

Prayer – Privilege & Power Part 1

Key Verses:

Psalm 65:2 – “O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.”

Psalm 145:18 – “The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.”

James 4:8 – “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you...”

Hebrews 4:16 – “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

1 Tim. 2:8 – “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

Jude 1:20 – “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,”

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

I. PRAYER – THE VOCATION OF THE BELIEVER

- A. The Scripture Texts on the right show that the Word of God repeatedly commands us to seek the Lord in prayer. The Old and New Testaments are filled with examples of prayer and calls to prayer.
- *1 Chronicles 16:11 – “Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.”*
 - *Isaiah 55:6 – “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.”*
 - *Ephesians 6:18 – “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”*
- B. Prayer is the most important Christian discipline that a believer can learn – for without prayer, spiritual survival is impossible. Prayer is like spiritual breath – we pray or we die.
- C. If we learn to develop a steady, consistent “prayer life” in the beginning of our Christian walk, we will have less difficulty in following God and our spiritual progress will be tremendously improved.
- D. Prayer activates the strength and power that we need to overcome every obstacle and difficulty of life. Prayer, together with fasting and the Word of God, will bring us victory over every problem.

II. PRAYER - THE GREAT SPIRITUAL WEAPON

- A. The “Armor of God” is listed in Ephesians 6:14-17. However, immediately following the list of our spiritual armor, prayer is emphasized as the activating weapon that makes the rest of the arsenal effective.
- *Ephesians 6:14-18 – “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”*
- B. Prayer is the supreme spiritual weapon in the arsenal of the believer – it is unlimited in its power. It can overcome and defeat any onslaught or attack.
- *2 Cor. 10:4 – “(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”*
- C. In the Bible, great people of God became great because they knew how to pray. The people

who did mighty things for God, who had powerful ministries, and who lived holy lives, were always mighty in prayer.

- Elijah's prayer brought victory over the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. (1 Kings 18:37-38)
- Joshua's prayer caused the sun to stand still. (Joshua 10:12-14)
- King David made a daily habit of prayer. (Psalm 55:17)
- Hannah's prayer resulted in the birth of Samuel, the prophet. (1 Samuel 1:27)
- Moses prayed in intercession for Israel and they were spared. (Deuteronomy 9:25-26)
- Daniel prayed three times a day, even at the risk of his own life. (Daniel 6:10)
- Anna prayed fervently and was allowed to see the newborn Messiah. (Luke 2:36-37)

D. God is willing to answer prayer. His readiness to answer our prayers surpasses even our willingness to provide necessary things for our children. The Lord is more eager to "open" than we are to "knock".

- *Matthew 7:7-11 – "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"*

III. JESUS - OUR GREATEST EXAMPLE

A. Prayer held high priority for Jesus Christ. Scripture records that He often prayed early in the morning and sometimes prayed through the night.

- *Mark 1:35 – "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."*
- *Luke 6:12 – "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."*

B. After ministering to the multitudes, Jesus would often find a private place to spend time in prayer.

- *Mark 6:46 – "And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray."*
- *Luke 5:16 – "And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed."*

C. In the garden of Gethsemane we see the Lord's most intense praying. Jesus' triumphant victory at Calvary was actually won on His knees in Gethsemane, where He prayed, "Not my will but thine be done."

- *Luke 22:44 – "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."*
- *Hebrews 5:7 – "(Jesus) Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."*

Prayer – Privilege & Power Part 2

IV. WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

- A. There is no end to the list of things for which we should seek God in earnest prayer. Scripture gives us examples of many things for which we should pray.
1. Pray for your physical needs. (Matthew 6:11)
 2. Pray for your spiritual needs. (Matthew 26:41; Jude 1:20; James 5:13; Colossians 1:9-12)
 3. Pray for forgiveness. (Matthew 6:12)
 4. Pray for deliverance. (Matthew 6:13)
 5. Pray for your family, your friends and acquaintances – all people (1 Timothy 2:1)
 6. Pray for your enemies. (Matthew 5:44)
 7. Pray for your church, your pastors and spiritual leaders. (1 Thessalonians 5:25)
 8. Pray for your civic and governmental leaders. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
 9. Pray that the gospel would be preached freely and without restraint. (2 Thessalonians 3:1)
 10. Pray for the lost. (Romans 10:1; Matthew 9:38)
 11. Pray for ministers, preachers, and missionaries around the world. (Ephesians 6:18-20)
 12. Pray for those who are sick. (James 5:16)
 13. Pray for those who are oppressed, afflicted or in hardship. (James 5:13)
- B. Again, this list mentions only a few of the things for which we should pray. All of our requests and petitions should be brought to the throne of God in prayer – and the list of needs is endless.
- *Philip. 4:6 – “Be careful (fearful) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”*
 - *1 John 5:15 – “And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”*
- C. After we have prayed for all the situations that we “know”, we can also pray for those things that we do not “know”. By praying “in the Spirit” or “with the Spirit” in tongues, we can pray for people and situations that are unknown to us.
- *Romans 8:26 – “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*
 - *1 Cor. 14:15 – “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also:...”*

V. HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

- A. We must pray in sincerity.
- *Matthew 23:14 – “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.”*
1. In the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, Jesus taught us that insincere prayer is worthless.
(Luke 18:9-14)
 2. Mindless repetition, repeating “holy” words, and reciting memorized prayers over and over again are of no real value.
 - *Matthew 6:7 – “(Jesus said) But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”*
 3. Our prayers are not measured just by length of time, but also by intensity. It is not only the *quantity* of our prayers that matters, but the *quality*. True prayer is that which is borne

in the sincerity of the heart.

- *Jeremiah 29:13 – “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”*

B. We must pray in faith.

- *Matthew 21:22 – “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”*
- *James 1:6-7 – “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”*

C. We must pray according to the will of God.

- *Luke 22:42 – “(Jesus’ prayer) Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”*
- *1 John 5:14 – “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:”*
- *James 4:3 – “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss (badly), that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”*

D. We must pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

- *John 14:13-14 – “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”*
- *John 16:26 – “(Jesus said) At that day ye shall ask in my name:...”*
- *Colossians 3:17 – “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”*

E. We must pray persistently.

- *Luke 18:1 – “And he (Jesus) spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always (at all times) to pray, and not to faint (become weary of praying);”*
 - Jacob wrestled with the angel in prayer until his prayer was answered. (Genesis 32:24-28)
 - Daniel prayed for twenty-one days until his prayer was answered. (Daniel 10:12-13)
 - Jesus taught the parable of the Persistent Friend. (Luke 11:5-10)
 - Jesus taught the parable of the Importunate Widow. (Unjust Judge) (Luke 18:1-8)
1. Importunity is the ability to hold on, to press on, to wait with unrelaxed grasp; with restless desire. It is a dogged determination that will not stop, will not quit, will not let go.
 2. In prayer, we must learn to P.U.S.H. – **P**ray **U**ntil **S**omething **H**appens.
 - *Colossians 4:2 – “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;”*

F. We must pray fervently.

- *James 5:16 – “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”*
1. The words, “effectual fervent” are translated from one Greek word, “energeo” which means to be active, to be forceful, vigorous, dynamic, and energetic.
 2. Effective prayer is not weak, puny, whiney, hesitant, or timid – it is mighty, forceful and powerful!

G. We must pray with thanksgiving

- *Philip. 4:6 – “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”*
- *Colossians 4:2 – “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;”*
- *1 Thes. 5:17-18 – “Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*

1. Thanksgiving is a major ingredient of prayer. Do we dare to offer requests for “present burdens” before we offer thanks for “past blessings”? Thanksgiving is the proper way to approach the throne of God.
 - *Psalm 100:4 – “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”*

H. We must pray both privately and publicly.

1. Jesus gave us instructions that we should pray in private or secret – we should not pray just to be noticed or “seen of men”. We should each have our own place of prayer that is personal and private for us alone.
 - *Matthew 6:5-6 – “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”*
 2. However, we are also instructed to pray in public, with the church and with our brothers and sisters. (Acts 12:12; Acts 16:13)
 - *Acts 4:31 – “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”*
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Prayer – Privilege & Power Part 3

VI. HOW WILL GOD ANSWER OUR PRAYERS?

A. "Request Granted"

1. Sometimes God answers our prayers immediately. The Bible is full of instances where God instantly answered the prayers of His people in the exact manner in which they desired.
 - *Isaiah 65:24 – "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."*

B. "Request Granted, But Not Yet"

1. God may accept our request, but not necessarily our timing. God does all things according to His perfect plan and purpose – and this includes His perfect timing.
 - *Eccles. 3:1 – "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:"*

"Never think that God's delays are God's denials. Hold on; hold fast; hold out. Patience is genius." - Comte de Buffon

2. Waiting upon the Lord is an important part of prayer. We must be importunate, persistent, and diligent. If our prayer is in accordance with the will of God, it will come to pass in God's perfect time!
 - *Psalms 27:14 – "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."*

C. "Request Granted, But Not As You Expect"

1. Sometimes God says "Yes" to our requests, but He answers them differently than we anticipated.
2. God's thoughts and ways are much different than our own. We think we know and understand a situation and how it should be resolved, but God always knows what is actually best.
 - *Isaiah 55:8-9 – "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*
3. We should be careful not to dictate to God "how" to answer our prayers. Again, we must pray, "Not my will, but thine be done." Submit your petition to God and let Him handle it according to His will.

D. "Request Denied"

1. Sometimes God says "No". The apostle Paul requested three times that God remove a difficult and painful situation from his life – but God refused Paul's request.
 - *2 Corinthians 12:8-9 – "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

- E. If we are praying to God in the correct manner, He will always answer our prayer. God's answer may not always be the answer that we want, but it will be the exact answer that we need.

VII. HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

A. Satan.

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1. Our greatest hindrance to prayer is the power of the enemy, Satan. He will have his minions do all that is within their power to keep us from praying.
2. He will try to deceive us into concentrating on our problems rather than focusing our attention on the One who is the answer to all of our problems.
3. He will try to keep us so occupied with the “busy-ness” of life that our prayer time is pushed aside until it is too late. The apostles understood the importance of *making* time to pray.
 - *Acts 6:2-4 – “Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”*
4. We must not be ignorant of Satan's devices and schemes. We must make time to pray – every day! Setting aside a specific prayer time each day is one of the most effective ways of defeating the devil. Guard your prayer time – don't let anything or anyone infringe upon your time with God!

B. Unbelief

1. Without faith it is impossible to receive anything from the Lord.
 - *James 1:6-7 – “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”*
2. Faith is one of the conditions that Jesus said is required if we are to receive anything through prayer.
 - *Matthew 21:22 – “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”*
3. When Jesus visited his hometown, He was not able to do great works there because the people could not have faith in Him.
 - *Matthew 13:58 – “And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.”*
4. If we know that we lack faith, we must ask God to increase our faith!
 - *Mark 9:24 – “And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”*

C. Unconfessed Sin

- *1 John 3:21-22 – “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”*
1. Sin is rebellion against God's authority and disobedience to the Word of God. The Scriptures reveal that sin will hinder our prayers.
 - *Psalms 66:18 – “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”*
 - *Isaiah 59:2 – “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”*
 - *Proverbs 15:29 – “The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.”*
 - *Proverbs 28:9 – “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”*
 - *1 Peter 3:12 – “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”*
 2. God hears the prayer of repentance.
 - *2 Chronicles 7:14 – “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*

D. Improper Treatment of Others

1. How we treat others has a direct effect upon how God treats us. In Matthew 18:23-35, Jesus told the parable of the king who takes account of his servants. This parable reveals that God will deal with us according to the manner in which we deal with others.
 2. If we harbor an unforgiving spirit, our prayers will be hindered. The Bible plainly tells us if we fail to forgive, we will not be forgiven by God.
 - *Matthew 6:12,14-15 – “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*
 3. If we treat other people in ways that are contrary to the Word of God, our prayers will be hindered because we are not living in obedience to God. Even incorrect family relationships can obstruct our prayers. (1 Peter 3:7)
 4. Jesus also taught us that we should not even offer our gift at the altar (praise and worship) if we remember that a brother has something against us. We should reconcile with our brother first.
 - *Matthew 5: 23-24 – “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”*
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Prayer – Privilege & Power Part 4

VIII. THE ELEMENTS OF PRAYER

A. Thanksgiving and Praise

1. As we saw earlier, thanksgiving is the proper and correct way to approach God each time we enter into His presence.
 - *Psalm 100:4* – “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”
 - *Psalm 95:2* – “Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.”
2. Even when we are encountering difficult and painful situations, we still have so much to be thankful for. The apostle Paul provides us with one of the best examples of praising God in difficult times.
 - *Acts 16:23-25* – “And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”
3. God delights in the praises of His people, and He appreciates being thanked for all the good things He has done for us.
 - *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18* – “Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

B. Repentance

1. David, who sinned against God by committing murder and adultery, wrote one of the most beautiful psalms of repentance. (Psalm 51).
 - *Psalm 51:10* – “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”
2. Even as Holy Ghost-filled Christians, we sometimes make mistakes and fail God. Our unregenerate flesh is always at odds with our spirit. Repentance should be a part of our daily prayer.
 - *1 John 2:1* – “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:”
 - *1 John 1:9* – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

C. Supplication

1. Supplication is making petitions or requests of the Lord. We should be specific in our requests, stating exactly what we desire God to do for us. Tell Him what we desire and then conclude by saying, “Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done”.
 - *1 Tim. 2:1* – “I (Paul) exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;”
 - *Acts 1:14* – “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”
2. Making supplication and petitioning God is mentioned frequently in the New Testament. God wants us to ask Him for our needs.
 - *James 4:2* – “... ye have not, because ye ask not.”
 - *John 16:24* – “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”
 - *Ephes. 3:20* – “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,”

D. Intercession

1. Intercessory prayer is the deepest and most unselfish form of prayer. This type of prayer is characterized by terms such as "wrestling in prayer", "groanings which cannot be uttered", and "fervent, agonizing prayer".
2. The word intercession means, "to come between", or "to interpose on behalf of someone else". An individual who is engaged in intercessory prayer is beseeching God on behalf of another person.
 - Moses prayed in intercession for Israel and they were spared. (Deuteronomy 9:25-26).
 - Abraham prayed in intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 18:22-33)
 - Paul prayed in intercession for Israel. (Romans 9:1-5)
 - Paul agonized and interceded for the Galatian church. (Galatians 4:19)
3. At times, the Spirit will lead you into intercessory prayer for someone. When this occurs, you will find yourself praying in a very unique and specific manner. Intercession is a deep, agonizing, powerful prayer experience that pulls down strongholds and wins great victories.

IX. HOW DO I PRAY?

- A. The disciples of Jesus felt the need to be taught how to pray effectively.
 - *Luke 11:1 – “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”*
- B. In answer to this question, Jesus gave the disciples what has come to be known as “The Lord’s Prayer”. This prayer provides us with a pattern by which we can model our personal prayer lives.
 - *Matthew 6:9-13 – “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”*
- C. Entire books have been written on the elements of “The Lord’s Prayer” and you can benefit greatly by studying this prayer in greater detail. However, for simplicity’s sake, we will look at the basic elements and see how they apply to our own prayer experience.
- D. *“Our Father, which art in heaven”* – begin by directing your prayer to God. He is your Father, so make your prayer personal. (John 14:13-13; 15:16; 16:23-24; 16:26)
- E. *“Hallowed be thy name”* – praise before you petition. Begin your prayer with a time of worship. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and adoration! Allow plenty of time for this element of prayer.
- F. *“Thy kingdom come”* – express your personal longing for God’s kingdom to be established upon the earth.
- G. *“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”* – seek God’s will for your life and the lives of your family members and acquaintances. Ask for God’s will to be accomplished in the church locally and worldwide.
- H. *“Give us this day our daily bread”* – petition God for all your needs: spiritual, physical, emotional, etc.
- I. *“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”* – sincerely ask God to forgive you for your weaknesses and faults. None of us is perfect; each of us needs to seek God’s forgiveness

every day.

- J. "Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil" – ask the Lord to keep you from temptation and the snares of Satan.
- K. "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" – end your prayer as you began, with a time of praise, worship and thanksgiving.

X. CONCLUSION:

- A. Prayer is the believer's greatest privilege. Nothing is more powerful than prayer!
- B. The greatest thing about prayer is not learning about it – but doing it. To learn more about prayer – pray!
- C. If you have not already done so, begin your "prayer life" today. If you find it helpful, use a "Prayer Chart", a "Prayer List" or a "Prayer Clock" to help you structure your prayer time more effectively.
- D. Set aside a special time each day to be alone with God. Guard and protect that time and make sure you keep your appointment with the King of Kings each day.
- E. Remember, the discipline of prayer is a life-long process. Prayer facilitates God's plan, frustrates the Devil's power, and fulfills God's purpose.
- F. Whatever you do – pray!
- Additional Reading:
"Teach Us To Fast And Pray", Kim Johnson
"Teach Us To Pray", Annie Alford
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Fasting Part 1

Key Verses:

Joel 1:14 – “Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD.”

Daniel 9:3-4 – “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord God, and made my confession...”

I. FASTING

- A. Fasting is an important Biblical discipline. There are over 70 references to fasting in the Bible. Both Old and New Testament leaders were moved upon to fast before the Lord. Moses, Elijah, and Jesus Christ were led by the Spirit to fast for 40 days. Fasting was also a part of the New Testament church lifestyle.
- B. In this lesson, we will look at the scriptural reasons why fasting should be a regular part of our devotion and service to the Lord.

II. WHAT IS FASTING?

- A. To fast means to abstain from physical nourishment for a specific period of time. An individual can fast for a single meal, an entire day, for an extended period of many days, or simply refrain from pleasant food for a period of time.
- B. When we fast, we deliberately turn our attention from physical things to spiritual things. By refusing food, we are denying our carnal nature (*Matthew 16:24*) and concentrating on spiritual things (*Matthew 6:33*).
- C. Because America was founded upon the Judeo-Christian ethic, her national leaders have frequently utilized both prayer and fasting in their public devotion to God. The American historic record has numerous calls for national prayer and fasting.

PROCLAIMED FASTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

In 1623, William Bradford, governor of the Plymouth Colony, proclaimed a fast to entreat God to save the vital corn crops.

In 1636, a law was passed allowing the governor and his assistants "to command solemn days of humiliation by fasting...and also for thanksgiving as occasion shall be offered"

In 1774, George Washington proclaimed a national fast day to avert a possible crisis with Great Britain.

In 1798, president John Adams proclaimed a day of solemn humiliation, fasting and prayer to avoid the war crisis with France.

In the 1860's, Abraham Lincoln called for three separate days of national humiliation, prayer and fasting to help restore national peace and unity during the Civil War.

III. WHY SHOULD WE FAST?

- A. First, Jesus declared that His disciples would fast. He stated that after He ascended into heaven, fasting would become a part of His disciples' practice.
 - *Mark 2:18-20 – “And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the*

bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.“

1. In the Old Testament, fasting was part of the mourning or grieving process after the death or loss of a loved one. Fasting was also a way of mourning when tragic events occurred.
 - *1 Samuel 31:13 – “And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.”*
 - *Nehemiah 1:4 – “And it came to pass, when I heard these words (of the destruction of Jerusalem), that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,”*
 2. In Mark 2:18-20, Jesus is referring to this tradition of the “grieving” or “mourning” fast. While the bridegroom is present, the children of the bridechamber feast and celebrate, but when the bridegroom is taken from them, they mourn and fast. Since we are awaiting the return of our departed bridegroom, Jesus Christ, fasting should be part of our devotion to Him.
 3. Part of our purpose in fasting as Christians is to “mourn” our departed bridegroom; to demonstrate our longing for His return. When we fast, we should experience an increased sense of yearning and desire for our bridegroom’s return.
- B. Secondly, the first church left us an example of fasting. The scriptures give us a clear record that the disciples and early Christians fasted often – their legacy of fasting is a pattern that we should follow.
- *Acts 14:23 – “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. “*
 - *2 Cor. 6:4-5 – “But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings,”*
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Fasting Part 2

IV. FACTS ON FASTING

A. Fasting provides spiritual benefits.

1. While there are many who acclaim of the health benefits of fasting, our main purpose in fasting is a spiritual one.
2. Fasting is more than a physical event – it is a spiritual activity. Many of the spiritual benefits of fasting are examined later in this lesson.

B. Fasting is a spiritual weapon.

1. Fasting is a powerful weapon that helps us win victory over ourselves, over the influence of the world, and over the attacks of Satan.

C. Fasting should be accompanied with prayer. (1 Corinthians 7:5)

1. Fasting is the partner of faith and should always be supplemented with prayer.
2. In most cases where fasting is mentioned in the Bible, prayer is also included.

D. Fasting is a way in which we "afflict", submit, and humble ourselves before God.

1. Humbling ourselves before God is a scriptural necessity.
 - James 4:6 – "...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."
 - Matthew 23:12 – "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."
 - 1 Peter 5:6 – "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"
2. Ezra proclaimed a special fast that the people might afflict and humble themselves before God to seek His protection.
 - Ezra 8:21 – "Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance."
3. Fasting humbles both the body and the spirit. Fasting is a way in which we "afflict" our carnality, keeping our body and its desires under subjection to the Spirit.
 - 1 Cor. 9:27 – "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
4. Fasting helps us organize our priorities – placing spirit over flesh, the will of the inward man over the will of the outward man.

E. Fasting is often undertaken in times of crisis or great need.

1. The children of Israel fasted as they sought God's help against the children of Benjamin.
 - Judges 20:26 – "Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord."
2. The people of Nineveh proclaimed a fast after hearing Jonah prophesy of God's extreme displeasure.
 - Jonah 3:5 – "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."
 - Jonah 3:10 – "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."
3. Regular periods of fasting should be routine in the life of a Christian, as this helps us keep the flesh under subjection – but there are also special times of crisis, disaster, and need that call for more intense campaigns of prayer and fasting.

F. Fasting should be a part of our ongoing life of repentance.

1. Israel fasted when they repented of idolatry.

- 1 Samuel 7:6 – “And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.”
- 2. Ahab fasted when he repented of his wickedness after hearing Elijah prophesy his doom.
 - 1 Kings 21:27 – “And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.”
- 3. It is important to note that fasting is never mentioned as a necessity of initial repentance. Nowhere in scripture is it required that an individual fast before repenting, being baptized in water, or receiving the Holy Ghost.
- 4. However, when a Spirit-filled Christian has erred, made a mistake or fallen into sin, it can be appropriate for that individual to fast as he or she repents before God.

G. Fasting is a way of finding the will of God more perfectly.

1. When we need to receive specific guidance and direction for our lives, fasting brings us into closer communion with God so that we may more perfectly discover His will.
2. The church leaders in Antioch fasted as they sought God's direction.
 - Acts 13:2-3 – “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”
3. When we have important decisions and choices to make, we should seek God with prayer and fasting.

H. Fasting is a type of worship.

1. All true worship involves sacrifice. We can praise without sacrifice – but we cannot worship without sacrifice. Sacrifice means giving up something that matters to us. When we forego eating as a discipline unto God, it is a form of worship.
 - Romans 12:1-2 – “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”
- a. Our bodies are to be presented to God as an acceptable sacrifice. This involves sacrificing the desires of our flesh to fulfill the will of God.
- b. One of the strongest desires of the body is for food and nourishment. When we deny this desire for a period of time as a sacrifice unto the Lord, it is an act of genuine worship unto God.

I. Fasting is not a “hunger-strike”.

1. Fasting is not a stubborn temper-tantrum in which we attempt to force God to do what we want Him to do.
2. We are not coercing God to do our will, but instead, fasting helps us bring our will into conformity to His will.

J. Fasting is an effective spiritual weapon against the enemy.

1. While fasting does not put “pressure” on God, it can put “pressure” on our adversary, the devil.
2. As Christians, we do not fight Satan with guns, swords, or spears, but we use the arsenal of spiritual weaponry provided to us by the Lord.
 - 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 – “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds).”
3. When the disciples encountered a particular man possessed of an evil spirit, they were unable to cast the evil spirit out. When they asked why they were unable to perform this spiritual work, Jesus responded:
 - Matthew 17:21 – “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”
4. From time to time, Christians will encounter unique difficulties and problems that require the extra spiritual power and authority that can only be obtained through the discipline of fasting.

Fasting Part 3

V. HOW SHOULD WE FAST?

A. Fasting should be a personal, private devotion to God.

1. Fasting should not be a public display to draw attention to oneself – in our personal devotion, we should try to make fasting as unobtrusive and unnoticed as possible.
 - *Matthew 6:16-18 – “(Jesus said) Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”*
2. To use fasting as a “spiritual status symbol” violates its purpose – fasting is supposed to humble us, not lift us up with pride. It is against the command of Jesus Christ to be proud or smug because we fast more or longer than other people. Pride, especially spiritual pride, is an offence unto God.
3. Fasting is the inseparable partner of prayer, and accordingly, it is to be utilized in many of the same ways as prayer.
 - a. Prayer can be private and personal (*as in praying in a secret closet of prayer; Matthew 6:6*).
 - b. Prayer can be public and corporate (*as in praying in public worship services; Acts 3:1*).
4. Likewise, fasting can also be private or corporate. When a public, corporate fasting campaign is undertaken, it is impossible to keep the fast totally “secret”. The point of Jesus’ words to us is not that no one should ever know when we are fasting, but rather that we should not do things to make others notice our fasting.

B. Fasting can be undertaken by an individual or by a group of people.

1. Most of our fasting should be done on a personal, private basis.
 - *II Samuel 12:15-16, 22-23 – “... and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.”*
 - *I Kings 21:27-29 – “When Ahab heard those words, he... fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.”*
 - *Daniel 9:3 – “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer ... with fasting ...”*
 - *Luke 2:36-37 – “And there was one Anna, a prophetess ... a widow of about 44 years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.”*
 - *Acts 9:9 – (Saul of Tarsus) “... neither did eat nor drink.”*
2. However, there are also times when specific periods of prayer and fasting can be proclaimed by a spiritual leader.
 - *I Samuel 7:5-6 – “And Samuel said, Gather all Israel ... and they gathered ... and fasted ... ”*
 - *Ezra 8:21-23 – “Then I proclaimed a fast ... So we fasted and besought our God ...”*
 - *Nehemiah 9:1-3 – “... the children of Israel were assembled with fasting ...”*
 - *Joel 2:15-16 – “... sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; gather the people”*
 - *Jonah 3:5-10 – “the people ... proclaimed a fast ... from the greatest of them even to the least”*

C. Fasting should be undertaken with the right spirit and right behavior.

1. At certain times in scripture, God was highly displeased with the fasting of His people, Israel, because it was not done in sincerity and obedience.
 - *Jeremiah 14:10-12 – “Thus saith the Lord unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the Lord doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, . . . When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when*

they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them..."

2. Anything we offer unto God must be heartfelt and sincere. Worship, Christian service, prayer, or fasting can never be offered as just a repetitious ritual or mindless routine.
3. Jesus warned us that inattentive repetitions are pointless and vain.
 - *Matthew 6:7 – "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."*
4. The same is true of fasting. Jesus condemned the Pharisee who prayed aloud in arrogance and proudly announced his repetitious fasting schedule.
 - *Luke 18:12 – "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."*
5. Fasting, to be effective, must be undertaken with a sincere heart and an obedient attitude.

D. Fasting may be absolute (total, complete) or partial.

1. Most fasts in scripture were "absolute", meaning that there is absolutely no food consumed during the time of the fast.
 - *Deuteronomy 9:9, 18 – "... 40 nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water."*
 - *Ezra 10:6 – "Ezra...did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned ..."*
 - *Esther 4:16 – "Go, gather together all the Jews ... and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day . . ."*
 - *Acts 9:9 – "... and neither did eat nor drink"*
 - *Acts 27:33 – "... This is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing."*
2. It is very important to note here that reason and judgment should be exercised when undertaking any fast.
 - a. Health concerns should always be addressed and regarded when fasting. Each person must fast in a way that is compatible with his or her specific health situations.
 - b. Lengthy and extended fasts should only be undertaken with extreme care and should be monitored diligently. The body can exist without water for only a very short time.
 - c. The 40-day fasts of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah were most certainly supernatural events and we should not attempt to copy them. We have no record of the apostles or other disciples fasting for 40 days.
 - d. We must remember that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; and we are instructed to properly take care of our bodies and not to neglect or abuse them. To damage the body through fasting is not God's will for us.
 - *1 Corinthians 3:16-17 – "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile (spoil, destroy) the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."*
3. A fast may also be partial, meaning that restrictions are placed upon the diet for a specific period of time. Certain foods are avoided in this type of fast.
 - *Daniel 10:3 – "I ate no pleasant bread (foodstuff, provisions), neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."*
 - a. This type of fast, commonly known as "Daniel's Fast", afflicts and humbles the flesh by avoiding all pleasant or enjoyable food and drink.
 - b. When fasting in this manner, individuals drink only water, eat no meat, and consume only plain foods that do not gratify the senses (e.g. plain bread, unsweetened grain cereals, oatmeal, unseasoned vegetables, etc.). In this manner the nourishment needs of the body are supplied, but eating is not an enjoyable experience.
 - c. Following Daniel's example, this type of partial fast is usually undertaken for an extended period of time, most typically three weeks (21 days).

E. Fasting can also be coupled with separating ourselves from other physical comforts, pleasures, and distractions in order to be "alone" with God.

- *1 Cor. 7:5 – (Husbands and wives) Defraud (deprive) ye not one the other, except it be*

with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency (self-restraint).

- When Jesus fasted for 40 days, he separated himself into the wilderness. (Mark 1:12-13)
- When Moses fasted for 40 days, he separated himself up to Mt. Sinai. (Exodus 34:28; Deut. 9:9)
- Elijah fasted for 40 days and separated himself unto Mt. Horeb (Sinai). (1 Kings 19:8)

F. Fasts may be undertaken for various periods of time.

- One night – *Daniel 6:18*
 - One day – *1 Samuel 7:6, 2 Samuel 1:12; 3:35, Judges 20:26*
 - Three days – *Esther 4:16, Acts 9:9*
 - Seven days – *1 Samuel 31:13, 2 Samuel 12:16-23*
 - Fourteen days – *Acts 27:33-34*
 - Twenty-one days – *Daniel 10:3*
 - Forty days – *Exodus 24:18; 34:28, Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, 25-29; 10:10, 1 Kings 19:8, Matthew 4:2, Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2*
1. There is no required length of fasting recorded in scripture. Each of us should make fasting a regular part of our devotional lives as we feel led of the Spirit to do so.

VI. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF FASTING?

- A. After Moses’s fast, He received the commandments of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 9:11)
- B. After Elijah’s fast, he heard the Word of the Lord. (1 Kings 19:8-9)
- C. After the city of Ninevah’s fast, deliverance came and they were spared destruction. (Jonah 3:10)
- D. After Jesus’ fast, He returned in "the power of the Spirit". (Luke 4:14)
- E. After Cornelius’ fast, he received a message from God through an angel and through the apostle Peter. (Acts 10:30)
- F. After the apostles gave themselves to prayer, fasting, and the Word, they turned their world upside down. (2 Corinthians 6:4-5; Acts 17:6)

Fasting is a powerful spiritual tool ordained by God to help us bring ourselves into subjection to His Spirit, to defeat the devil, and to win victories over troubling situations in our lives. In fasting, we worship God, draw closer to Him and express our desire for His soon return. Until our bridegroom returns for us, we, the children of the bridechamber, should fast unto the Lord. When He returns, we will celebrate and feast with Him at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

- Additional Reading:
“Teach Us To Fast And Pray”, Kim Johnson

Spiritual Warfare Part 1

Key Verses:

1 Timothy 6:12 – “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

Ephesians 6:11-18 – “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

You have been drafted. You are in a war. There is no demilitarized zone, no neutral ground. Whether you want to fight or not, you are a warrior in the battle of the ages. At the moment of your natural birth you were placed on one side of the battle line. At the moment of your spiritual birth you crossed over to the other side. Now, as a soldier of Jesus Christ, you are commissioned to engage the battle.

I. A BATTLE ON THREE FRONTS

- A. The first part of our spiritual warfare is an inward battle – against our old, carnal nature.
- *Romans 7:23 – “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”*
 - *Galatians 5:17 – “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*
- B. The second part of our spiritual battle is an outward battle – against the opposition and hindering efforts of people who oppose our walk with God – (not against *people*, but against their *efforts*).
- *2 Corinthians 4:8-9 – “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.”*
- C. The third part of our spiritual battle is an invisible battle – against “unseen forces”, spirits, and powers of darkness.
- *Ephesians 6:12 – “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*
- D. *We must expect to face attacks on all three fronts, and we must be prepared and empowered to overcome each attack.*

II. YOUR MILITARY COMMISSION

A. *In our scripture text, Ephesians 6:11-18, we read our military orders. The apostle Paul, who was very familiar with the Roman army, compared our spiritual warfare with the armament and procedures of the Roman soldier.*

B. Amplified version of Ephesians 6:11-18:

- *“Put on God’s whole armor – the armor of a heavy-armed soldier, which God supplies –*

that you may be able successfully to stand up against (all) the strategies and the deceits of the devil. For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood – contending only with physical opponents – but against the despotisms, against the powers, against (the master spirits who are) the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere. Therefore put on God’s complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day (of danger), and having done all (the crisis demands), to stand (firmly in your place). Stand therefore – hold your ground – having tightened the belt of truth around your loins, and having put on the breastplate of integrity and of moral rectitude and right standing with God: And having shod your feet in preparation (to face the enemy with the firm-footed stability, the promptness and the readiness produced by the good news) of the Gospel of peace. Lift up over all the (covering) shield of “saving” faith, upon which you can quench all the flaming missiles of the wicked (one). And take the helmet of salvation and the sword the Spirit wields, which is the Word of God. Pray at all times – on every occasion, in every season – in the Spirit, with all (manner of) prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God’s consecrated people).”

C. Mission Outline: *(This is what we have been commissioned to do.)*

1. Put on the whole armor of God.
2. Stand against the wiles (*strategies*) of Satan.
3. Wrestle against spiritual wickedness in high places.
4. Withstand (*survive*) in the evil day. [quality of our strength]
5. Stand. (*continue, remain, survive*) [quantity of our strength]
6. Pray.

D. Armor Inventory: *(This is the equipment we have been given to accomplish the mission.)*

1. Belt of Truth
2. Breastplate of Righteousness
3. Greaves (Brass Boots) of the Preparation of the Gospel
4. Shield of Faith
5. Helmet of Salvation
6. Sword of the Spirit

III. THE SPIRITUAL ARMORY

- Ephes. 6:11 – “Put on the whole armour of God, ...”
- Ephes. 6:13 – “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, ...”

A. *The first order in our commission is to put on the “whole armor of God”.*

1. *The apostle Paul states that the armor of God consists of six separate pieces. It is not sufficient to “put on” just certain pieces of the armor – we must have it all. Unless we have the whole armor of God, we are still unguarded and vulnerable in some areas of our lives.*

B. *The armor of God is also called the “armor of righteousness”.*

- 2 Corinthians 6:4-7 – “But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, ... By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness ...”

C. *Spiritual warfare requires spiritual weapons – it cannot be accomplished with carnal weapons.*

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

D. *Ephesians chapter 6 gives three major purposes for utilizing the whole armor of God (panoply):*

#1. To prevail over Satan's schemes and strategies (Ephesians 6:11)

- 1 Peter 5:8 – *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*
 - 2 Corinthians 2:11 – *“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”*
- a. Just as Satan desired to “have” the apostle Peter (Luke 22:31), so he schemes to trap and deceive us today.
 - b. We must have the armor of God to gain victory over Satan's assaults and onslaughts.

#2. To withstand all attacks “in the evil day” (Ephesians 6:13)

- a. The Bible speaks of different types of evil days that we may have to face: a day of trouble (Psalm 86:7), a day of battle (Job 38:23), a day of calamity (Psalm 18:18), a day of temptation (Hebrews 3:8), a day of vengeance (Proverbs 6:34), a day of adversity (Ecclesiastes 7:14), a day of grief and sorrow (Isaiah 17:11), and a day of affliction (Jeremiah 16:19).
 - Psalm 34:19 – *“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.”*
- b. Regardless of which evil days we face, if we are equipped with the armor of God, we can successfully withstand all the attacks.

#3. To quench the fiery darts of Satan (Ephesians 6:16)

- 1 Peter 4:12-13 – *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you ...”*
- a. Fiery darts, called “*falarica*”, were combustible, burning arrowheads that set fire to fortifications and strongholds.
 - b. These flaming arrows can be Satan's attempts to ignite our own carnal lusts, desires, passions, emotions, evil thoughts, and intense temptations.
 - c. Fiery darts can also be burning trials and difficult situations through which Satan attempts to make us fall.
 - d. If we are going to prevail over Satan's schemes, quench his fiery darts, and survive the evil days, then we must be well protected by the whole armor of God.
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Spiritual Warfare Part 2

IV. THE 5 DEFENSIVE WEAPONS: PROTECTION

A. The Helmet Of Salvation:

- Ephes. 6:17 – “And take the helmet of salvation, ...”
- 1. The soldier’s helmet was designed to protect or secure the brain, the mind, the “command center” of the warrior.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:8 – “*But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on...for an helmet, the hope (confidence) of salvation.*”
- 2. The helmet protects our thinking processes – it allows us to “think straight”. It protects what we know. The Biblical meaning of “hope” is better understood as confidence or expectation.
- 3. When we are confident in our hope of salvation, our priorities, attitudes and thinking are anchored and secure.
 - 2 Timothy 1:12 – “... for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”
 - Hebrews 6:19 – “*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, ...*”

B. The Belt of Truth:

- Ephes. 6:14 – “*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, ...*”
- 1. The purposes of the belt:
 - a. to bind the flowing garments that would hinder the soldier’s movements in battle
 - b. to hold the soldier’s weapons close to the body
 - c. to give support, strength, and protection to the middle body during the fatigue of war
- 2. The belt is symbolic of truth – there are two types of truth to consider here.
 - a. Doctrinal truth: protects us from false doctrines and ideologies of men and devils.
 - Proverbs 23:23 – “*Buy the truth, and sell it not ...*”
 - 1 Timothy 4:16 – “*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself ...*”
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:10 – “... them that perish...they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”
 - b. Personal truth: inner sincerity, honesty and integrity which protects us from corruption.
 - Psalm 51:6 – “*Behold, thou (O God) desirest truth in the inward parts ...*”
 - John 4:24 – “*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*”
- 3. In the fatigue and weariness of battle, our doctrinal truth and personal integrity with God will provide strength and support.
- 4. If we lose either our doctrinal truth or our personal honesty with God, we lose our support and will eventually lose the battle.

C. The Breastplate of Righteousness:

- Ephes. 6:14 – “*Stand therefore, ...having on the breastplate of righteousness;*”
- 1. This piece of armory, the breastplate, protects the vital organs of the torso. The full Roman breastplate (*cuirass*) came in two pieces – one part to cover the chest, one to cover the back.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:8 – “*But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love ...*”
- 2. In Ephesians the breastplate is called “righteousness”; in 1 Thessalonians the breastplate is labeled as faith and love – faith and love incorporate all the virtues of righteousness.
 - by *faith* we are bound to Jesus Christ
 - by *love* we are bound to each other (the brotherhood)

3. When we wear the breastplate of righteousness, we are faithful in our relationship with God (*faith*) and faithful in our correct behavior towards our brothers and sisters (*love*) – that is *righteousness!*
4. The breastplate was a shining, glistening weapon. It was usually made of brass, bronze, gold or some other reflective metal. It was often highly polished to reflect the light and dazzle, blind, and confuse the enemy.
 - *Romans 13:12* – “*The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*”
(light: Greek, “*phos*”, to shine, especially by rays; luminousness, fire light)
 - *2 Thessalonians 2:8* – “*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall...destroy with the brightness of his coming:*”
5. The brightness of the glory of Jesus Christ, which is reflected in us, shall ultimately destroy all the enemies of God. The more His righteousness shines through us, the more our enemies are defeated.

D. **The Greaves, (Brass Boots) of the Preparation of the Gospel:**

- *Ephes. 6:15* – “*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*”
1. The soldier’s “greaves” were used to provide protection for the feet and shield the front of the legs. Gall-traps (poison) and sharp sticks were often hidden along pathways to injure the legs and feet of enemy warriors. These were primitive versions of “land mines”. Without the “greaves” a soldier was extremely vulnerable.
 2. *The greaves are called the “Preparation of the gospel”, which means being equipped, primed, and ready to obey and proclaim the gospel of making peace with God.*
 - *Psalms 119:101* – “*I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.*”
 - *Psalms 119:133* – “*Order my steps in thy word ...*”
 3. In scripture, a person’s “walk” is an allegory for his or her way of life. Our feet and our steps should be well-schooled in the gospel – the gospel must be our “way of life”.
 4. When we are prepared and skilled in the gospel, we are protected from Satan’s traps which try to cripple us or cause us to stumble.
 5. When we are protected with the “preparation of the gospel of peace”, our feet can carry us to spread the Word of God.
 - *Romans 10:15* – “*... How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*”

E. **The Shield of Faith:**

- *Ephes. 6:16* – “*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*”
1. The soldier’s shield was used as a movable buckler or a cover that protected the soldier from an opponent’s weapons regardless of the direction of the attack.
 2. The shield of faith is the most important defensive weapon of all: “... above all, taking the shield of faith.”
 3. It has been appropriately said, “*In the hour of attack, in the time of temptation, faith is all in all.*”
 4. Faith is the only shield that can extinguish and smother the flaming arrows of the enemy – passions, lusts, emotions, etc.
 5. Faith is mobile and adaptable. It is versatile to any attack. With the shield of faith we can turn in any direction necessary and ward off the attack from any quarter.
 6. Notice how versatile and adaptable the weapon of faith is. In Hebrews 11 we read “By faith...”:
 - we understand the creation
 - Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice
 - Enoch was translated
 - Noah prepared an ark

- Abraham went out into an inheritance
 - Sara received strength to conceive
 - Abraham offered up Isaac
 - Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau
 - Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph
 - Moses was hid of his parents from Pharaoh
 - Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh
 - Moses kept the Passover
 - the Israelites passed through the Red Sea
 - the walls of Jericho fell down
 - the harlot Rahab perished not
 - they subdued kingdoms
 - wrought righteousness
 - obtained promises
 - stopped the mouths of lions
 - quenched the violence of fire
 - escaped the edge of the sword
 - out of weakness were made strong
 - waxed valiant in fight
 - turned to flight the armies of the aliens
 - received their dead raised to life again
7. Faith conquers the world. Regardless of the attacks we encounter, faith is sufficient to bring us victory over each one!
- *1 John 5:4 – “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”*
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Spiritual Warfare Part 3

V. THE OFFENSIVE WEAPON

A. The Sword of the Spirit, The Word of God:

- *Ephes. 6:17 - "And take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:"*
- 1. This powerful offensive weapon is used to strike the enemy with an overwhelming blow.
- 2. This is not an ordinary sword – it is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.
- 3. The Word of God, the Sword of God, is unlimited in its power.
 - *Hebrews 4:12 – "For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*
- 4. Jesus Christ Himself wielded the sword of the Word and defeated Satan's onslaught of temptation by saying, "It is written..." (Matthew 4:4, 6, 7, 10)
- 5. The Word of God, hidden in our hearts, will impale and slaughter the lust, pride, malice, envy, and all other corruptions that might be hidden there.
 - *Psalms 119:11 – "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."*
- 6. Sample sword tactics:
 - confusion / turmoil:
Isaiah 26:3 – "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."
 - fatigue / weariness:
Matthew 11:28 – "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
 - temptation:
1 Corinthians 10:13 – "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
 - grief:
Psalms 23:4 – "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."
 - fear:
Psalms 56:3 – "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."
- 7. It is advisable that you learn to practice using your "sword" until you become skillful with this powerful offensive weapon.

VI. MILITARY PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

- A. *Not only does our commission order us to be suited in the whole armor of God, it also instructs us on how to use the armor and engage in battle.*
- B. The Military Discipline of Prayer.
- *Ephesians 6:18 – "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit ..."*
 - 1. After the scripture catalogs our spiritual armor, it calls for us to engage in prayer. Prayer is the discipline, the exercise, the regimen, the perpetual habit of the soldier.
 - 2. Without prayer a soldier is weak, feeble, and unable to manipulate the armor effectively. It is through prayer that we build up our strength.
 - *Jude 1:20 – "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost."*
 - 3. Effectual, fervent prayer is the means by which we activate the power to properly use the armor that we have been given. (We will study prayer in greater depth in a later lesson.)
- C. The Military Discipline of Preparedness

- *Ephesians 6:13 – “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God,..and having done all, to stand.”*
1. The phrase “to stand” is a military term that means after we have conquered one enemy, stand ready and prepared to conquer the next.
 - *1 Corinthians 16:13 – “Watch ye, (be vigilant, awake, prepared) stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, (act manly) be strong.”*
 2. We must always be prepared to fight the good fight of faith – always ready to defend the gospel, to stand against all attacks from within and without.

D. The Military Discipline of Endurance

- *Ephes. 6:18 – “... watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”*
1. The final instructions given to us in our commission tell us that as soldiers we must persevere, persist, and endure. It is not enough to begin the fight, we must also finish it!
 - *Mark 13:13 – “...he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”*
Endure (Gr. *hupomeno*) – to remain, to have fortitude, to persevere, to hold out.
 2. As Warriors of the Word we are called to endure many things:
 - endure afflictions:
2 Timothy 4:5 – “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, ...”
 - endure hardness:
2 Timothy 2:3 – “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”
(Hardness: difficulties, situations that are not easy to bear.)
 - endure persecution:
2 Timothy 3:12 – “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”
 - endure chastening and correction:
Hebrews 12:7 – “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”
 - endure grief:
1 Peter 2:19-20 – “ ... if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully ... if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.
 - endure temptation:
James 1:12 – “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.”
 - endure all things:
1 Corinthians 13:7 – “(Charity) ... endureth all things.”

VII. THE REWARDS OF WINNING THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE

- A. The second and third chapters of Revelation reveal that great rewards will be given to those soldiers who faithfully endure and overcome. He that overcomes:
 - *shall eat of the tree of life*
 - *shall not be hurt of the second death*
 - *shall eat the hidden manna*
 - *shall receive a new name*
 - *shall receive power over the nations*
 - *shall be clothed in white raiment*
 - *shall have his name in the book of life*
 - *shall be a pillar in the temple of God*
 - *shall sit with Jesus Christ in His throne*
- B. *Nothing that we suffer or endure here as soldiers of Jesus Christ can begin to compare with the reward that we shall receive.*

- *2 Corinthians 4:17 – “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;”*
- *Romans 8:18 – “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*
- *2 Tim. 4:7-8 – “(Paul said) I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”*

VIII. SPIRITUAL WARFARE – MISSION POSSIBLE

- A. *The fight may be fierce, but we are guaranteed the victory if we stay faithful to our Commander In Chief.*
- *Isaiah 41:10 – “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”*
 - *Jude 24 – “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”*
- B. *Whom He calls – He qualifies – whom He qualifies – He enables.*
- *Romans 8:35-39 – “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

A SOLDIER IN THE ARMY OF GOD

I am a soldier in the army of my God!
 The Lord Jesus Christ is my Commanding Officer!
 The Holy Bible is my code of conduct!
 Faith, prayer and the word are my weapons of warfare!

I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience,
 Tried by adversity and tested by fire!
 I am a volunteer in this army, I am enlisted for eternity!
 I will either retire in the rapture or die in this Army,
 But I will not get out, sell out, be talked out, or pushed out!
 I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable!

If my God needs me, I will be there!
 If He needs me to teach children, work with the youth,
 Help adults, assist the disabled, teach Bible studies,
 Clean the church, feed the poor, pray for the sick,
 Or just sit and learn, He can use me, because I will be there!

I am a soldier! I am not a baby!
 I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up,
 pumped up, picked up, perked up, or pepped up!

I am a soldier! No one has to call me, remind me,
 write me, visit me, entice me or lure me!
 I am a soldier! I am not a wimp!

I am in my place, saluting my King, obeying His orders,
Praising His name and building His kingdom!
No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards,
candy or give me handouts!
I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for or catered to!

I am committed! I am determined.
I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around!
I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside!
I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit!

When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing!
If I end up with nothing,
I will still have more than I started with!
I will win! My God will supply all my needs!
I am more than a conqueror! I will always triumph!
I can do all things through Christ!
Devils cannot defeat me! People cannot disillusion me!
Weather cannot weary me! Sickness cannot stop me!
Battles cannot beat me! Money cannot buy me!
Governments cannot silence me and
HELL CANNOT HANDLE ME!

I am a soldier! Even death cannot destroy me!
For when my commander calls me from this battlefield,
He will promote me to a captain and bring me back to rule this world with Him!

I AM A SOLDIER!

Word of God Part 1

Key Verses:

Luke 4:4 – “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”

2 Timothy 2:15 – “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

I. THE AMAZING BOOK

- A. No book in the world is more amazing or more powerful than the Word of God, the Bible. Even as a work of literature, it has no parallel.

*“It is impossible to righteously govern the world without God and the Bible.”
– George Washington, first U.S. President.*

“I believe that the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through the book.” – Abraham Lincoln, U.S. President.

*“If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity.” – Daniel Webster,
Preeminent American Spokesman and Legislator*

“That Book, Sir, is the rock on which our Republic stands.” – Andrew Jackson, U.S. President.

“Indeed, it is an indisputable fact that all the complex and horrendous questions confronting us at home and worldwide have their answer in that single book.” – Ronald Reagan, U.S. President.

II. WHY IS THE BIBLE IMPORTANT?

- A. Although great men have extolled the importance of the Bible, it does not receive its value from the praise of men. The Bible is important because it is the pure, absolute Word of God.
1. While it was physically penned by human beings, every word was written under God's divine inspiration, anointing, and direction.
 - *2 Peter 1:20-21 – “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*
 - *2 Timothy 3:16 – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”*
- B. The Bible is important because it is absolute truth – it is reliable and dependable. We can have total confidence and trust in the truth of the Word of God.
- *Psalm 119:160 – “Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.”*
 - *1 Thes. 2:13 – “. . . when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”*
- C. The Bible is important because it is unchanging, eternal and everlasting.

- *Psalm 119:89 – “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.”*
- *Isaiah 40:8 – “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”*
- *Matthew 24:35 – “(Jesus said) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”*
- *1 Peter 1:25 – “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”*

D. The Bible is important because it gives us answers and instructions for the issues of life:

1. It tells of mankind’s need for a savior.
 - *Romans 5:12 – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”*
2. It reveals God’s love for the lost world.
 - *John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*
3. It portrays God’s plan for saving the world.
 - *John 3:5 – “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”*
4. It imparts God’s instructions on how we should live.
 - *Col. 3:16 – “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”*

III. SOME FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- The word "Bible" comes from the Greek word “*biblos*” which means book. It was the name given to the pulp of the papyrus reed upon which ancient books were written.
- The plural form of *biblos* is *biblia*, and by the second century AD, Christians were using this word, *biblia*, to describe the holy scriptures.
- The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew.
- The New Testament was written primarily in Greek.
- Cardinal Hugo divided the Bible into chapters in 1250 AD.
- The first printing press was invented in 1450 AD and the Bible was the first book ever printed. Before that time, Bibles were copied by hand.
- Sir Robert Stephens divided the Bible into verses in 1551 AD.
- The King James Bible is divided into 66 books, 1,189 chapters, and 31,214 verses, made up of 773,746 words and 3,566,480 letters.
- Psalm 119 is the longest chapter
- Psalm 117 is the shortest chapter
- Esther 8:9 is the longest verse
- John 11:35 is the shortest verse
- There are roughly 1,250 promises in the Bible given to people in various time periods; approximately 500 of those promises can be claimed by believers today.

A. The Bible was penned by 40 dissimilar men writing on three different continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe) over a span of 1500 years.

- Moses – a prince, educated in the universities of Egypt
- Peter – a fisherman
- Amos and David – humble herdsmen
- Joshua – a military general
- Luke – a doctor
- Solomon – a king
- Matthew – a tax collector
- Paul – a rabbi

- B. The Bible was written in different locations
 - *Moses wrote in the wilderness.*
 - *Jeremiah wrote in a dungeon.*
 - *Daniel wrote from hillsides and in a palace.*
 - *Paul wrote in prison.*
 - *Luke wrote while traveling*
 - *John wrote while in exile on the island of Patmos.*
 - *David wrote during the rigors of military campaigns*

- C. In spite of the diversity of its writers (their backgrounds, education, and life experiences) the Bible is uniquely harmonious in its unity and agreement. It speaks with “one voice”.

- D. The books of the Bible are arranged by subject – they are not arranged in chronological order.

OLD TESTAMENT (39 Books)

– TORAH – BOOKS OF MOSES (5 books)	HISTORY (12 books)	POETRY (5 books)	MAJOR PROPHETS (5 books)	MINOR PROPHETS (12 books)
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 & 2 Samuel 1 & 2 Kings 1 & 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT (27 Books)

– GOSPELS – LIFE OF JESUS (4 books)	HISTORY (1 book)	EPISTLES (LETTERS) (21 books)	PROPHECY (1 book)
Matthew Mark Luke John	Acts (of the Apostles)	Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews James 1 & 2 Peter 1, 2 & 3 John & Jude	Revelation

- E. The Bible needs no external support to prove its truth and validity; the truth of the Word of God confirms itself – it works! However, there is an increasing body of external evidence that also supports the Word of God.
1. There is astounding archaeological evidence that supports the Bible.
 - *"In every instance where the findings of archaeology pertain to the Biblical record, the archaeological evidence confirms, sometimes in detailed fashion, the historical accuracy of Scripture. In those instances where the archaeological findings seem to be at variance with the Bible, the discrepancy lies with the archaeological evidence, i.e., improper interpretation, lack of evidence, etc. -- not with the Bible." – Dr. Bryant C. Wood, archaeologist.*
 - *– A.N. Sherwin-White, classical historian at Oxford says the following concerning the book of Acts, "For Acts, the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming . . . any attempt to reject its basic historicity even in matters of detail must now appear absurd."*
 2. There is astounding prophetic evidence that supports the Bible.
 - *More than 300 Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled by the life of Jesus Christ. Prophecies concerning world events, most notably, events in the Middle East, have been fulfilled in recent history – some coming to pass even in our lifetime.*
- F. In spite of this amazing evidence, we do not depend upon external, outward sources to prove the Word of God. The Bible remains true regardless of attacks, criticisms or denunciations leveled against it by skeptics and critics. Attacks will come and go, but God's Word will stand forever.
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Word of God Part 2

IV. THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

- *2 Tim. 3:16 – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”*
- A. The word “*inspiration*” is translated from the Greek word “*theopneustos*” which literally means “*God-breathed*”. It has the connotation of “imparting life”, much the same as when God breathed life into Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:7).
 1. The word “*inspiration*” means that the writings are the result of a definite and certain influence of God exerted on the actual inscribers. The Word of God is the declaration of God's thoughts, His will, His desires, and His being.
 - *2 Peter 1:20-21 – “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*
 2. The word “*moved*” is translated from the Greek word “*phero*” which literally means “bear along, carry, move out of position, drive, impel”. God’s Spirit moved and compelled (inspired) the ancient scribes to write His divine wisdom, will and instruction as He dictated it to them. They were not writing their words, they were writing God’s words.

V. THE WORD – A SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL RICHES

- A. *The Bible is a source of power* – it helps us defeat our enemy, Satan. When Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness, He used the Word as His weapon. Three times He defeated Satan’s attack by saying, “*It is written.*” He won the victory by quoting scripture to the devil.
 - *Matthew 4:10-11 – “Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”*
- B. *The Bible is a source of great spiritual benefit.* When righteous, obedient people consistently read the Word, they receive tremendous spiritual development and blessing. Psalm 19 recounts some of the ways in which the Word blesses us:
 - *Psalm 19:7-11 – “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”*
- C. *The Bible is a source of joy.*
 - *Psalm 119:47, 97, 162 – “And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved... O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day... I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.”*
 - *Jeremiah 15:16 – “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.”*
- D. *The Bible is a source of peace.*
 - *Psalm 119:165 – “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.(make them stumble)”.*

VI. FOUR WAYS IN THE WHICH THE WORD “PROFITS” US

- *2 Tim. 3:16 – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”*
- A. The Word of God is profitable in four very specific areas: doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction.
- B. First, the Word is profitable for doctrine.
1. Doctrine is a belief, a teaching, a dogma, a creed, a tenet of faith. Doctrine must not be man’s ideas, it must be the teaching of inspired scripture. The Bible teaches us specific doctrines that can be learned through no other source.
 - It teaches us the nature, character, and power of God.
 - It reveals to us our fallen, sinful state.
 - It shows what we must do to be saved and have eternal life.
 - It teaches us how to overcome temptation and sin.
 - It teaches us how to live a holy life that pleases God.
 - It teaches us how to be a part of the church of God
 - It instructs us how to treat other people.
 2. The basis for sound doctrine cannot be man’s philosophy, popular opinion, traditional beliefs or even commonly accepted ideas – the basis for sound doctrine must always be the faithful Word of God.
 - *Titus 1:9 – “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers”*
- C. Second, the Word of God is profitable for reproof – reprimand, scolding, censure, admonition.
1. Sometimes, we imperfect Christians need the chastening or “scolding” of the Lord. We can fail, make mistakes and get out of line. The Word is the main source of God’s reproof and reprimand to us.
 - *Hebrews 12:6-7 – “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”*
 2. When we read the Word or hear the Word preached or taught, it can sometimes “sting” us as it cuts away the things that need to be removed from our hearts and lives.
 3. The reproof and chastising of God’s Word is never for our harm – it is always for our good!
 - *Psalms 94:12 – “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law”*
 - *Rev. 3:19 – “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”*
- D. Third, the Word of God is profitable for correction.
1. Correction is the next step beyond reproof or chastisement – it means to “mend our ways” or to make something right that was wrong. God corrects us by showing us where we are wrong and guiding us into that which is right.
 2. First comes reproof or chastening. Secondly comes repentance. Thirdly, we must change our wrong way and bring it in line with the Word of God.
 3. An example of the Word being used in correction is found in 1 Corinthians chapters 11 and 14, where Paul corrects the Corinthians in the appropriate way to observe the Lord’s Supper and the proper use of spiritual gifts.
- E. Fourth, the Word of God is profitable for instruction in righteousness.
1. “Instruction in righteousness” means to be tutored or trained in “equity of character” – it means the act of being educated in holiness, godliness, and righteousness.

2. The Bible is the handbook for Christian development – both inward and outward development. It is the manual for our spiritual training. As Christians, we don't conform to the attitudes and behaviors of worldly culture, but instead we comply with the teachings of the Word.
 - *Psalm 119:133 – “Order my steps (conduct) in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.”*
 - *2 Peter 3:11 – “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved (earthly possessions), what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation (behavior) and godliness,”*
-

Word of God Part 3

VII. THE PURPOSE OF THE WORD – EQUIPPING US

- *2 Tim. 3:16-17 – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*
- A. Verse seventeen of this chapter gives us the purpose for the four functions provided to us by the Word – that we may be thoroughly furnished (equipped) as productive workers in the kingdom of God. The Word equips or supplies us with all the necessary tools to become what God has called us to be. Some of the ways in which the Word equips us are listed below:
1. The Word is creative power.
 - Psalm 33:6 – “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”
 2. The Word is saving power.
 - 1 Peter 1:23 – “Being born again, . . . by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”
 - James 1:21 – “. . . receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
 3. The Word is healing power.
 - Psalm 107:20 – “He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”
 4. The Word is reviving power – quickening, giving life, revitalizing, reanimating power!
 - Psalm 119:50 – “This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.”
 5. The Word is cleansing power – purifying, purging power.
 - John 15:3 – “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”
 - John 17:17 – “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. “
 - Jeremiah 23:29 – “Is not my word like as a (purifying) fire? saith the Lord . . . ?”
 6. The Word is judging power.
 - John 12:48 – (Jesus said) “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.
 7. The Word is a destroying hammer – defeating the enemies of righteousness.
 - Jeremiah 23:29 – “Is not my word like as a . . . hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”
 8. The Word is a lamp – lighting our way, illuminating the way in which we should live.
 - Psalm 119:105 – “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
 9. The Word is Jesus Christ in written manifestation.
 - John 1:14 – “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
 10. The Word is nourishing food.
 - 1 Peter 2:2 – “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:” Hebrews 6:5 – “And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,”
 11. The Word is a stumbling block to unbelievers.
 - 1 Peter 2:8 – “. . . even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient . . .”
 12. The Word is spiritual knowledge.
 - Proverbs 2:5-6 – “Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”
 - John 5:39 – “(Jesus said) Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”
 13. The Word inspires faith.

- *Romans 10:17 – “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*
 - *John 20:31 – “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”*
14. *The Word is a powerful spiritual weapon – the Sword of the Spirit.*
- *Ephes. 6:17 – “And take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”*
 - *Hebrews 4:12 – “For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*

VIII. WHAT ATTITUDE SHOULD I HAVE TOWARD THE BIBLE?

- A. Obey the Word. Comply to, conform to, observe, obey, and follow the scriptures.
- *James 1:22 – “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only...”*
 - *Psalm 119:9 – “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. (taking heed: attending to, observing, conforming, obeying)*
- B. Respect the Word of God. Treat it with awe, honor and deference. Glorify the Word. (Glorify: to give honor, to render esteem)
- *Psalm 119:161 – “Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.”*
 - *Acts 13:48 – “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”*
- C. Receive the Word openly. Have a willing, eager and zealous heart to take in the Word.
- *James 1:21 – “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”*
 - *Acts 17:11 – “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*
- D. Hide the Word in your heart. Memorize portions of it and learn selected verses “by heart”.
- *Psalm 119:11 – “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”*
- E. Study the Word. Research it and examine it carefully.
- *2 Timothy 2:15 – “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*
- F. Allow the Word to dwell or live in you. Let its truths and principles become part of your nature and character.
- *Colossians 3:16 – “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”*
- G. Delight in the Word. Allow the Word to become your “pleasure”, your enjoyment, your cherished and valuable treasure.
- *Psalm 119:16 – “I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.”*
 - *Psalm 1:2 – “But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”*
- H. Love the Word. Have great affection and passion for the Word of God.
- *Psalm 119:97 – “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.”*
 - *Psalm 119:140 – “Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.”*

- I. Meditate on the Word. Meditating is thinking and rethinking each thought until it becomes your thought. Meditation is best accomplished by committing verses to memory.
- *Joshua 1:8 – “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”*
 - *Psalm 119:97 – “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.”*
- J. Combine Bible reading with prayer. Prayer is helpful in the process of transplanting the Word into our heart, our inner man.
- *Acts 6:4 – “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”*
- K. Teach the Word. Instruct and educate others in the scriptures.
- *2 Tim. 2:2 – “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*
- L. Apply the Word – utilize what you learn from the Word of God by putting it to use in your life.
- *James 1:22-25 – “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass (mirror): For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”*
- M. Develop the habit of reading the Word daily. The Bible is our spiritual “daily bread”. It is advisable to begin reading in the New Testament with the Book of Acts, the Gospels, and then the Epistles. From there you can expand your reading schedule to include the entire Bible.
- There are numerous Bible reading programs that are structured to help you read through the entire Bible each year. (e.g. “B.R.E.A.D”) There are also one-year Bibles that have a prescribed daily reading selection to accomplish the same goal.
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Word of God Part 4

IX. HOW DO I STUDY THE BIBLE?

- A. The word “study”, as used 2 Timothy 2:15, is the Greek word “spoudazo” which means to give diligence, to labor, to make effort. Studying the Word of God means more than just casually reading it. We are instructed to carefully examine and inspect it.
1. True Bible study calls for discipline. Paul compliments the Bereans in Acts 17 because they diligently searched the scriptures to discover God’s truth.
 - *Acts 17:11 – “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*
 2. A casual reading of the Bible, reading a verse here or there, or skipping from thought to thought, are poor study habits and will not produce much fruit or genuine knowledge of the Bible. We need to carefully and systematically study, scrutinize and examine the scriptures.
- B. Studying the Word is a commandment of God. Studying God’s Word is both a privilege and a duty.
- *2 Timothy 2:15 – “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*
- C. Studying the Word of God protects us from false doctrines. Scripture warns us that false prophets and false beliefs will threaten to corrupt and defile us.
- *2 Timothy 3:13 – “But evil men and seducers shall wax (grow) worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”*
 - *2 Timothy 4:3 – “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”*
- D. Studying the Word helps us to rightly divide (correctly interpret) the Word of truth. The term “divide” as used in this passage means “to cut straight”. Paul, possibly referring to his occupation as a tentmaker, understood the necessity of good workmanship and cutting straight any material that was to be joined together.
1. We are commanded to “rightly divide” the Word of truth. We must be very careful not to force our own interpretation upon scriptures.
 - *2 Peter 3:16 – “As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”*
 - a. The word “wrest” is from the Greek word “strebloo” which means to wrench, to twist or dislocate, to pervert, warp or distort
 - b. Some people argue with scripture and “wrest” it, trying to make it mean something different than what it truly says. Some distort the scriptures to mean what they want them to mean.
 - c. We must note that wresting or twisting scriptures from their true meaning will lead us to destruction.

*I supposed I knew my Bible,
Reading piecemeal, hit or miss,
Now a bit of John or Matthew,
Now a snatch of Genesis,
Certain chapters of Isaiah,
Certain Psalms (the twenty-
third),
Twelfth of Romans, first of
Proverbs
Yes, I thought I knew the Word!
But I found that thorough
reading
Was a different thing to do,
And the way was unfamiliar
When I read the Bible through.
You who like to play at Bible,
Dip and dabble, here and there,
Just before you kneel, weary,
And yawn through a hurried
prayer;
You who treat the Crown of
Writings
As you treat no other book,
Just a paragraph, disjointed,
Just a crude, impatient look,
Try a worthier procedure,
Try a broad and steady view;
You will kneel in very rapture
When you read the Bible
through.
- Paul Borthwick*

- *Deut. 4:2 – “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”*
- *Rev. 22:18-19 – “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”*

X. HELPFUL TOOLS FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE

- A. A study Bible, preferably the King James or the New King James version, is a wise investment. Both the Thompson Chain Reference Bible and the Open Bible contain many useful helps. Be aware that doctrine should be taken only from the actual text of the Bible and not from commentaries you find printed in various Bibles.
- B. The Amplified Bible is a translation that gives expanded definitions of every scripture in the Bible.

<i>King James Version</i>	Amplified Version
Acts 2:38 – <i>“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”</i>	Acts 2:38 - <i>“And Peter answered them, Repent- - change your views, and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it-- and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of and release from your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”</i>

- C. Be careful not to rely upon "paraphrased" versions of the Bible. Paraphrased versions are not translations, and contain significant man-made changes to the original text.
- D. A Bible Concordance enables you to look up individual words and find out which scriptures contain that word. The Strong's Exhaustive Concordance also gives the literal Greek and Hebrew definitions of every word in the Bible.
- E. A topical Bible, such as Nave's Topical Bible, groups scriptures in subject or topic categories.
- F. A Bible commentary can be used for background or historical information. However, be careful about accepting doctrinal statements from Bible commentaries as they contain the author's opinions.
- G. Most Bibles and Bible reference books are available on computer software.

XI. CONCLUSION

- A. The Bible is the greatest tangible possession we can ever hold with our hands. It is God’s “love letter” written expressly to us!
- B. The Bible is an extraordinary miracle. It was miraculously inspired, miraculously created and has been miraculously preserved for us today.

This Book is the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding; its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully, meditatively, searchingly, devotionally, and study it constantly, perseveringly, and industriously. Read it through and through until it becomes part of your being and generates faith that will move mountains. It is a mine of wealth, the source of health, and a river of pleasure. It is given to you in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and will last forever. Follow its precepts and it will lead you to Calvary, to the empty tomb, to a resurrected life in Christ; yes, and even to glory itself, for eternity.

- Additional reading material:

“God's Infallible Word” David Bernard. Word Aflame Publishing.

“Prepare to Answer” Shelly, Rubel. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

“The Bible – Its Origin and Use” Word Aflame Publishing