slipping away to be shut-up unto Him and empowered.

Oh believer, will you heed the promise? -

“God opposes the proud, but give grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”¹
“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.”² “So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”³

Believer, will you not be strong in the LORD and the strength of His might, by being in Christ Jesus (the Word), wielding that ordained sword of the Spirit, drawing near

¹ James 4:6-8

³ James 4:17

² James 4:10

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unto Him in prayer? What strongholds and evils have been holding you back? There is no excuse for the true Christian; our God is true and powerful and has given us everything we need!

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire... For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”¹

In what way?

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they

¹ 2nd Peter 1:3, 4, 11

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keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”¹

I wonder if the greatest works performed by Jesus was not casting out demons, raising the dead, and healing the sick, but really was His life of prayer? Could it be we fail the most in this area because there is no self-glory to be found? Could it be that the reason so little time is spent in His Word, and even less time in prayer, is because this is where His light exposes our pride and the Spirit pours salt into our open wounds?

“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord’, and not do what I say?”² For “if you love Me, you will keep my commandments.”³ “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do...Whatever you ask in My name, this I will

¹ 2nd Peter 1:6-10

³ John 14:15

² Luke 6:46

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do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in My name, I will do it.”¹

Could it be that some of us have so little, because so few ask? Could it be we do not have because we know the Lord and His Word so little, that if when we ask, we do so out of ignorance of God’s will or because our intentions and motivations are wrong? Could it be we have no desire for God’s Word and prayer because we have never asked Him for the desire? There is no wonder we are weak and apathetic. Of course, it could very well be that we have never come to know Him at all. I am aware that this may be a powerful confrontation for some, Lord willing, not unto despair, but a glorious new life.

Think about when Jesus was praying in the garden, and in great anguish,² knowing that He was to drink the cup of the winepress of the wrath of God³ for our sin, the Apostles could not stay alert and pray. Now, I do not point the finger at the Apostles, at least they were cognitive as to ask Jesus how to pray,⁴ but I am pointing the finger to myself and challenge you: Have we prayed for one hour this last year with our brothers and sisters? Have we prayed for one hour in private? Have we prayed for at

¹ John 14:12, 13

² Luke 22:44

³ Isaiah 63:3

⁴ Luke 11:1-13

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least one hour this year in total? Have we ever prayed this much in our lives? Have we prayed, asking the Lord, ...*teach me [us] how to pray?*

Honestly, I hope that this exposes our condition and profession to Jesus. I mean, shall we continue to play ‘church’, imitating biblical Christianity, while the games of ‘churchianity’ drench us in the putrid odors of the flesh, sitting for one more Sunday-sermon, living powerless, ignorant as to the Scriptures, and spiritually defeated by every minor condition; worse yet, denying the Lord Jesus Himself? If we reject God’s Word, we reject Christ, for He is the Word; even if we are in His Word, if we reject prayer, we not only reject communion with Him, and empowerment unto maturity, but a light is shed on our thinking, proving our guilt as we reject His pattern of life. No wonder the church in the West is so powerless, fruitless, and lethargic. It is an absolute travesty to our profession of faith should we not be *praying at all times*, in special seasons, both in private and making this the highlighted meeting within the local church. “*If we are not praying, we are playing.*”¹

“Prayer is the open admission that without Christ we can do nothing. And prayer is the turning away

¹ Leonard Ravenhill

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from ourselves to God in the confidence that He will provide the help we need. Prayer humbles us as needy and exalts God as wealthy... There is a direct correlation between not knowing Jesus well and not asking much from Him. A failure in our prayer life is generally a failure to know Jesus... And the implication is that those who do ask - Christians who spend time in prayer - do it because they see that God is a great Giver and that Christ is wise and merciful and powerful beyond measure. And therefore their prayer glorifies Christ and honors His Father. The chief end of man is to glorify God. Therefore, when we become what God created us to be, we become people of prayer"¹

I truly believe *Ichabod*² has been written over the doorways of many so-called church meetings in our culture. For the *Spirit of the Lord has departed* as fruits of godliness, genuine piety, and prayer are completely absent. However, this does not need to continue should *we who are called by His name humble ourselves, and pray and seek His face and turn from our wicked ways.*³

¹ John Piper, *Desiring God*,
Pg. 161-62

² 1st Samuel 4:21

³ 2nd Chronicles 7:14

Hope of the World

“Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all and ordered them not to make him known. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

“Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”¹

Now, do not be mistaken, there is hope, much amazing hope! If we have a beating heart and breath in our lungs, we still stand at the precipice of grace, the place where the one true God stands out in distinction among all the imitators.

So let me encourage you, draw near to Him, ask Him for the desire to long for Him, to be in His Word, to see His beauties, and learn to speak with Him in earnest. Rest

¹ Matthew 12:15-21 (Isaiah 42:1-3)

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assured, shall you ask Him for this, and you mean ‘business’ with all honest sincerity, He will begin to give you such desires, along with tremendous joy, and victories over sin and strongholds.

How shall we respond? The duty to take up the armor is ours - the promise to strengthen us is His. The duty to take up the sword is ours - the training for right usage is His. The willingness to draw near and be empowered in prayer is ours - the promise that He will draw near to us and grant destruction over strongholds is His.

“Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going? How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”¹

How many claim that Jesus is the way, yet live as though He is not the truth, demonstrating a life exactly like that *of the world*? If we desire to be like Jesus, then why is prayer so removed from our lives?

*“Emotions stirred does not equal worship received.”*²

¹ John 14:5, 6

² Dr. John Snyder, *Behold Your God: Rethinking God Biblically Study*

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Meaning,

“...the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”¹

Our profession of faith, even our emotions, are often deceived but Jesus’ profession to us is paramount, mattering most, and never wavers. This reality we must know without shadow or doubt, and in power and authenticity, not being moved by secondaries, lesser and imitators. Jesus demonstrated for us how to draw from the wellspring of spiritual strength. His is not only our living example, He Himself is our strength, the very Word fulfilled and made manifest for us.

May it be that we would draw near Him always praying intentionally in special seasons and in the closed closet. Shall we respond to Him? Shall we learn to live in His light? Shall we be more victorious than we could have ever imagined? We can, that is, if...

“If you abide in Me, and My word abide in you...”²

Once new life has been worked in us by grace and through faith in Christ Jesus, the responsibility, that is the duty and

¹ Jeremiah 17:9

² John 15:6

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obedience, is ours to be strong in His might, take up the sword, and live forever with a Godward focus.

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

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“Behold, my servant shall act wisely; He shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. As many were astonished at you - His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and His form beyond that of the children of mankind - so shall He sprinkle many nations... Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the many, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors...”¹

“We love because He first loved us.”²

¹ Isaiah 52:13-15, 53:12

² 1st John 4:19

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“God looks not at the elegance of your prayers, to see how neat they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor yet at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are. There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded, or rewarded by God, but that where in the heart is sincerely and wholly. The true mother would not have the child divided. God loves a broken and a contrite heart, so he loathes a divided heart. God neither loves halting nor halving.”

Thomas Brooks

Section Four

Living Forward



“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”¹

I must admit, for a moment a thought entered my mind as to this last section. Should I strongly admonish using creative wording to stir strong convictions? The Spirit of the Lord quickly rebuked me. What an opposition and offense this would be against God. I mean, shall I begin by the Spirit and finish by the

¹ Philippians 3:13, 14

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flesh?¹ Shall I by grace justify the flesh? By no means!² Because of this, I am leaving this work for a season of prayer.

I have left this in this book that I might be honest to you as I stand bare before God.³ Should I speak of being strong in Him, picking up the sword, drawing near unto Him in prayer and not do so myself? Shall I pick up the sword with the arm of my flesh? God forbid! May it never be!

I am compelled to leave this as the introduction to this chapter. I too, like you, need to *forget what lies behind and press on toward the goal*, therefore I shall be shut up to Him for some time.



I fear that we are missing out on so much peace and joy, the very love of God (regardless of our present external situations), due to our obsessions with worldly pleasures, the cunning deceptions of Satan, and our direct defiance to be at rest in the Lord. Thus, our own choices have resulted in the consequences of weak, joyless, and

¹ Galatians 3:3

³ Hebrews 4:13

² Romans 6:1-4

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spiritually impotent lives. I fear that too often we simply refuse to trust in the Lord and His strength. Why turn to the Lord when we have all the numbing entertainments at our disposal? Oh, that we would give ourselves to Him and His Word, trading the ashes for joy, being knit in close communion and prayer.

Consider God's words, through the prophet Isaiah, calling to you -

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.”¹

¹ Isaiah 61:1-3

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This book is not only about fighting battles externally, but more so about conquering battles within our own hearts, minds, and wayward desires. If we shall not expose ourselves internally to the cutting work of the Spirit, then how can we ever expect to be more than conquerors externally? Authenticity must be found internally before we should expect external strongholds to be destroyed.

For this reason, I believe it is paramount that we turn our attention to three specific areas where we can no longer remain ignorant nor impotent. It is of utmost importance that those who make up the church in the western world personally embrace the biblical Jesus and turn away from nearly all aspects of what culture, media, and the flood of internet opinions has to say. To do so, we ourselves must be confronted, tested, convicted, and resent onto the highway of true godliness.

Power unto Reality

“The Christless soul has no armour.”¹

¹ William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, Pg. 45

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Without a doubt, one of the most challenging statements by Jesus was when a Pharisee by the name of Nicodemus came to Him by night saying,

“Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”¹

Jesus quickly aimed the arrow of the word directly at the heart of the matter. He answered him,²

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”³

Two more times Jesus answered,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”⁴

“Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony... And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the

¹ John 3:2

² * Take note of the double emphasis: *Truly, truly*, which is also mentioned three

times. The importance of this cannot be overlooked.

³ John 3:3

⁴ John 3:5, 6

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Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.”¹

Jesus released the arrow straight through Nicodemus’s heart and lodged it directly into us. This new birth which comes by the cross of the Lord Jesus and the life giving Spirit is non-negotiable, that is if we are indeed a true Christian. We must have new life; we must have a reality of the power of God in our lives or else we have nothing more than another man-made religion of narcissism. This does not come by rhetoric or philosophical theory, but rather in the working power of God. For He gives us a new heart² with His Laws written³ directly within, by which He then leads us to new affections and a new style of living. He empowers our life unto good works whereby a pure and undefiled religion seeks to benefit that of others, especially the poorest and weakest among us, and this all while keeping us *unstained from the world*.⁴

Very sadly, I see that the great majority of the professing church today is ignorant of a biblically true and powerful new life. However, we must never forget that the church is made up of individuals, a people who can still respond should they hear and heed the call to return to the only

¹ John 3:11, 14

² Ezekiel 36:22-36

³ Jeremiah 31:31-34

⁴ James 1:27; Also see the prayer of Jesus in John 17.

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true God. As mentioned in the last section, hope is not yet lost.

If you have experienced new life in Christ, then it is you who must be strong in the Lord and His might, take up the sword, and set out to destroy strongholds. If you will not take up this mantle (in God's providence and sphere of life), then who will? This is not only the duty of pastors and church leaders, I dare say most of which are biblically ignorant themselves, but ought to be the cry of our hearts, the cry of every single Christian.

So terribly sad, many are living only to fulfill Jesus' prophecy -

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.’”¹

A terrifying prophecy and reality of *many*.

¹ Matthew 7:21-23

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How do we know if we ourselves are not fulfilling this? I mean, are we willing to even ask such a question? It would do us well to examine ourselves as to reality. However, we need not dwell here too long. It is far better to be honest with ourselves in quick fashion, return our focus (repent), and then seek to know God in greater measure; for He is perfectly powerful to work in us the needed new life and give us new and right passions, should we respond rightly.

Consider the passage below and take notice of what a mere verbal profession to God looks like when reality is absent.

“And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, ‘*I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.*’ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, ‘*Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?*’ And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they

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fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.”¹

What were the seven sons missing? Was it not the reality of the true power of God in knowing Christ Jesus for themselves? Indeed.

Take notice of the evil spirit’s response,

“Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?”

Can this be said of us?

¹ Acts 19:11-20

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Let me ask, has the Morning Star¹ risen in your heart? Has God so *stirred up your spirit*² that you are *grieved over the ruins of Joseph*³ to the point, like Nehemiah, who *wept and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven*?⁴

May none of us be found living a lie like Ananias and Sapphira⁵ nor ill prepared as the foolish virgins.⁶ Should it be that we really desire to be like Jesus, then we must be about the doing of His will, rooted and grounded, growing and abounding in His love and strength. If we are to be that which we claim, then we cannot be ignorant nor impotent of knowing Christ Jesus. For apart from Christ, we cannot be strong in the Lord, take up the sword of the Spirit, and think our prayers are accepted. For if we do not have new life, we are already dead.

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever rejects the Son [does not obey the Son]⁷ will not see life. Instead, the wrath of God remains on him.”⁸

¹ 2nd Peter 1:19; Revelation 22:16

² Ezra 1:1, 5

³ Amos 6:6

⁴ Nehemiah 1:4

⁵ Acts 5:1-11

⁶ Matthew 25:1-13

⁷ ESV

⁸ John 3:36 BSB

Living forward as to our enemy

As mentioned earlier, our enemy should never consume our focus. If our enemy constantly has our attention, or we fail to ever consider him, we are most likely already his captive. Because so much attention is given to the flesh, too often we are consumed with what other people are thinking or saying about us. This often becomes our focus which then causes us to feel as if they are our chief enemy and direct threat. I no doubt agree that there are people who are indeed hate filled and hateful towards one another, seeking to destroy others, however they are nothing more than minions of their father.¹ We must understand completely that our chief enemy is Satan, and he is *the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.*²

Satan is desolate of truth, opposed to the true light,³ and cunning⁴ and deceptive. He offers himself in millions of pathways and under names of all sorts. All his ways are contrary to the grace of God and lead one away from the biblical Christ Jesus, straight towards eternal destruction.

¹ John 8:39-47

² Ephesians 2:2

³ John 1:9

⁴ 2nd Corinthians 11:3

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He is not ignorant of God's Word; however, he can only use it outside of right context for temptation and ruin.¹

There are times that he comes as his name suggests, Satan – secretive, seductive, dark, cunning, even disguising himself as an *angel of light*.

“So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.”²

There are other times he comes with great anger, causing fear, and *roaring like a lion to devour*,³ *seeking to kill and destroy*.⁴ For this reason we must be *sober-minded, watchful, and stay alert*. The Apostle Peter, by his own experience, charges us to –

“Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To Him be the dominion forever and ever... I have written briefly [in context

¹ Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-13

² 2nd Corinthians 11:14, 15

³ 1st Peter 5:8

⁴ John 10:10

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to the entire letter] to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.”¹

We must not be ignorant of his ways. If we desire to be *strong in the Lord and the strength of His might*, we must have a biblical understanding of Satan’s cunning and deceptive ways.

I believe we are severely anemic in understanding just how his slide of hand misdirects our attention. For instance, when Paul said, “*We are not ignorant of his ways*,”² the context was in direct relation to unforgiveness. Unforgiveness is a killer of our spiritual strength, leaving us with a weak and inapt hand, essentially useless in rightly using the sword, inhibiting our prayers, and setting up roadblocks to our drawing near God.

Or again, consider,

“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”³

How easy it is to see that we today are so deceived as to a *sincere and pure devotion to Christ*, both in our private lives and in the life of the western church. What would it

¹ 1st Peter 5:9-12

³ 2nd Corinthians 11:3

² 2nd Corinthians 2:11

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look like if the ministers and leaders, the young and the old, in the preaching and the music, were all to be centered around the beauties of Christ, His sufficiency's, realities, workings, fillings, and great love poured out through the propitiating work on the cross? Would this not propel us to draw near Him that He might draw near us? What glory, what power, what victory, what worship would result?

Oh, for His manifest presence to shine His great light and glory into our lives, that we might catch greater and greater glimpses of His majesty. Oh, that we would be so aware of His expiating work that we would praise Him every waking moment with every waking thought. Oh, that He would array us for that great day. What joy, what peace, what indescribable praise – victory has been won! Oh, dear reader, can you not see, can you not hear, can you not taste that the Lord is good?¹

The cunning of the serpent is very much alive, working his crafty false light, emotional impulses, and twisting of God's word in the mist of the church meetings. He has nearly killed off the prayer meetings, and even when many of such meetings do occur, they look more like gossip sessions and prayer for national narcissism (not at all

¹ Psalm 34:8

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saying we should not intercede for national repentance and Godly principles).

Oh, for a love of Christ! That our Lord and Savior, great God of all grace and glory, would be the theme of our churches and our lives. Oh, that we would pray and act to this effect: that our end would be found at Calvary, the risen victory of Jesus over death, and foundationally rooted in God Himself? Let us, at the very least, ask God for the desire to long for Him *as a deer pants for water*,¹ learning to pray in private, seeking to build corporate prayer that is honoring to Him. In this way, I am convinced, He will grant us strength, peace, understanding, knowledge regarding our enemies' strategies, and enable us the grace to pull down strongholds.

We not only need to know the truth about our enemy, but we must know our true King much more. We must know Him in truth, not merely for our own victories, but for the lifting up, encouragement, and victories of those who are weak, incapable, and abused. Oh, that God would grieve our hearts, flood our eyes, fan into flames a heart that burns. Would it be that He would empower our resolve

¹ Psalm 42:1

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and bring forth conviction leading us to overpouring love through willful and obedient service.

“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”¹

Believer, God has not given us a spirit of fear, so fear not. It is time for us to live in the power, love, and self-control He has given us, that is if we have become recipients like Timothy. Who has an ear to hear? – Let him/her humble themselves, come into the presence of the King, and be forever changed. Oh, that we would be an empowered son or daughter of the Most High, no longer mere servants, but friends,² and fellow brothers and sisters with Christ.³ Here enter the training field, become strong and skilled with the sword, that you would grow in Christ Jesus, taking up His mantle in prayer.

“Satan’s designs against prayer are of three kinds. **FIRST.** If he can, he will keep thee from prayer. **SECOND.** He will strive to interrupt thee in prayer. And, **THIRD.** If that plot takes not, he will

¹ 2nd Timothy 1:6-7

³ Hebrews 2:11

² John 15:15

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labour to hinder the success and return of thy prayer.”¹

Willful Duty vs. Empty Talk

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”²

Thus far I have centered on what I believe is the foundations of a true Christian, those who desire to be strong in the Lord, rightly take hold of the sword, and draw near to God in prayer. However, this is not everything we are to be and are to be doing. I am not advocating for cultural ignorance, the denial of loving care for mankind, nor forbidding the need to carry out justice in civil affairs. On the contrary, simply praying apart from good works and the duties of enforcing law and justice (when in God’s providence the abilities to do so) is sickly and denies the overarching context of the Bible.

Consider James’ admonishment -

¹ William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, Volume 2, Pg. 305

² Micah 6:8

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“If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”¹

Let us not be ignorant. For we must be careful that we do not let legalism become our excuse to do nothing; yet at the same time, grace is never an excuse to do anything and everything. We need God’s wisdom and discernment for what we are to be doing and how we are to go about doing it. Take this instance when David went and recovered the ark of the Covenant, he did not adhere to how God ordained this to be done. Notice the consequences.

“David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baalejudah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of

¹ James 2:15-17

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Abinadab, were driving the new cart, with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark.

“And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. And David was angry because the Lord had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and he said, ‘*How can the ark of the Lord come to me?*’ So David was not willing to take the ark of the Lord into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.”¹

Now you might be thinking,

¹ 2nd Samuel 6:1-11

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“That was awfully harsh what the Lord did there. After all, what was wrong with them bringing back the ark?”

Nothing was wrong with bringing back the ark, it was how they purposefully, and most certainly acting in ignorance, disrespected God’s command on how the ark was to be carried. Because of their ignorance, this led to Uzzah reaching out to touch the ark, resulting yet again in another act of irreverence and blatant violation of God’s holy statues. Look how quickly David’s partying was turned to wrongful anger directed at God, yet he was the one who failed to keep the commandment regarding how the ark was to be carried. Sadly, he probably got the idea from the Philistine’s when they put the ark on a cart.¹ God quickly reminded the people who He was and their need to have tremendous reverence, even down right *phobos* (Gk. fear).

There are so many things we can learn from this story that time here would fail us. For instance, we could talk of God’s holiness, His prior commandments, His right to set forth the standards, or maybe closer to us in the church, carrying forth God honoring worship, church events and their structures, etc. We could even mention how David

¹ 1st Samuel 6

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was clearly influenced by the enemy's ways, and the culture of the day, or how he failed to consult God's word and God Himself. Maybe, being the king that he was, if he had spent more time as was prior commanded for a king, he would have known better.¹ For our purposes, we need to see that not only does good works matter, but equally the manner in which we go about doing the work. Does our profession match our style of life? Do our words match our desire to carry out the Gospel in loving services? Is our good works performed in a fashion keeping with what is right, honoring, and pleasing to our Lord? The specifics of what the Lord would have of us to do ought to be taken up with Him in accordance with His word, will, and in prayer.

We are going to take a brief look from a general, yet important, view of Scripture. Here, again, it would be good to make a serious detailed study as to all the places that we are to be dutiful, resolved in service, and care for humanity. It is also good to remember again, as individuals, we are not to be doing every single work possible. This is one of the reasons for the individual differences and giftings of the corporate church.

¹ Deuteronomy 17:18 (vs.14-20)

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“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”¹

First, I want you to consider all the Lord has given you. Think about His grace, mercies, great love, and ongoing patience He has had in your life. Then, think about all the material blessings, provisions, and access to His Word. Now think about how much you have wasted? How much money and food has gone wayside? How many hours in neglect of His Word have been lost, especially when you had the time. How many Bibles lay dust covered? Now,

¹ Romans 12:3-8

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consider what the prophet Ezekiel said to Jerusalem, regarding Sodom,

“As I live, declares the LORD GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and the needy.”¹

To say the least, it is apparent that God expects *those to whom much has been given*² are to care for the needy. It is also apparent that the chief sin of Sodom is not that of sexual wickedness, but that which started from their self-gratifying abundance and the denial of those in great need. No doubt sexual sin was rampant, but sin of all sorts is always a slippery slope from lesser to greater, until finally, ultimate destruction. Consider this, if God has given us blessings, what are we really to be doing with them?

Take the following passages of Scripture slowly, reading back through their context for yourself, and then ask the Lord in prayer what you need to see regarding yourself. May the Lord stir up our hearts to personal, and corporate

¹ Ezekiel 16:48, 49

² Luke 12:48

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prayer, then when rising from our knees, may we be a people of wisdom, love, resolve, and action.

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.’”¹

“Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before My eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.”²

“Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”³

“Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, as you have said. Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the

¹ Jeremiah 22:3

³ Psalm 82:3, 4

² Isaiah 1:16, 17

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LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.”¹

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

“Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

“Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

“Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, ‘*Here I am.*’ If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.”²

¹ Amos 5:14, 15

² Isaiah 58:6-10

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It is easy to be overwhelmed by just these few passages; however, we must not think that we will accomplish such feats by ourselves. The greater question is not how shall we accomplish such tasks, but do I even care for such people? Then, to what extent am I willing and open to be used of God? It is our duty to respond to God, being willing to serve; it is God's deep love and empowerment that enables us to carryout His will.

I love what Paul Washer¹ has said regarding our blessings and abilities -

“If we are strong, we are strong to help the weak. If we have opportunity of an education, we help those of our brothers and sisters who have had no opportunity. If we have wealth, it is for our brothers and sisters who have none.”

He also said regarding missions -

“We either go down in the well or we hold the rope for those who go down; either way, there ought to be scars on our hands.”

Do we have work that needs to be done? Absolutely. We never want to be a sort of people who are full of

¹ Founder of HeartCry
Missionary Society

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‘theological knowledge’ and yet loveless empty talkers. If we do not care to even raise a finger of effort in helping others, as we have ability, for the help and defense of others, then what good is our verbal professions?

Let us consider Nehemiah and the workers who labored to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and its gates¹ -

“When our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had frustrated their plan, then all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work. From that day on, half of my servants carried on the work while half of them held the spears, the shields, the bows and the breastplates; and the captains were behind the whole house of Judah. Those who were rebuilding the wall and those who carried burdens took their load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon. As for the builders, each wore his sword girded at his side as he built, while the trumpeter stood near me.”

Did you notice what was said when the enemies heard that the people knew what was happening and that God had frustrated their plan? They returned to the wall and to their work. Why? Because the enemy now knew that

¹ Nehemiah 1:3

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reality had come to fruition in the lives of the people and God was at work. In this context, the enemy was rendered powerless, and they could not say, like the demon possessed man, “*Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?*” The enemy knew that the people now had a working reality that was backed by a mind of knowledge as to their scheme.¹ More than that, God was in their midst – the greatest of all realities.

“And I [Nehemiah] looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, ‘*Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.*’”²

Although the people *prayed to God* concerning the plot of their enemy, they did not just sit there worrying about what was to come, they put their hand to the plow, they literally picked up sword and trowel, laboring and working hard all while ready and empowered for battle. Their words were tangibly put in action.

Let me ask you, does this describe your life? Are you working diligently in God’s providence and power as you have ability and doing so with the sword of the Spirit at

¹ Nehemiah 4:7-9

² Nehemiah 4:14

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the ready? Have you been *clothed with power from on high*¹ as the early apostles and disciples? Has reality gripped your heart that the flames burn bright in our culture of darkness? Here I must add, talking like this can seem a bit dangerous as people often use this type of thinking for emotional highs, false signs, and even in the twisting and denial of Scripture. I am not talking about worked up emotional highs and spasmodic bodily movements that has absolutely nothing to do with God's Holy Spirit. I am talking about real power, the reality of God's grace such that you are no longer who you used to be and are continually being transformed by Him in the way of Christ, being further set apart for His purposes, His glory, His will, His victories, in His great love. Is this your reality? Do your words match your life?

For a moment consider God's powerful working grace, and then ask yourself if this is evident in your life.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus

¹ Luke 24:49

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Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”

Let us not be a people who make bold claims, while living under the cover of lies. Let us not be false to our profession of faith by trying to fake the working power of God. God knows the truth, but do you? And if you find that you are void in this area, then begin by being honest with God, humble yourself, and ask Him for a desire to be godly, true, and empowered. Take up His word, asking Him for wisdom, discernment, conviction, and empowerment to be a man or woman of God. Take up praying at all times, asking Him for more tenacity, resolve, perseverance, and faith.

Oh, that we might be people with the mindset like that of Moses, Paul, the three Hebrew youths, Esther, and a host of saints prior -

Moses.

“By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of

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Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.”¹

Paul.

“But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”²

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.’”³

Esther.

“Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young

¹ Hebrews 11:24-26

³ Daniel 3:16-18

² Acts 20:24

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women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”¹

Saints of old.

“And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”²

¹ Esther 4:16

² Hebrews 11:32-38

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Oh, that we would be relentless, in the face of the enemy, to do what is right and good, with willful obedience, striving to be God honoring, and resolved unto the very end of our temporal flesh and unto the first steps of eternity, and forevermore.

Final thoughts and questions

Remember, the *weapons of our warfare are not carnal*. Essentially they are -

- 1.) A style of life set apart by walking with God and intentionally drawing near Him, through both His Word and prayer, for our eternal good and interceding for others.
- 2.) A taking up of the sword of the Spirit, standing strong and steadfast in Him, while rightly responding to the Word of God for the eternal good of others, chiefly, that we would proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 3.) That we would be deeply rooted and grounded in a growing love that flourishes for God and is carried forth by sacrificial love for others.

Oh, for greater and greater vision of Christ's love for us, and that through His cross and His unwavering intercession. That we would experience measure beyond

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measures of Him in truth, reality, and power. Let us be about this great task, to grow in desire and a passionate pursuit to lay hold of even the *fringes of His garment*, to know Him, His grace, and His love such that everything can only pale in distant light. Oh, for an increasing experiential taste of His goodness and joy that we would be strong in Him and His might, willing and able to take up the sword, and be forever bowed low, grateful, humbled, and growing in love for Him.

There are such unbelievable treasures in Christ yet to be discovered. May we sell everything and buy up the fields that yields the treasure.¹ May we lay our hand to the plow and till up our fallow ground.²

Lord, may You cause our hearts to yearn for You. Amen.

“We may have as much of God as we will. Christ puts the keys of the treasure-chamber into our hand, and bids us take all that we want. If a man is admitted into the bullion vault of a bank and told to help himself, and comes out with one cent, whose fault is it that he is poor?”³

Alexander MacLaren

¹ Matthew 13:44-46

² Hosea 10:12; Jeremiah 4:3

³ *Bell's Commentary on the Bible*, Intro. to 2nd Peter 1

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End questions.¹

Is our style of life, our prayers, our worship, our work, pleasing to the Lord?

Am I the kind of person that the Lord would be pleased to draw near?

Do I wake up and think to myself: I must meet with Him (God) today?

Am I willing to *decrease that He might increase*² and to be like the *grain of wheat*?³

Is my mind made up to what I really want when asking God? For friendship with the world is hostile to God, and I cannot have both Christ and the world.

¹ Some of these are owed to Dr. John Snyder from the *Behold Your God: Rethinking God Biblically* Bible study.

² John 3:30

³ John 12:24

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“I have never met an old saint who regretted having spent too much time in prayer, but I have met many who regretted having spent too little.”

Paul Washer

“Activity with God is not a substitute for walking with God.”

Brad Pittman

“Oh, for closet communion with God, till soul and body, head, face, and heart - shine with Divine brilliancy! But oh! for a holy ignorance of our shining.”

Robert Murray M’Cheyne

A Story of Repentance



“Arise, my darling. Come away with me, my beautiful one.”¹

Tears streamed down his cheeks at that moment he realized how many wasted hours, days, and nights he spent chasing useless pursuits and empty rabbit holes. Baited by bits of truth, the snares and traps were covered beneath the countless layers of endless opinions. The moment, the very hour of obedience, had come by way of repentance, through grace, and fully mixed with loving mercy. The time had come to redeem what time was left.

¹ Song of Solomon 2:10

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O' the wasted time - the hours of being mesmerized by self-pleasing lusts of various kinds had only led to his abasement and separation from God, proving that continued learning, in and of itself, *never arrives at the knowledge of the truth.*¹ 'Narcissism' and its close friend 'Entertainment' are the fore fronted appetites of 'Pride', and they, being the seductive rulers of night, misdirect unto 'Destruction'. Such is the cleverness of 'Darkness' that it need only to entice by way of mere 'Feelings' and to thus feed the numbly distracted appetites of the lost soul. Thus, 'Destruction', if left on its course, be the end goal of 'Darkness', eternal separation from light.

'Darkness' says -

“You may go down any of the millions upon millions of paths, paths to appease your appetites and give you what you spontaneously want. But heed - stay away from the narrow way, do not even touch the unpopular gate, for surely you will need lose everything and gain nothing.”

Oh, how deceptive is his cunning, devices so powerful and damning, filled with lies, lies, and more lies, of which fools never cease their fill.

¹ 2nd Timothy 3:7

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Endless pursuits, tireless cravings, unfulfilled ideas, unsatiated appetites, tears with no heart, is the life of the carnal. Fears within, anger without, the bitter entrapment seems it has no end. Many such ones make various professions to the titles of men, of which, they have no ownership - no reality, no truth, no solid *Rock*¹ and *Cornerstone*² upon which to take stand, of which to see and hear, taste and experience. O' how devastating will be the blow upon their heads on that day,³ and this is their lot, should it be they never arrive at the *Truth*¹ and rightly respond.

However, regardless of his ill trained recognition and endurance, this man of tears has begun to learn to embrace the discipline of which '*Darkness*', its allies, and the carnal, all hate. This man now cries out -

“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.”

With conviction, he embraces the discipline that leads him through wildly wicked weeds of the worldly self-

¹ Acts 4:11

² Ephesians 2:19-22

³ Revelation 20:11-15

⁴ John 14:6

⁵ Proverbs 12:1 BSB

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pleasures and straight through unto the blessed *narrow gate*¹ and onto the eternal *pathway of life*.²

He now cherishes the *Word of life*³ and promise, help and hope, teaching and training, freedom, and joy – for the beauties are immensely precious and so nigh that distance has not measure. It is this path, this very *way*,⁴ of which he now cannot get enough. Chasing hard, with his *face like flint*⁵ in the footsteps of his perfect Master, he now hears the Savior’s *voice* and *follows*⁶ Him as He leads through the wilderness and unto eternal realms.

The chasing for more of Him is the beat of his heart and willful pleasure of his newly found hedonism.⁷ This joyous freedom, truly an experiential beauty, cannot be rivaled nor be found in any other. By the conviction of His Spirit, the time and grace of obedient resolve in *drawing near*⁸ has come – this all for the glory, honor, and praise of *Him who saves*.⁹ Death to distractions! This man now holds near His Word¹⁰ while walking and talking with Him down the pathway of life and into eternity forevermore.

¹ Matthew 7:13

² Psalm 16:11

³ Philippians 2:16

⁴ John 14:6

⁵ Isaiah 50:7

⁶ John 10:27 ESV

⁷ Recommend, “*Desiring God*” by Dr. John Piper

⁸ James 4:8

⁹ Isaiah 12:2

¹⁰ John 1:1, 2, 14

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*Is there a cost?*² – the simple might ask. Yes, but not what is thought. It is the trading of chains for freedom, misery for purpose, hopelessness for help, *ashes for beauty*,¹ death for life. He who *first loved*¹ initiated the trade agreement and its terms. It is He, the very *One* who drank down the dregs of the *cup*,³ the very cup that man should have drunk, having been drowned under its full weight. Man was due to be paid in full – chains, misery, hopelessness, ashes, death, a crushing of the bones, and eternal wrath; yet, he received life, victory, peace, joy, love and a whole host of goodness.

Should the man *reject* this *One's* deal, *wrath* was to *remain*,⁴ in perfect and due time, the full weight of justice will be executed in its entirety for the rejection of the *One*. It was the Father's *Son*,⁵ *He* is the *One*, Him being *perfect* and *without blemish*,⁶ who absorbed all that was in the cup,⁷ and in doing so for each one who would simply look and confess that this *One*, this *Son*, He is the Christ – that is, would it be that he would *receive Him*.⁸

¹ Isaiah 61:3

² 1st John 4:19

³ Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17,
22; Jeremiah 25:15; Luke
22:42

⁴ John 3:36

⁵ John 13:19, 20

⁶ Ephesians 5:27

⁷ Isaiah 53:10; Romans 1:18,
3:25, 5:8, 9

⁸ John 1:12

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O' that he would trade his garbage, his works, his hell-bent state, for His righteousness,¹ and enter His blessed way. For in comparison to Him, the very best of works are nothing short of *filthy rags*,² yet, through Him all the mazes of *Darkness's* deceptions can be navigated in discernment, wisdom, and victory.

The time had come for this man - time enough indeed. For it was time for him to truly embrace the *One* and seek to know Him yet even more.

Yet, what shall you do?

Shall you continue reading onward? Shall you make Him your pursuit? Shall He be preeminent in the style of your life? Shall you receive Him and His powerful working grace?³

Shall you read? Shall you hear?
Shall you heed? Shall you respond?

Shall resolve be a grace?
Shall love take all of one's place?
Shall night continue to lead?
Shall He be all you will need?

¹ 2nd Timothy 2:22

³ Titus 2:11-14

² Isaiah 64:6

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Shall you read? Shall you hear?
Shall you heed? Shall you respond?

Here it is you and I find our true dilemma; here the bulwark stands in the pathway of our desires. Shall we *come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost?*¹ Or shall we *spend money on that which is not bread, [our] labor on that which does not satisfy?*²

Should we continue to be spiritual beggars while refusing to *take all that we want* of Christ because the distracting narcissisms have numbed and dumbled us into apathy and addiction(s)? Rest assured, your hour has been summoned and you will appear before Christ.³ *We [may] have as much of God as we actually want,⁴ as a matter of fact, we already do.⁵*

I beseech you, could the power to open your eyes be mine, I compel you, listen to His call and put away childish things.⁶ May your affections no longer be blind and deaf to the beauties and deep joys found in Christ.

¹ Isaiah 55:1

² Isaiah 55:2

³ Philippians 2:10, 11

⁴ A.W. Tozer, *The Divine Conquest*

⁵ Thought from Dr. John Snyder, *Behold Your God*

⁶ 1st Corinthians 13:11

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For He says,

*“Arise, my darling.
Come away with me, my beautiful one.
For now the winter is past;
the rain is over and gone.
The flowers have appeared in the countryside;
the season of singing has come,
and the cooing of turtledoves is heard in our land.
The fig tree ripens its figs;
the blossoming vines spread their fragrance.
Arise, come away, my darling;
come away with me, my beautiful one.”¹*

¹ Song of Solomon 2:10-13

Closing Prayer

The Only Path



“And there will be a highway called the Way of Holiness.”¹

Lord, it was not until my dear Savior set my feet firm upon the pathway of life was I able to say with Job -

“I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”²

By the powerful working grace of God I was brought through the *narrow gate*.³ That is when Christ became sweet and most precious⁴ and the darkness of my heart

¹ Isaiah 35:8

² Job 42:5, 6

³ Matthew 7:13, 14

⁴ 1st Peter 2:7 KJV

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was brought to my conscious awareness – only then, O’ then, was it I was made anew.¹ And even though at the time I had no understanding of such words to describe the beautiful redemption I had received,² I was nonetheless a *new creation* in Christ Jesus.³ O’ mighty God, thank you for such massive grace – how could it be, that the blessed Savior should rescue and die for a sinner such as me? How amazing are You that You would die and gloriously raise again for such a wretched man.

“Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people, build up, build up the highway, clear it of stones; lift up a signal over the people.”⁴

Even before I was able to understand that it was You who sustained me through the darkest chapters and most lonely of roads, yet it was You who prepared the way. It was You who was the Light of life that lit my way, who led me forward straight and steady, and called me to the *old paths*.⁵ May You never let me wonder to the left or to the right that I would go after the sinful delicacies of my old lustful nature. For You have given me a new nature, a new life, a *heart of flesh* to be nurtured and fed, trained and matured, sanctified and humbled. And although there still

¹ Ezekiel 36:26

² John 1:12

³ 2nd Corinthians 5:17

⁴ Isaiah 62:10

⁵ Jeremiah 6:16

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be in me *a way which seems right*¹ to myself, I know that only You are my *bright morning star*,² and should You continue to grant me the continued grace, thus You shall be upon my mind, with resolve, daily.

“Make me know the way I should go, for to You I lift up my soul... Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground.”³

It is You, O’ Lord, who has *first love me*,⁴ who put my feet on the *narrow way*, through the *narrow gate*,⁵ and onto the *way of holiness*. How could I ever take the credit for what You have done? May it never be! For I was helpless and hopeless, deaf and blind, unknowing and ignorant. O’ how precious is the Savior! For He says -

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”⁶

And again -

“I am the resurrection and the life.”⁷

¹ Proverbs 14:12

² 2nd Peter 1:19

³ Psalm 143:8b, 10

⁴ 1st John 4:19

⁵ Matthew 7:13, 14

⁶ John 14:6

⁷ John 11:25

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You, O' Lord, have called me to leave my folly, my sin, my narcissism behind that I might live and to *walk in the way of understanding*.¹

“Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.”²

O' Lord, never let me leave this path, never allow my ignorance and old nature to have reign, for the saying is true, [I am] *prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love - here's my heart, O' take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above*.³

For this very reason and purpose, O' precious Lord, make me wise and understanding, that I may direct my *heart in the way*⁴ and to be found rich in truth. May I offer unto You thanksgiving as my sacrifice and in all seasons of life. O' my dear Lord, may my way be ordered rightly and may I see the fullness of Your blessed salvation.⁵

¹ Proverbs 9:6

² Jeremiah 6:16

³ From the Hymn: *Come*

Thou Fount

⁴ Proverbs 23:19

⁵ Psalm 50:23

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“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the first fruit of lips that confess His name.”¹

I praise You mighty God that You clear a straight and level path² for me. May I always be found wanting for You, O’ Lord, that I would *walk in the path of Your judgments*.³ It is said that there is a way that seems right to a man yet it leads to death;⁴ *for a man’s folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the Lord*.⁵ And yet You have brought my ear to hear and my eye to see⁶ – hallelujah! May I never say, “*I have made my heart pure*.” May it never be uttered.

Although the outer appearances of my words lack the poetic beauty so deserving of Your works and Your majestic splendor, yet I will praise You for You are great and greatly to be praised.⁷

“Walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh... let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”⁸

¹ Hebrews 13:15 BSB

² Isaiah 26:7

³ Isaiah 26:8

⁴ Proverbs 14:12

⁵ Proverbs 19:3

⁶ Proverbs 20:9

⁷ Psalm 145:3

⁸ Galatians 5:16, 25

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In this most blessed pathway of Yours there is so much wisdom, so much blessing, so much of You to be found. For here in this way I have experienced and can see -

- the heavy yoke of the flesh dissolves
- there is the working of sanctification
- the faithfulness of God when I stumble
- the love of God abounds beyond measure
- Jesus traveled the way of Golgotha that I might travel the way of holiness
- walking by the Spirit is the only way in which to navigate the wickedness of the day
- there is a humble communion with God to be found
- the way may be narrow but unbelievable joy abounds and is only found here
- it is the blessed path unto the glories that are to be revealed
- it is the way of His will
- it is ordained by Him
- it is ordered by Him
- the only way of righteousness
- no enemies shall enter
- it leads to the true Zion
- it must be traveled to know Him
- it is entered only by the empowering of grace, by faith, and in mercy - Jesus Christ

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- it can never be thwarted
- it leads to peace forevermore
- it is not empowered or made by the hands of man
- it is despised by the proud, the arrogant, and the wisdom of men
- it is traveled by few and hated by many
- it knows freedom and rejects legalism
- it protects to the utmost

“In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.”¹

O’ dear Lord, it is You who weighs my spirit and knows my ways.² Lord, keep me on the *level highway*³ that I would *walk straight ahead*.¹ Turn me far away from *Sheol* that I would walk the *path of life that leads upward* to You.⁵

Grant that I would have the same desire for You as the blessed Apostle Paul -

“Indeed I count all things as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my

¹ Proverbs 12:28

⁴ Proverbs 15:21

² Proverbs 16:2

⁵ Proverbs 15:24

³ Proverbs 15:19

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Lord... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”¹

Again -

“But I do not account my life of any value of as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God.”²

O’ Lord, keep my feet sure and true. May I always be found praying through the pathway of walking with You.

Amen.

¹ Philippians 3:8, 10

² Acts 20:24

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“And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”¹

¹ Isaiah 35:8-10

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“He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.”

Psalm 107:7

Tract of Tracts

Others May: You Cannot



Over a decade ago this tract, written by G.D. Watson (1845-1924), captivated my attention. Herein, Watson takes aim at our pride and exposes our tendency to compare ourselves with others. To this day, this tract stands as one of the best I have ever read and remains a treasured means of grace. I hope and pray that it will help you the same.

Others May: You Cannot - by G.D. Watson.

If God has called you to be really like Jesus He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility, and put upon you such demands of obedience, that you will not be able to follow other people, or measure yourself by other Christians, and in many ways He will seem to let other people do things which He will not let you do.

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Other Christians and ministers who seem very religious and useful, may push themselves, pull wires, and work schemes to carry out their plans, but you cannot do it, and if you attempt it, you will meet with such failure and rebuke from the Lord as to make you sorely penitent.

Others may boast of themselves, of their work, of their successes, of their writings, but the Holy Spirit will not allow you to do any such thing, and if you begin it, He will lead you into some deep mortification that will make you despise yourself and all your good works.

Others may be allowed to succeed in making money, or may have a legacy left to them, but it is likely God will keep you poor, because He wants you to have something far better than gold, namely, a helpless dependence upon Him, that He may have the privilege of supplying your needs day by day out of an unseen treasury.

The Lord may let others be honored and put forward, and keep you hidden in obscurity, because He wants to produce some choice fragrant fruit for His coming glory, which can only be produced in the shade. He may let others be great, but keep you small. He may let others do a work for Him and get the credit for it, but He will make you work and toil on without knowing how much you are doing; and then to make your work still more precious He may let others get credit for the work which you have

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done, and thus make your reward ten times greater when Jesus comes.

The Holy Spirit will put a strict watch over you, with a jealous love, and will rebuke you for little words and feelings or for wasting your time, which other Christians never feel distressed over. So make up your mind that God is an Infinitely Sovereign Being, and has a right to do as He pleases with His own. He may not explain to you a thousand things which puzzle your reason in His dealings with you, but if you absolutely sell yourself to be His love slave, He will wrap you up in Jealous Love, and bestow upon you many blessings which come only to those who are in the inner circle.

Settle it forever, then that you are to deal directly with the Holy Spirit, and that He is to have the privilege of tying your tongue, or chaining your hand, or closing your eyes, in ways that He does not seem to use with others. Now, when you are so possessed with the living God that you are, in your secret heart, pleased and delighted over this peculiar, personal, private, jealous guardianship and management of the Holy Spirit over your life, then you will have found the vestibule of Heaven.

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“Sometimes, when I see some of the worst characters in the street, I feel as if my heart must burst forth in tears of gratitude that God has never let me act as they have done! I have thought, *‘If God had left me alone, and had not touched me by His grace, what a great sinner I would have been! I would have run to the utmost lengths of sin, dived into the very depths of evil. Nor would I have stopped at any vice or folly, if God had not restrained me!’*”

“I feel that I would have been a very king of sinners, if God had left me alone. I cannot understand the reason why I am saved, except upon the ground that God would have it so. I cannot, if I look ever so earnestly, discover any kind of reason in myself why I should be a partaker of Divine grace.”

~ Charles Spurgeon ~

Biography



Jeremy B. Strang is simply a Christian, husband, father, and author. More information, along with free downloads, can be found at: ForgeFlower.com

Prior books include:

Twenty Years and Plowing into Eternity
One Mans Walk with God: Preparing for Trials and Fears
The Foothills of True Grace
Stay in the Boat: When Perception Begg Our Abandonment
Realities of a True Christian
As Christ: Man and Marriage

and more.

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