

## RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE

We will see that there is interdependency between righteousness and peace. When you put on Christ at salvation, you are justified before our holy God. The breastplate of a suit of armor is designed to protect an area of extreme vulnerability – the heart. The breastplate of righteousness is our protection against Satan’s attack on our very hearts; Therefore, we can see that righteousness is given a place of great importance in the believer’s warfare. There are at least two reasons for this:

1. Righteousness defeats Satan because it is all that he is not. He is unrighteousness, evil, wicked, and full of darkness. Righteousness repels him.
2. Righteousness is one of God’s attributes. It is even a name of God. Read Jeremiah 23:6 \_\_\_\_\_

Now read 2 Corinthians 5:21 and note what you learn about sin and righteousness: \_\_\_\_\_

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When Satan aims an arrow at you by saying, “you’re not good enough to be a Christian,” you can respond with Paul, “who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies.” (Romans 8:33) This sort of righteousness is called **imputed righteousness** because God has credited the very righteousness of Jesus to our account. Now God sees us as being clothed in His own righteousness. “Impute” is a banking term. It means that something that belongs to one person is put to the account of another.

Read Romans 8:1-2 and 31-39. Record what you learn of condemnation and imputed righteousness in these verses: \_\_\_\_\_

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“There is therefore now no condemnation” because God’s righteousness has been put on our accounts. God does not condemn. God does not accuse. God

convicts of sin and seeks to lead us to repentance. **SATAN IS THE ACCUSER.** He accuses you day and night before the throne of God (Revelation 12:10).

As much as we rejoice in our position of imputed righteousness in Christ, we are well aware that our actions are frequently unrighteous. We think, do, and say things that are far from God. Standing firm involves understanding and applying some additional truths. Read Ephesians 4:25-32 and record what sin does in the life of a Christian.

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The word translated "opportunity" is *topos* and is used of a region, locality, or place which persons or things occupy. It is also used metaphorically of a condition or occasion, although Paul never uses it in the second way. This verse tells us that sin in a believer becomes an open door to the enemy. It is a "beachhead," a place to stand, a toehold in our lives.

God's remedy for sin is stated in I John 1:9. This verse is crucial in the life of a believer. Write it here: \_\_\_\_\_

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Confession is different from saying "I'm sorry," or asking for forgiveness. The word translated "confess" is *homologeō* which means to state the same thing, to agree. In other words, we need to say (aloud is implied) what we have done and that it is sin. Of course, we should also be sorry. We may need to ask for forgiveness or make restitution. But confession always involves "naming the sin--agreeing with God that it is, indeed, sin." This is part of the sanctification process-- it is the way we make righteousness part of our experience--it is **imparted righteousness.**

Satan will make confession as difficult as he can. He will try to convince us that it's too late, that God has already erased our name from the book of life. This is one of his biggest lies. Our eternal destiny is not at stake when we sin; but our daily victory and our fellowship with God are. Confession of sin clears the way for fruitful expression of righteousness in our daily lives.

Read Acts 24:16 and record Paul's position: \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE SHOES

Closely related to righteousness is the concept conveyed by the "shoeing of our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." When we receive Christ, we are united with the Prince of Peace. We have positional (imputed) peace right now. (Romans 5:1), but the peace of Christ must also rule in our heart. This is only possible when the Word of Christ dwells richly in us. Even the best equipped, most skilled soldier cannot win a war if he cannot stand on his feet. The Roman shoe, the *caliga*, protected the soldier's feet against razor-sharp sticks planted into the ground. (the land mines of the time).

But, why are these shoes "the preparation of the gospel of peace?" Many have felt that this implies some evangelistic effort. Indeed, the verse is reminiscent of Romans 10:15. However, the context of Romans 10:15 is salvation--evangelism. The context of Ephesians 6 is warfare. The word for preparation is *hetoimasiai* which means readiness. Readiness is a state of mind that comes from the gospel whose message is peace. This involves experiential (imparted) peace.

Read Philippians 4:6-9 and record what you learn. \_\_\_\_\_

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Romans 5:1 declares that we have peace with God. This is an intellectual, positional peace. Philippians 4:6-7 says that we have the peace of God. This is an experiential peace. The peace of God applies a balm of inner serenity to our emotions. We feel at peace in our minds and hearts. There is no solution to inner disquiet that is as effective as prayer.

## EXTRA READING

Read the following verses and record what you learn about peace and righteousness:

Ephesians 6:3 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 16:7 \_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 3:9-11 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 2:13-14 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 3:9-18 \_\_\_\_\_



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## CLAIMING THE BREASTPLATE

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I put on the breastplate of righteousness. In this moment, I repudiate any dependence I may have on my own goodness. I embrace the righteousness that is mine by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I look to the Holy Spirit to be effecting righteous actions, pure thoughts, and holy attitudes in my life. I hold up the righteous life of the Lord Jesus Christ to defeat Satan and his kingdom. I affirm that my victory is won and lived out by my Savior. I eagerly ask and expect that the Lord Jesus Christ shall live His righteousness through me. Through the precious blood of Christ, cleanse me of all my sins of omission and commission. Let me walk in a holy and clean manner that honors God and defeats the world, the flesh, and the devil, through Jesus Christ, my Lord.

## APPROPRIATING THE SHOES OF PEACE

Father, by faith and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I put on the shoes of peace. I accept Your declaration that I am justified and that I have peace with You. May my mind grasp that wondrous truth with ever increasing awareness. I thank You, Lord, that I need not carry any anxiety or suffer from inner torment or turmoil. Thank You, Lord Jesus Christ, that You have invited me to make all of my needs known to You through prayer. Teach me to wait in Your presence until the inner peace of God, which transcends human understanding, replaces my anxiety. I desire to know the strong presence of Your peace. May You walk with me and say to me, "don't be afraid; I will help you."

With all of my heart, I want to be obedient to Your will at all times. May the Fullness of Christ, who is my peace, enable me to so walk in Him that the fullness of His peace may glorify God through me. I take the shoes of peace in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by faith I will walk in them this day.



# THE PERIL OF WRONG THINKING

## Put on the Shield and Helmet

The one who scatters has come up against you. Man the fortress, watch the road; strengthen your back, summon all your strength. Nahum 2:1

Taking up the SHIELD OF FAITH is a defensive action which uses specific truths From God's Word to counteract the devil's lies and accusations. When the enemy attacks, the shield extinguishes the lie or accusation with an appropriate truth or promise that you choose to believe instead of what the enemy said. What is so awesome about the shield is that apparently there's not a single lie or accusation that we can't extinguish. The Word says we will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. Only God can choose to let a missile through our shield when we have it up.

The Roman soldier had a large shield, made of iron, and covered with layers of leather. He soaked the shield in water before the battle began. When flaming darts hit the shield, the water extinguished them! It was also a practice of warfare at that time to lob fiery missiles into cities, over their walls of protection. When a lot of people had to get involved in fire-fighting, there were fewer defenders for the city and the enemy could overtake it more easily. Discuss how this sort of analogy fits in with the fires you have to put out in your own life.

When we take up the shield of faith, there are several important elements to be discussed. First, our faith is only useful if it is placed in someone who is able to deliver. In our times, many people have misplaced faith. When this happens, the Holy Spirit calls us back into alignment with God's teachings. Faith in and of itself can provide no protection if the object of the faith is faulty.

It is also possible for a Christian to misappropriate his faith and "put God to the test. Describe ways this might happen.

The shield of faith, in its fullest meaning, is the sovereign omnipresence of God. Read the following verses and record what you learn about the shield:

Genesis 15:1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Deuteronomy 33:29 \_\_\_\_\_

The Psalms contain more than a dozen references to the fact that God Himself is our shield. Through faith, we are aware of the presence of the Lord between us and the enemy. Note the following things about the shield:

What percentage of the fiery missiles of the enemy can be extinguished? \_\_\_\_\_

Who does the extinguishing? \_\_\_\_\_

We must actively participate in warfare! The shield's protection is something we must take and use on a daily basis.

Although we have said it before, repetition can be worthwhile! **SATAN'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS TO GET US TO SIN.** His primary target is our mind (sometimes scripturally referred to as the "heart.") Sin doesn't originate in our actions. It starts in our minds. If we don't learn to control our thoughts, we'll find ourselves ensnared by the devil.

We must put on the **HELMET OF SALVATION**, the assurance of salvation, and the confidence that salvation brings. To put on the helmet is to know with certainty that you belong to Jesus and to actively embrace your position in Christ. You realize that you belong to God and the enemy cannot crush you, touch you, or do anything without permission from the Father. When the enemy "seems" to gain the upper hand, or "seems" victorious, remember that Jesus Christ will lead us in ultimate triumph and that none of these events can separate us from the love of God.

The helmet covers three aspects of salvation:

**I HAVE BEEN SAVED:** Justification.

**I AM BEING SAVED:** Sanctification.

**I WILL BE SAVED:** Glorification.

The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Christ and He will rule forever and ever. Hallelujah! Read the following verses and record what you learn.



I Corinthians 2:16 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Timothy 1: 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Have you felt depression settle in like a dark, rainy morning? Have doubts assailed you--you wondered if you were worth anything or if God would ever talk to you? Do you have a minus 10 self image? Do you hate who or what you are, what's been done to you? Does being in control of your body give you a sense of power? Do you feel like a failure as a mate, parent, son, daughter, child of God? Has someone you loved failed or hurt you? Do you want to throw up your hands and say, "what's the use?"

Do many thoughts clamor for attention? Does vengeance keep pushing its way through, and its plan for getting even? Have you thought of just ending it all?

**IT'S WAR! YOU'RE IN WARFARE!** Get up, get dressed, call your commanding officer. Ask Him to bring to your mind His commandments and precepts. Yell out His promises! Bring your thoughts captive! Philippians 4:8 them!

Read the following verses and record what you learn.

Philippians 4:8 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (note the context) \_\_\_\_\_

I Thessalonians 5:8-9 \_\_\_\_\_

Just when we feel the most lost and forsaken, just when the enemy seems to be winning, just when the storm is heaviest, the hope of salvation comes to lead us back to safety. If the helmet of salvation is covering our minds, we need never lose hope. We always know God is going to come. He knows where we are. He has promised never to leave or forsake us. God has provided the helmet of salvation. We must take it. We must not passively assume our salvation, but aggressively take up the person of Christ, His mind, His Word, His power, His presence. The emphasis in warfare is not in being saved from our sins, since this happened at justification. The emphasis is on what is available to us since we have been saved.

**PUTTING ON THE HELMET** Heavenly Father, I take by faith the helmet of salvation. I recognize that my salvation is the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. I cover my mind with Him. I desire that He put His mind within me. Let my thoughts be His thoughts. I open my mind fully and only to the control of the Lord Jesus Christ. Replace my own selfish and sinful thoughts with His. I reject every projected thought of Satan and his demons and take instead the mind of Christ. Grant me wisdom to discern thoughts that are from the world, my old sin nature, and Satan's kingdom. I praise You, Father, that I may know the mind of Christ as I hide Your Word in my heart and mind. Open my heart to love Your Word. Grant me the ability to memorize portions of it. May Your Word be ever over my mind like a helmet of strength, which Satan's projected thoughts cannot penetrate. Forgive me for my neglect, my failure to aggressively take the salvation always available to me. Help me to fulfill the discipline of daily duty to appropriate Your salvation. I lay these requests before You in the name of my precious savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**TAKING UP THE SHIELD** Father, I take by faith the protection of the shield of faith. I count on Your presence to surround me and protect me from Satan's flaming missiles. Grant me the grace to accept Your refining purpose in allowing any of Satan's missiles to pass through the shield, and even to praise You for it. Help me to concentrate upon Your presence and not the enemy's arrows. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I claim the protection of the holy angels to guard and shield me from the assaults of Satan's kingdom. Send ministering angels to interfere with the strategy of Satan to harm me and my family. I appropriate the victory of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and hold it against the advances of the evil one. With gratitude and praise, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I rejoice in Your victory.

#### **EXTRA READING**

Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-23 and record the specific things Jehoshaphat did and the order in which he did them. \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following verses: Proverbs 4:23; Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 15:18-19; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Philipians 4:8. Write a brief summary of what you learn about the mind in these verses:



## THE "RHEMA" WORD TAKE UP THE SPIRIT'S SWORD

The believer essentially has two offensive weapons to use against the enemy. They are the Word of God and prayer. The responsibility of every believer is to carry the battle to the enemy and invade his gates. You cannot do that without a proper emphasis on the offensive weapons.

Notice that the sword is the last on the list of armor parts. We are not ready to use our aggressive weapon against Satan's kingdom until all of the other parts of the armor are in place. The sword is listed last as a warning against presumptuous, foolhardy warfare. In our bold view of "invincible warfare we must never forget who our enemy is. He is the most powerful of all created beings. He was a formidable foe to even Michael, the archangel." (see Jude 9) Mark Bubeck, Overcoming the Adversary. This verse comes in a section warning those who "reject authority and slander celestial beings."

Even in his encounter with Satan, Jesus resisted the devil with dignity and proper respect for his created role. Acts 19:13-20 gives an illustration of people who went presumptuously into battle with the enemy. They were overcome by a wicked spirit and severely beaten. The message should be clear--one cannot trifle with Satan's kingdom. A careless, unprepared advance against Satan's kingdom may prove disastrous. This is why we must be firmly rooted in the word and have our armor on. Then, and only then, are we ready to take up our offensive weapon.

The sword of the Spirit is the "*rhema*" word of God. This is not a reference to the entire Bible. The Greek word used in Ephesians 6:17 is "*rhema*" and not "*logos*". Both words are used to describe the Word of God. "Logos" denotes the expression of thought and the Personal Word, i.e. Jesus. "*Rhema*" denotes that which is spoken, what is uttered in speech or writing." The distinction of "*rhema*" is in the injunction to take "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," not a reference to the whole Bible, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need.

One of the obvious requirements for using the sword is to know the Word! Devout Jews memorized the first five books of the Old Testament. Jesus refuted the devil with scriptures. Besides knowing the scripture, there are other requirements.

Read 2 Timothy 2:15 and record what you learn. \_\_\_\_\_

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The word for "sword" in Ephesians 6 is "*machaira*" and means the short, straight sword used by a Roman soldier. It was used for hand-to-hand combat and it took skill to use. The sword, "*machaira*," hung from a scabbard on the belt. The sword symbolizes a specific verse or segment of the truth needed in a particular conflict with the enemy. This is what Jesus used when Satan tempted Him.

We can see that it is critical to become skilled in the teachings of the Word. Everything must be brought into line with what the Word teaches. We must not go off into battle unskilled in the use of our sword. Then we can defend ourselves by speaking aloud God's truth.

**"Why is it so important to speak God's Word in addition to believing it and thinking it? Because Satan is a created being and he doesn't perfectly know what you're thinking. By observing you, he can pretty well tell what you are thinking, just as any student of human behavior can. But he doesn't know what you're going to do before you do it. He can put thoughts into your mind, and he will know whether you buy his lie by how you behave." Neil Anderson, Bondage Breaker.**

Satan can influence your thoughts, but he can't read your mind. "The two most common misconceptions about Satan are that he can read your mind and that he knows the future."

Only God knows the thoughts and intentions of your mind and only He knows The future. Do not ascribe divine attributes to Satan.

Read Hebrews 4:12 and record what you learn: \_\_\_\_\_

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God knows our unspoken thoughts. Satan does not. If you only tell Satan and his hosts to leave with your thoughts, he won't do it because he can't hear you. You must defeat Satan by speaking out. There may be times when doing so publicly may be scary or embarrassing. But James clearly records our methodology:

James 4:7 \_\_\_\_\_

THE HOLY SPIRIT is behind the sword of the Spirit. He is the one who makes our sword effective in battle. We cannot effectively use the Word of God in warfare unless the Holy Spirit is controlling us. We must remember not to resist the Holy Spirit in one area of our lives while trying to use the "sword of the



Spirit" in another. It is the Holy Spirit who appropriates the power of the sword against our enemy. If we are grieving or quenching His work in our lives in any area, Satan and his hosts will be quick to take advantage of the crack in our armor.

All spiritual victory is essentially bound to the Word of God. Read Matthew 12:22-32 and summarize what you learn. \_\_\_\_\_

Continue by reading Matthew 16:15-20. Again summarize what you learn.

We are the church. (reread Ephesians 1-2) The church is a body, made up of all those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. We have the opportunity to actually invade Satan's territory. The Greek word "*katischuo*" translated as "overcome", or "prevail" literally means "shall not be proven to be stronger." The primary purpose of Satan's gates is to protect what he claims as his own. He wants to build such strong gates that we cannot get any of what he claims away from him. But, Jesus has said that the gates of hell are not stronger than the church!

The verbal construction of binding and loosing implies that you have the authority to bind on earth whatever has already been bound in heaven and you have the authority to loose on earth what has already been loosed in heaven. To rephrase it, believers have Christ's power and authority so that they can execute the Father's will on earth.

When we pray and resolve to stand, the Lord will show himself strong. We have the authority to resist evil.

**REALIZE YOUR POSITION IN CHRIST Ephesians 2:6**

**PRAY; REPENT OF KNOWN SIN; ASK FOR GOD'S WISDOM James 1:5,6**

**ASK FOR DISCERNMENT 1 John 2:20,27**

**RELY ON THE SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS' NAME Philippians 2:9-11**

**RELY ON CHRIST'S ATONING BLOOD Revelation 12:11, Colossians 1:13-20**

**REMOVE THE GROUND OF OPPRESSION** Get rid of moral compromise, deception and exploitation of vulnerabilities in others

**WE ARE ABLE TO STAND!**  
**WE ARE EQUIPPED TO STAND!**

When the enemy attacks the truth of God's Word, you have the belt of truth.

When the enemy tries to lead you into sin or remind you of sins you've already confessed, you have the breastplate of righteousness.

When the enemy wants to cause enmity between you and others, you have the shoes of peace.

When the enemy tries to cause doubt and fear, take up your shield of faith.

When the enemy wants you to doubt your salvation or cause you to question your position in Christ, put on the helmet of salvation.

Aggressively meet the enemy with the sword of the Spirit. Keep in communication with your commander in prayer.

#### **TAKE UP THE SWORD**

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I lay hold of the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. I embrace its inerrant message of truth and power. I ask the Holy Spirit to guide me into a true understanding of the message of the Word, so that I handle it accurately. I ask the Holy Spirit to bring to my memory those portions of the Word that I need to go forward in spiritual warfare. Grant me the discipline and dedication to memorize the Word and to saturate my mind with its truth and power. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, grant me the wisdom to apply the Word against the enemy. May I use the Word to defeat Satan and to advance the cause of Christ into the very realm that Satan claims.

#### **EXTRA READING**

Read Romans 8:28-30 and Ephesians 6:18-20. Discuss the warfare aspect of prayer.

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## TEMPTED TO DO IT OUR WAY THE LURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND POWER

"Any ministry that turns on the light has to expect opposition." Neil Anderson

During this study, we have taken considerable time to lay a groundwork of truth on which to stand in confrontations with the enemy. From this point onward in the study, we will turn our attention to practical applications of what we have learned, and to sharing experiences and opportunities.

Frequently, those who begin in absolute earnest in their stand for righteousness and against evil find that their enthusiasm wanes over time. They don't intend to get into trouble, but like the little lost sheep, they just wander off a little at a time. Soon they are in such a state that the shepherd alone can get them back into the fold. This happens because Christians are spiritually alive, but the flesh, those ingrained, self-centered habits and patterns that were learned before conversion, contest our commitment to walk in the Spirit. Temptation is essentially an invitation to live independently from God. (see Philippians 4:19)

Most of us aren't tempted to commit obvious sin like rape, murder, or robbery. Satan knows that we will see that these things are wrong. Rather, he begins to tempt us to take something good beyond the boundaries that God establishes. Like the frog in the kettle, the heat is turned up in the pot of temptation so slowly that we don't realize we're in hot water and past the boundary of God's will. For example:

- ❑ enjoying food becomes gluttony
- ❑ self-respect becomes self-centeredness
- ❑ communication becomes gossip
- ❑ generosity becomes wastefulness
- ❑ anger becomes rage
- ❑ cautiousness becomes unbelief

It is important to keep a mind that is ever alert to the ways that false thinking and false knowledge can creep into our lives. We must take our thoughts captive, as we have discussed before. But, this is not enough. We must also pursue true knowledge.

Read the following verses and record what you learn about true knowledge.

John 8:32 \_\_\_\_\_

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Hosea 4:6 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 11: 52 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 16:19 \_\_\_\_\_

Compare what you learned in these verses to the following verses which give insight into false knowledge:

I Timothy 6:20 \_\_\_\_\_

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Corinthians 10:5 \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Corinthians 2:14 \_\_\_\_\_

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Our goal as believers is to move toward a deep personal knowledge of God. Our faith should be securely grounded on a loving relationship with God. 1 John 2:15-17 describes three channels that Satan uses to move us away from the strength of true knowledge and into the power of sin.

Read I John 2:15-17 and identify the three areas of sin: \_\_\_\_\_

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**LUST OF THE FLESH (ANIMAL APPETITES, CRAVINGS, PASSIONS)**

- DRAWS US AWAY FROM GOD'S WILL (Galatians 5:16)
- DESTROYS OUR DEPENDENCE ON GOD (John 15:5)  
    'the woman saw that the tree was good for food" Genesis 3:6

**LUST OF THE EYES (SELFISHNESS, SELF-INTEREST)**

- DRAWS US AWAY FROM GOD'S WORD (Matthew 16)



- DESTROYS OUR CONFIDENCE IN GOD (John 15:7)  
 "and that it was a delight to the eyes..." Genesis 3:6

**PRIDE OF LIFE (SELF PROMOTION, SELF-EXALTATION)**

- DRAWS US AWAY FROM WORSHIP OF GOD (1 Peter 5:5-11)
- DESTROYS OUR OBEDIENCE TO GOD (I John 15:8-10)  
 "and that the tree was desirable to make one wise." Genesis 3:6

Reread Matthew 16:19, Matthew 18:18, and John 20:23. Do these verses suggest that the church has the power to bind or loose or forgive whomever it wishes? The Catholic church has taken the position that the pope can determine such authority and communicate it to the people via the priests. Some evangelicals in the positive confession movement also believe that they have the authority to bind and loose whatever they will.

In fact, Jesus himself seems to have renounced such thinking when tempted to throw Himself down from the top of the temple. He responded, "you shall not put the Lord your God to the test." Matthew 4:7. God is under obligation only to Himself to keep His Word and His covenant with mankind. God communicates with His church in such a way that it may have the keys to the kingdom. However, no one person can claim perfect discernment, or a totally renewed mind, or a totally pure heart. We are all in process. This is why two or three gathered together in His name can hold each other accountable and confirm what God is saying.

Since we don't minister in our authority, but in God's authority, Paul can say, "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might." (Ephesians 6:10) If we act only by God's authority, it only follows that what we do will be limited by God's will.

**LIMITATIONS** Read the following verses and discuss how we are limited in binding and loosing:

Romans 13:1-7 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 12:1 (Compare with James 4:7,8) \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 4:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_

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Summarize what you have learned about the importance of listening for God's will before moving into spiritual confrontations with the enemy. List the avenues God may use to reveal His will to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPEARANCES CAN DECEIVE DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU SEE AND HEAR

In previous lessons, we looked at the importance of accurately handling the truths about the scripture that we have learned during the past weeks. Last week, we looked at "gnosis," that is, accumulated facts, synthesized and stored in our minds. This week we will turn our attention to "*epignosis*," that is, knowledge that is discerned and acknowledged. Both sorts of knowledge are important for the believer to accurately handle the Word of Truth.

Read Philippians 1:9-11 and record what you learn: \_\_\_\_\_

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Compare with Colossians 1:9 \_\_\_\_\_

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From these verses, we can understand that every Christian is to be an alert discerner. This does not mean that every Christian will have the charism that enables one to discern spirits. The gift of discerning of spirits has to do with the happenings in the spiritual realm. A person with this gift should be more aware of actions and interactions of spiritual forces. However, all believers are exhorted to exercise some measure of discernment in the Christian walk. It is essential to lifestyle spiritual warfare.

When we think of terms like "false prophets" and "false teachers," we tend to think of gurus and mystics, cult leaders, or others obviously outside the boundaries of Christianity. But, Peter wrote extensively regarding false teachers who operate within the church. Read 2 Peter 2:1-20 and record what you learn. \_\_\_\_\_

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Such people operate within the church even to this day, disguised as workers of righteousness. Notice that the lure of false teachers is not primarily doctrine. What is it about them that attracts people?

Peter reveals two criteria by which we can identify false teachers. **FIRST**, immorality of some sort **may** be involved. It may not be easily seen, but will eventually surface in their lives. (2 Corinthians 11:15). **SECOND**, they may

despise authority, having an independent spirit, refusing to answer to anybody. They won't submit to the authority of elders or leaders of the church.

In addition to false prophets or teachers, scripture warns us against deceptive spirits that come into the church. The following will help with thinking through such issues:

**ASK THE QUESTION** In spiritual matters, a strange paralysis often develops in the church. Christians hesitate to question anything for fear of grieving the Spirit of God and contributing to dissension and division. But God actually does intend for Christians to question some things. Read the following verses and record what you learn:

I Thessalonians 5:21 \_\_\_\_\_

1 John 4: 1 \_\_\_\_\_

1 John 2:18 \_\_\_\_\_

We must stop accepting everything that happens in church as originating from the Holy Spirit and stop believing that everything done in the name of Jesus is necessarily authored by Him. It is not carnal or unspiritual to ask the question; in fact, failure to do so will short-circuit the process of discernment.

**SIDE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT** Scripture warns us not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19). But there is also a danger that we may become so preoccupied with discerning that we fail to see the overall view of what God is doing. There may be groups of Christians who do things differently than we do. Read Luke 9:50 and record what you learn:

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**RECOGNIZE THE MEANING OF CONFUSION** I Corinthians 14:33 tells us that "God is not the author of confusion." The author of confusion must then be either the flesh or the devil. Therefore, we can say with authority that we oppose confusion because it is certainly not from God. But we cannot say that all order necessarily comes from God.

**THINK CAREFULLY** Many scriptures are directed to the mind. We have looked at many of them already. We must also understand that Christians are magnificent, creative thinkers.



Discerning Christians must not despise the educational disciplines. The ability to reason and logically deduce are God-given gifts which quicken the mind and propel us toward greater understanding. At the same time, we must not become so enamored with education and logic that we are unable to believe anything that is supernatural and not logically explained. To pursue education as an end unto itself is wrong; however, the Christian who appreciates and welcomes the mental processes is likely to be more discerning.

**KEEP THE CHURCH IN MIND** We studied Matthew 16:18, where Jesus said, "I will build my church." The church is marvelously diverse, tenacious, and durable. Although heresies and schisms have arisen, and persecutions have occurred, the body of believers has grown. A key attitude in discernment is to ask the question, "What does this teaching (or idea, etc.) do to the church? Does it build it up, tear it down, threaten it, divide it, or bless it?" It is valid to realize that creative tensions sometimes are for the benefit of the church. But something that willfully fails to build the church must be looked at very carefully.

**MONITOR HOLINESS** Hebrews 12:14 tells us that "without holiness, no one will see the Lord." 2 Corinthians 7:1 urges us to be "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Many discerning decisions can be made about many issues by simply asking, "Does this attitude (action, practice, etc) contribute to personal holiness in the life of the believer?"

**KNOW THE WORD** All questions must finally be examined in light of what the Bible says because it is the pulsating heart of Christian discernment. Read Acts 17: 11 and see what the Berean church did. \_\_\_\_\_

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**BOUNCE IT OFF ANOTHER BELIEVER.** Since the body of Christ is made of many members, and since no one has all of the gifts, an interdependence exists. We obtain discernment from one another. Some spiritual gifts such as word of wisdom, and word of knowledge, many times contribute very directly to discernment, as does the charism of discerning spirits.

Read I Kings 3:9 and discuss the motive for discernment. \_\_\_\_\_

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True discernment is never to promote self or to secure an advantage over another person--even an enemy. Discernment (*diakrino*) means only to make a distinction. Christian discernment has one motive--to

distinguish right from wrong so that wrong can be eliminated and right can be promoted.

Discernment is not a function of the mind; it's a function, of the Holy Spirit in union with our soul/spirit. When the Spirit sounds a warning, our mind, designed to deal with objectivity, may not be able to perceive what's wrong. In fact, if you try to interpret the warning objectively, you may miss the point entirely. Rather, when you discern that something is wrong, stop and pray. Ask God to help. Then allow God to bring conviction as only He can.

Besides the deception of false prophets or teachers, and the deception of evil spirits, scripture warns us against self-deception. The Word reveals several patterns of behavior through which Christians become vulnerable to self-deception.

**WE DECEIVE OURSELVES WHEN WE HEAR THE WORD BUT DON'T DO IT.** James 1:22; 1 Peter 1:13.

**WE DECEIVE OURSELVES WHEN WE SAY WE HAVE NO SIN.** (1 John 1:8)

**WE DECEIVE OURSELVES WHEN WE THINK WE ARE WISE IN THIS AGE.** (1 Corinthians 3:18,19, Romans 1:22, 1 Corinthians 2:16)

**WE DECEIVE OURSELVES WHEN WE THINK WE ARE RELIGIOUS BUT Do NOT BRIDLE OUR TONGUE** (James 1:26)

**WE DECEIVE OURSELVES WHEN WE THINK WE WILL NOT REAP WHAT WE SOW.** (Galatians 6:7)

**WE DECEIVE OURSELVES WHEN WE THINK THE UNRIGHTEOUS WILL INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.** (1 Corinthians 6:6-10)

**WE DECEIVE OURSELVES WHEN WE THINK WE CAN CONTINUALLY ASSOCIATE WITH BAD COMPANY AND NOT BE CORRUPTED.** (1 Corinthians 15:33)

EXTRA READING Read all of the scriptures above that deal with self-deception. Record any areas where the enemy may have deceived you. Confess them to God. How will this help you in standing against the enemy in the future?



## CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION

It is staggering to realize all that God has done in order to provide for our ability to stand firm in the fact of attack from the enemy. God has proven Himself to be sovereign and wise, a God who is totally trustworthy! If we are going to learn to honor God in times of attack and adversity, we must trust Him. There is more at stake than just our own peace during trials or difficulties. The honor of God should be our primary concern!

There are responses that show when we are trusting God. Today, to end our study this semester, we will look at some of them.

### THANKSGIVING

1 Thessalonians 5:18 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Obviously, giving thanks during times of adversity or spiritual attack is not a natural virtue. It is a fruit of the Spirit which the unbeliever does not understand. One of the most forthright rebukes against mankind is offered by Paul in Romans 1:21. Read this verse and record what you learn: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Giving thanks admits dependence. Read the story of the lepers in Luke 17:11-19. Record what you learn: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Often our problem is deeper than just forgetfulness. We have a spirit of ingratitude because of our sin nature. Of course, we don't have so much trouble with the need to give thanks when the circumstances are good (someone has been healed.) But, we have much more difficulty when the circumstances are bad.

Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Romans 8:28 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Do a word study on "purpose." \_\_\_\_\_  
Thanksgiving is a response to the trustworthiness of God.

## **WORSHIP**

Worshipping God in times of adversity also shows our response to God's trustworthiness. Read Job 1:20-21 and record what you learn: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Worship involves a two-directional view. Looking upward, we see God in majesty, power, glory, and sovereignty. Looking inward, we see our dependence on God and our sinfulness in His sight. We see God as sovereign Creator and ourselves as the creature. We deserve nothing from God but eternal judgment.

Read Matthew 20:15 and record what you learn: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

God has absolute power to do what pleases Him and absolute control over His actions. Read Exodus 33:19 and record what you learn: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Worship in times of adversity implies an attitude of acceptance on our part of God's right to do what He pleases. It is an acknowledgment that anything we have is a gift of sovereign grace and may be taken away at His pleasure.

God does not wield His sovereign power tyrannically. God acts toward us in love, mercy, and grace. As we worship before Him, we can bow in confidence that His power is used for us and not against us.

## **HUMILITY**

Humility is a response to adversity and trials as well as its fruit. Read 1 Peter 5:6-7 and record what you learn: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Compare to 2 Corinthians 12:7 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Also compare to James 4:6 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **FORGIVENESS**

Adversity and trials often come because of the deliberate hurtful actions of others. The natural tendency is to harbor resentment and seek revenge. Forgiving shows that we have learned two important truths:

1. **We are all sinners.** Believers are forgiven by the grace of God. We have all acted selfishly or uncaringly at some time.

Read Ecclesiastes 7:21-22 recording your thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Compare with Ephesians 4:32 \_\_\_\_\_

2. **The hurtful person is just the instrument of the hurt.** Read the following verse and record what you learn:

Lamentations 3:37 \_\_\_\_\_

## **PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE**

Humility, worship, thanksgiving, and forgiveness do not mean that we should not pray for deliverance from the adversities and attacks that we experience. Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Matthew 26:39 \_\_\_\_\_

Job 1:12; 2:6 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 22:31 \_\_\_\_\_

James 4:7 \_\_\_\_\_

**SEEK GOD'S GLORY**

Above all, our response to adversity, trials, and attacks should be to seek God's glory in the circumstances. Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Philippians 1:14-17 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 1:18 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**EXTRA WORK**

Think through each of the appropriate responses that we have considered in this lesson. Compare them to the issues of spiritual warfare that we have discussed in this class. How might each response apply to your own personal circumstances? Record your thoughts and prayers here: \_\_\_\_\_

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**APPENDIX**  
**Kinsman Redeemer Outline**

### **WHY ONE NEEDS A REDEEMER**

1. Had become enslaved – kinsman redeemer paid the price to redeem the enslaved relative
2. Had lost control of land – kinsman redeemer paid the price to redeem the land
3. Family murder – kinsman redeemer served as the judicial executioner of the murderer
4. Had produced no heirs – kinsman redeemer married the one without heirs and produced heirs

### **WHO COULD SERVE AS A GA'AL**

The nearest blood relative who: (Leviticus 25:48)

1. Was willing to pay the price (would use his own resources to pay the price)
2. Was able to pay the price (was qualified i.e. sufficient resources and not himself a slave: Ruth 4:6)

### **MANKIND (ADAM) NEEDED A REDEEMER**

1. After the fall, mankind was enslaved to sin (John 8:34: Jesus answered them, "truly, truly I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.")
2. Mankind had lost dominion of the earth (John 12:31 "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out")
3. Mankind had been murdered (John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning...")
4. Because of sin, there were no heirs for the kingdom (Romans 4:14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified.)

### **HOW JESUS REDEEMED US**

1. We had no eligible kinsman to redeem mankind because no one was able (i.e. not himself enslaved to sin) Sin entered through being a descendant from Adam's seed)
2. Jesus became eligible for us by meeting the requirements:
  - a. He became a blood relative (Hebrews 2:14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same)
  - b. He was able because he wasn't born of Adam's seed and therefore was not born enslaved to sin
  - c. He was willing

### **JESUS' ACTIONS FOR US**

1. Redeemed any of enslaved mankind who choose His redemption
2. Will redeem the land over which Satan took control (Earth)
3. Will include the judicial execution of our murderer (Rev. 20:10, 14)
4. Will include marriage to those who had produced no heirs, making them His bride (the church)

### **EXAMPLES OF REDEMPTION**

Ruth and Boaz (he redeemed the land and married her) Ruth 4:1-13

Jeremiah 32:10-14 (he redeemed the land and put the deed in a jar of clay)

Articles redeemed were "sealed" as a mark of ownership and authenticity. Only the rightful purchaser could break the seal, which was both placed and broken before witnesses.

### **REDEMPTION TERMINOLOGY**

1. 2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels (referring to saved spirits in fleshly bodies)
2. Ephesians 1:13 In Him, you also after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise
3. Revelation 19:9 And he said to me, "write, 'blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And He said to me, "these are true words of God."