

SHADOWS
AMONG US

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*Discovering the Path to
Spiritual Liberation & Wholeness*

ROBIN M. BERTRAM



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Shadows Among Us

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PROLOGUE

The call came one Saturday morning. Katherine's voice was shaken and distressed. "I need your help!" After returning the call, I agreed to meet with Katherine and her friend, Elaine, the next day. Elaine recounted her story. This bright-eyed, energetic college student had been paralyzed by fear. One night while in her dorm room almost asleep, she felt an overwhelming sensation of another's presence in her room. Unable to move or speak, she felt a crushing weight on her back. Sweat poured onto the sheets as her body trembled with immense fear. She was not alone. Elaine knew it was her night to die. She felt a word being etched into her skin. Elaine did not sleep at all that night. The next morning she pulled her head from the covers terrified at what she might see, however, she was all alone.

As Elaine told of the events that had taken place, I asked, "Are you ready to pray?" "Yes," she replied. Depression had so overtaken her, that she had been forced to drop out of college. "Can you repent of your sins before we begin?" I asked. After what seemed to be a thorough confession, the Holy Spirit said, "Now ask her to do it from the heart?" Something in Elaine broke. She fell to the ground, weeping and mourning over her sins in true confession and repentance. After it was over, she lifted her head. I gazed into her eyes, but it was

not Elaine looking back. Peering at me was the deepest, darkest evil I had ever experienced. Time for war! I explained to Elaine that I had never been trained. I did not have a degree of theology. I was not an ordained minister. I came only on the authority of the written Word of God. I clinched my Bible with all of my might. I began addressing the spirits one by one. My friend, Katherine, quoted scriptures as she stood behind Elaine. Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” One by one they would manifest as the Holy Spirit gave discernment and leave, as they were cast out. At last, the Holy Spirit said, “Call out the spirit of destruction.” “Spirit of Destruction, I command you out.” There was a pause that seemed like an eternity. Then, suddenly, a deep, rough, voice replied, “We will not go. We will kill her!”

PREFACE

This course of study is an in-depth look at the Ministry of Deliverance. It is intended to reach those who are in need of personal deliverance and those who feel called into prayer ministry. It may be effectively used as a training tool for pastors and leaders who are interested in the development of a deliverance team. It may also be used in conjunction with teaching tapes, other books and resources, or as a stand-alone resource. The subject matter contained herein is addressed in the context of deliverance ministry, and is not considered an exhaustive study of the subject. It does, however, attempt to highlight topics that are frequently dealt with during sessions of deliverance ministry.

Our team of prayer ministers is available to visit your church to assist in the training of church leaders, staff, or lay pastors to better deal with the needs and concerns within the congregation as it relates to the Ministry of Deliverance. We hope you find the information within helpful in dispelling some of the concerns related to such an important topic, and in bringing light to an area of ministry that has been underutilized due to the lack of knowledge. Our desire is to see the many bound by oppression within the Body of Christ walk in the freedom our Lord and Savior provided through His death, burial, and resurrection. The real life cases reported

within the text have been altered in such a way as to preserve the privacy of those involved, therefore the names and specific details have been changed. We pray that this information is a blessing to all who read it.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to each member of Covenant Renewal Ministries for their hard work and dedication and my dear friend Lucy Barlow who was there at the beginning of this journey. I would also like to thank my husband, Ken Bertram, for his editing work, Earl and Linda Gills for their prayers and encouragement, and our children, Logan and Taylor, who so graciously supported us in this process. I would also like to acknowledge my dear precious father, Rev. Paul A. Maddy who went to be with the Lord one week before the submittal deadline for this book, who was a living example of a life of faith.

*Robin Bertram, Founder/Chairman
Covenant Renewal Ministries*

INTRODUCTION

Deliverance ministry is the most ignored work of the Holy Spirit in our churches today. Yes, it is even resisted. It is seen as being on the edge, for radicals and zealots, for irrational, over-mystical people, often being dismissed as myth or rejected by the local church as though it were a legend from days of old. Teachings about deliverance are rarely found in mainstream denominations. Those who claim to embrace the fullness of the Gospel are also trailing behind in the area of “*seeing the captives set free.*” Churches are full of defeated Christians with a “*just help me get by, Lord*” mentality as the world looks on in wonderment as to what would possess them to waste time and effort with the senseless activity we call “*church.*” Unfortunately, many are under the guise of “*doing church*” instead of “*being Church*”—that is, the fighting, warring army Jesus Christ calls His Bride, which is ready to stand in victory and shout from the mountaintops, “*Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*”

What can all this mean? Where are the stories of reconciliation, restoration, and release that we read about in the Bible? Where are the stories of successful battles and the great warriors such as Joshua, Gideon, and David? Where are the stories of tremendous obstacles overcome, like that of Jacob, Esther and Ruth? Could it be that we, the church, have set-

tled for the stories without desiring to experience the glorious truths attached to those stories? Could we have decided that what once worked for the great men of faith no longer applies in our beautifully decorated sanctuaries with all their rich adornments? Have our churches become just a forum for good entertainment and the respectable thing to do? These questions are not meant to put down the workings of the Body of Christ, and all the good that is being accomplished in and through the local church. They are, however, meant to challenge the status quo. They are meant to inspire and encourage the introspection of every person, group, or church who believes that there is more ahead of them; more to know, more to do, more of the mysteries of God to embrace. The revelations contained throughout this book attempt to do just that. They aim to inspire individuals and churches to delve into an area of ministry that is not so readily accepted or understood. One cannot deny the evidence of scripture—the very desire of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, outpoured—that the Ministry of Deliverance go forth just as He sent His trainees into the world to preach, teach, and pray “The Good News” of the Gospel.

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor”.

LK 4:14–19

This is so much more than a historical account of the participation of our Savior doing church. It was a prophetic proclamation by Jesus to those in His hearing, as well as to those who will have “*ears to hear*” today. It was a statement of purpose. It was a man, destined with the very essence of His existence, clearly announcing His mission. These words resounded throughout the temple with great authority, divine authority, to the point that it astounded even the most scholarly of the day. The religious sat in amazement that this simple carpenter could have such an impact. Jesus kept it simple, and so should we. The work of deliverance ministry is like every work of ministry. It is based on foundational principles contained within the Holy Bible. It encompasses biblical principles that we must understand to be effective in this work and, contrary to the mainstream mindset, it can be accessed. This book represents a concerted effort to bring these biblical foundations into practical application. Although there will be no distinct format offered, there will be an under-girding of the process, which will allow the student of deliverance to move with confidence into dealing with the oppressed, setting free those who are bound, and celebrating the goodness of God in the midst of the course of action taken.

Method and methodology are not important. The beauty of deliverance ministry is the absolute dependency on the Holy Spirit as our guide. We could legitimately stop right here. The work of the Holy Spirit is just that; it is His Work! We are only willing participants, vessels to be used as our Father allows. God so graciously decides our role; we determine the amount of our participation in that work. Yes, we may desire a particular work, but if it is not assigned by the Lord, it is a work that is in vain.

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain (Ps 127:1).

Make no mistake; we cannot call ourselves into ministry and expect the Lord's favor to rest upon it. Often, this becomes the issue within the setting of the church; the need is there, the responsibility must be filled, and we quickly assign those with whom we are most comfortable, and those willing to fit into our mold. In the Ministry of Deliverance, there are several prerequisites that should be met to ensure success. Are you a believer in the Lord, Jesus Christ of Nazareth? This is the first condition. Secondly, are you willing? That being said, not everyone is called to full-time deliverance ministry; however, every believer is called to cast out demons. Could it be that we chose for ourselves the duties we want to perform instead of those the Lord has given us to do?

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven".

LK 10:17–20

One cannot deny the excitement and elation that are felt the first time he has the privilege to witness deliverance, or the first time he has an angelic encounter. Both will leave the viewer forever changed. Skeptics will scoff at such things—things that they have never been allowed to see. Could it be that the resistance in their heart has closed the doors of opportunity? God entrusts those who are childlike in faith to see the mysteries of heaven. Can we become those people of faith who will accept scripture as a living, active word for today? If the answer is yes, then open your heart to receive instruction that can radically change you, your family, your church, your community, and beyond.

Elements of deliverance ministry are grounded on princi-

ples found in the Bible which must become firmly understood as one moves forth in such a ministry. These areas of understanding include: spiritual authority, the power in the Blood of Jesus, the Covenant, the seal of the Holy Spirit, the power of the spoken word, curses, principles of spiritual warfare, prayer, and the name of Jesus. Please take time to explore each area as you read through your Bible and begin to seek revelation from the Holy Spirit as He guides you into all truth. May the Lord bless your efforts as you begin the journey of wholeness. Names and situations have been altered in such a way that will protect the privacy of individuals who have been ministered to, and these special cases are used for the intent purpose of teaching the principles found within the specific chapters. Quotes are written to the best of the author's recollection and some small details have been changed to ensure complete anonymity.

WHO'S IN CHARGE ANYWAY?

Regardless of modern perspective, there are absolutes. Nothing challenges the intellectual mindset more than the view that there is, beyond all reasoning, a pragmatic, unwavering perspective of seeing things in black and white, with no gray area. The belief in absolute truth stirs zealous opposition. In today's culture, we are encouraged to embrace the diverse and surrender the core of our beliefs. While America touts "In God We Trust," our culture screams hostility to traditional Christianity through governmental policies, entertainment, education, and in every aspect of our modern culture. Judeo-Christian values are mocked and ridiculed and the moral compass is losing ground to hostile, anti-God, anti-Christian theology. We are encouraged to promote tolerance at the expense of forfeiting foundational truths of the Word of God. These perceptions are diametrically opposed to what we, as Christians, are taught throughout scripture. Society tells us that to be in authority, one must take it; make room for yourself at the expense of those around you, climb your way to the top of the corporate ladder. Even in church one may find the "*you must work your way up*" mentality. However, in the government of the Kingdom of God things are quite the opposite. True spiritual authority is given to those who are willing to give up their personal freedoms for the good of

others; those who are willing to lay down their own desires and wants and submit their will to a higher authority. We are given in scripture a beautiful picture of a man who understood true authority.

After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. A centurion there had a slave whom he valued highly, and who was ill and close to death. When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave. When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy of having you do this for him, for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us." And Jesus went with them, but when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, "Go," and he goes, and to another, "Come," and he comes, and to my slave, "Do this," and the slave does it." When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

LK 7:1-10

The key words within this text that imply a true understanding of spiritual authority are, "*For I also am a man set under authority.*" While deliverance ministry is the act of taking supernatural authority over spirits in the spirit realm, in order to participate or be used as an instrument of restoration, one must walk under authority in the natural realm. The spiritual laws are in place and do not change. Finding

one's place within the framework of deliverance ministry will invariably start with submission to the will of God. Obedience to the written Word is one of those absolutes. Does this mean a deliverance minister must have a sinless life? No, but a sinless lifestyle is critical. There is tremendous power in the supernatural realm, and working in a position of fighting the forces of evil can open oneself up to serious attack of the enemy. Sin leaves us open and vulnerable. It produces death in us, and represents an agreement with the very forces against which we stand. Obedience to the will of God will always supersede the work with which one is involved. Scripture substantiates this:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evil-doers'.

MT 7:21-2

Once again, doing the will of the Father determines the success or failure of our work, and not the work itself. Biblical principles of authority reign throughout scripture and can be used as a test and measurement of the authority one is given in the government of God. The word *obedient* actually means "coming under or being submissive to the restraint or command of another." By our act of obedience, we are establishing the kingship of God in our lives. Once properly aligned with God as our leader, we may proceed in the establishment of His Kingdom on earth where we act as His chosen vessels to fulfill His plans and purposes. To establish the authority of God on earth, we must first walk in submission to His authority. To come against authority it is to come against God. The author-

ity of God is supreme, unconditional, and absolute. His Word is His authority. It is unchanging and eternal, and all authority in heaven and earth is derived from this authority. Obedience to God's Commandments and to His written Word is the first step in achieving spiritual authority. Throughout scripture, we are taught that God desires hearts that will submit to Him. He gave us, through Spirit-filled men, a thorough set of guidelines and expectations that we are to follow. These laws are to protect us from the consequences of sin. The law itself can be looked at as a type of governor or a model of all truth. Moses wrote it down, Noah declared it to men long before, and God established it before the foundations of the world. The law is not an irrelevant list of arbitrary commands. It is the spiritual basis for life and death, for blessings and curses, for freedom or bondage. Jesus clearly taught us that He came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Thus, through His death, burial, and resurrection we have been given grace. However, grace was never meant to override the rights and wrongs of our daily living. It, along with our willingness to submit to God's intentions for us as given in the law, was meant to reestablish the harmony we have with a living Savior. Unrepentant sin alienates us from God. Sin brings into our lives darkness, guilt, and shame. When we are walking in darkness in any area of our life, we are living a life far less than what God has intended for us. It is in that place of darkness that the forces of evil are allowed to operate.

The good news of the Gospel has released us from the legal justification of the written code and it has given us a higher law to fulfill, the law of the Spirit. The law is holy. It is just and good. It is our disciplinarian given to train us in righteousness. We are given precepts that are meant to regulate our moral code. We are instructed to be not only hearers of the law but, also doers of the law. As Christians, we should choose to live a righteous life allowing the Bible to be our

blueprint, looking at it as gracious duties and privileges we have been given to protect us and keep us in fellowship with our Lord. The Apostle Paul teaches us in *Romans* 3:28 that we are justified by faith, however, in *Roman's* 3:31 he asks, "*Do we then overthrow the law by, this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.*" Many times when there is a need for deliverance ministry, it is often due to an individual who has repeatedly broken the commands of God. The law was given, in part, for the acknowledgment of sin. It was also given for our own protection. Often a person in need of deliverance refuses to see a particular sin with which he has been involved, or it may simply be a matter of denial. Pointing out in scripture what the Word of God has to say pertaining to a certain sinful behavior will be a good place to start. It will help obliterate any attempt to justify one's actions. It will also be that solid rock on which to stand as the healing process begins. Healing from such wounds caused by disobedience must start with an acknowledgment that sin has ruled in a certain area of one's life. After the confession has occurred, the individual should make a conscious decision to turn away from that sin, to stop the behavior or lifestyle and begin replacing those ungodly thoughts, actions or deeds with godly behaviors. Sin produces death, death to the body, the soul, and the spirit. We need not be fooled. We are justified through faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot work our way into heaven. We can, however, find freedom and peace in this lifetime as we willingly submit to the leading and guidance of God's Word.

...Surely, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams (I Sa 15:22).

The revealed will of God teaches us many things. We are to be holy as He is holy. We are to avoid sexual immorality, live a life of faith, and to have a grateful attitude. We are to love our brothers and sisters in Christ and also love our enemies. We are to edify and not tear one another down. We

are to rejoice in all things. We can sum it up in the words of the prophet Micah, *“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God”* (Mic 6:8)? In addition to understanding and obeying God’s will as communicated in His Word, we must obey His will as communicated through the Holy Spirit and prophetic guidance. The Apostle Paul tells us that we may discern what is the will of God by being transformed in our minds and not conforming to this world. We have a choice to make. We can follow the lead of the Lord or our own desires. Self-will, however, is a path toward destruction and it is impervious to the very nature of God within us.

The battle that rages within is the battle between spirit and flesh. As we give in to our flesh, it becomes stronger and our ability to resist the desires of the flesh becomes weaker. Although once saved, we are new creatures in Christ and dead to sin. Paul warns us in Romans, chapter six, that we should not allow sin to reign in our mortal bodies and we must therefore learn to deny the lust of the flesh. Herein lies the problem. Many Christians have claimed Jesus as the Lord of their life, yet still have areas in which the lusts of the flesh rule. Healing of the body, soul or spirit begins with a conscious decision to set the mind on things of the Spirit and refuse to allow sin to exercise dominion over any part of life. Paul taught in Romans that an individual would be a slave to the one whom they choose to obey: a slave of sin, which leads to death, or a slave of obedience, which leads to righteousness. We understand that it is not enough to call Him Lord. We must follow the will of the Lord, be obedient to Him, and allow Him to be Lord of our lives. Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, prayed to God. He said, *“Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want”* (Mk 14:36). Jesus is our perfect role model.

Through His life and actions, we can see the importance of laying down our wants and desires and putting priority on what we are asked to do for God. Jesus asked Peter a question. He asked if He was not to drink the cup provided for Him by His Father. He had already made that decision. It was His food to do the will of the one who had sent Him and Jesus would fulfill His destiny and purpose regardless of what it would cost. Jesus submitted to the will of His Father totally and without reservation and we are to do the same. There are consequences when we do not. Paul, when he was Saul, before his name was changed, stood against the will of God. *He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting”* (Ac 9:5). Paul was “kicking against the goads,” fighting against the will of Christ Jesus until he was struck with blindness on the road to Damascus. God had chosen Paul to be used as an instrument in spreading the Gospel to the Gentiles. He heard the voice of the Lord and in an instant he became a follower and disciple of Jesus. Paul was not left in such a condition, however. Ananias, a disciple who lived in Damascus, was obedient to the will of the Lord as he followed instructions to go to the street called Straight to find Saul of Tarsus and lay hands on him so that he might regain his sight. Ananias was well aware of the reputation Saul had for persecuting Christians. He was well aware that his obedience to the direction of the Lord could potentially cost him his life. Where would we be today had it not been for the obedience of Ananias? Would we have had the tremendous insight into the life, death and resurrection of Christ had it not been for the willingness of Ananias to follow the direction of the Lord? Ananias is a New Testament example of willingly obeying the voice of God. We, as Christians are to hear His voice and we are to follow just as Ananias did. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and He told us what those who believed in Him would do. They would hear and follow!

My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me (Jn 10:27).

All authority is from God; therefore, we must learn to obey all authority. Delegated authority is possessed by those who have been entrusted and empowered to carry out certain acts, without impediment. Along with the delegated authority, there should be a set of standards, which would outline the rights that may be exercised within the boundaries and scope of that place of responsibility. Within the operation of the church, there is a certain hierarchy of authority that must be recognized and respected. Christ is the head. He is the supreme authority over His Church. He gives His chosen leaders direction. They are to follow His lead. Church leadership is carefully ranked within scripture. With God-given position, there will be the anointing of God to carry it through. Every position of authority within the church should stem from, and out of, a ministry call. True ministry flows out of death, death of self, and there is no exception! It is God who calls, and man who recognizes that call. We are never to assume a position of ministry that God has not given. He calls and commissions and His delegated authority will back it up. In other words, there should be an appointing by the laying on of hands from a person of authority, who will send forth a servant of God into that service or ministry only through prayer and fasting.

Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off (Ac 13:3).

A FAMILY'S SHAME

Within the family, as within the Church, proper authority at the head, spiritually and naturally, supported through submission, brings unity and blessings. Proper order within the family structure also offers protective covering, spiritual guidance, and focused direction as to where the family is head-

ing. Fathers are the spiritual leaders of the family unit. They are the leaders of the family whether they see themselves as such or not. Fathers set the course of the direction for their family. It can be in a positive direction or a negative direction; and most often it is a mixture of the two. Whatever is in the head is also in the body. Jesus taught this lesson through His obedience to His heavenly Father. As He stated, He only did what He saw His Father do. This teaching sets a spiritual precedent to fathers today. Children will often do what they see their own fathers do. Therefore, it is critical for the father of the home to take the position of spiritual leadership and it should not be relinquished to the mother. We have biblical examples of situations where the head of the household was not respected or upheld as the leader. When there has been a violation of that order, the entire family suffers consequences. Let's look at the lesson of Ham when he uncovered the nakedness of his father.

Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. He drank some of the wine and became drunk, and he lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

GE 9:20-23

Shem and Japheth entered the tent backwards and turned as to not look upon their father's shortcomings. Ham, however, exploited what was a bad situation by inviting his brothers to gaze upon Noah. The result of such an act was astounding. We can trace the bloodline of Ham and see that there was a repeated history of sexual perversion. Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, had settled in the land of Canaan, and it had become

the epitome of sexual exploitation and degradation. His descendants, the Canaanites, worshiped numerous false gods and were steeped in fertility cults, more so than any other in the ancient world. What began as the exposure of the nakedness of one man, resulted in a generational curse as evidenced in the extreme sexual perversions of the land of Canaan. The lessons that can be learned from the examples of Nadab and Abihu are quite profound. They worked apart from Aaron, thus they worked apart from God. Aaron, the high priest, was consecrated into the priestly office of the Levitical tribe by Moses. He and his sons had traveled with Moses part of the way up Mount Sinai where Moses had received the law written on stone. There they were able to experience at least a glimpse of the divine presence of God. They had been trained in proper worship with the very specific regulations to follow. However, in a rebellious act, Aaron's sons chose to kindle a "strange fire." They were to use fire from the altar, which burned perpetually, for burning incense in worship, but they chose fire from another source, therefore making it unacceptable before the Lord and they were destroyed instantly in the sanctuary.

This strange fire was unauthorized. They had served without proper order, independently, and without direction. Some scholars speculate that they may have been intoxicated also, although that is only speculation based on *Leviticus* 10:8–9 where they were instructed not to partake of wine while they were to serve within the sanctuary. They had incorrectly performed the worship service apart from the leadership of their father and this invidious conduct brought about severe and immediate judgment of the Lord. The charge: they had kindled a "strange fire" and the result was that they were consumed by fire. We can gain great insight as we look at the lesson of Aaron and Miriam as they rebelled against God-ordained leadership. Aaron was the older brother of Moses by three years. Moses

was the spiritual father of Israel. Chosen of God as deliverer, judge, lawgiver, and prophet, the Lord spoke directly to Moses. He was the most humble man on the face of the earth. Because of jealousy, Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses. Their reviling and rebellious action brought about judgment of the Lord and, in His anger, the Lord departed from them. Miriam became leprous. Aaron and Miriam were charged with speaking against their leader because of jealousy. Rebellion and reviling those in leadership will result in the loss of the presence of God, just as witnessed in the above case where the cloud departed from the Tent of Meetings. As previously stated, the Bible clearly teaches that the husband is to be the head of the household. Often, this is an area where spiritual authority is violated. Wives may take the lead role for many different reasons; however it is ultimately the responsibility of the husband to stand in the place of authority.

Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives (I Pe 3:1).

Women who constantly usurp their husband's authority, whether in open defiance or through some form of manipulation and trickery, hurt their own household, themselves, and their children. They are, in essence, ripping the blessings promised to a godly family out of their own hands. Frequently, those in need of deliverance have found ways of covertly undermining those who are in authority, and often present themselves as being totally submissive. Those who receive deliverance ministry must be willing to be honest with themselves and they must be willing to turn from the actions and attitudes that have afforded them the ability to gain the leadership role.

WHERE ARE YOU DAD?

Frequently, in a situation where the protection of a father is not in place, children can be severely hurt, neglected or abused, thus growing up as many do, suffering in silence. The need for healing and restoration becomes apparent, as those who have suffered such tragedy tend to act out their pain in a myriad of ways. In many situations the fathers are simply not present in the home, but often they are there in body, but not in mind. Absentee parenting has a detrimental effect on children, especially when they have suffered some violation or abuse. Parenting is an extremely difficult and complicated responsibility especially if there were poor role models or no role models. Healing of the soul often involves the willingness of the one who is receiving prayer to forgive and release their parents for their shortcomings and failures.

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you (Ex 20:12).

Children should be taught that obedience to their parents is not just a thing to do because it is right. They need to understand that there is a promise attached to the command, “so that your days may be long...and things may go well for you.” One may glean from these scriptures that the reverse is true for those who do not obey their parents. Dishonoring a parent can bring into one’s life a series of dangerous repercussions both in the natural realm and the supernatural realm. Take a few minutes and ask yourself, “Have I dishonored my parents in any way?” If the answer is yes, then pray and ask the Lord to forgive you. You may also need to go to one or both parents and confess your disobedience or disrespect. They may or may not understand what you are saying, however, the process is very important to your healing. There may also be a situation where one or both parents have passed away. In such cases, simply let the Lord know that you choose to confess the

hardness of heart toward them and ask Him for forgiveness. Age is irrelevant; a clean slate is not. If you are a parent, you may need to go to your child and ask for forgiveness. Freedom comes when confessions are made. Guilt is lifted and pain is often wiped away. Do not hesitate. If there have been injustices within your family structure, run quickly to make amends. This is the time to reconcile! Be on the lookout for areas of authority that have been violated. Quite often, there are issues related to rebellion that will surface. Deep feelings of anger, resentment, rage, and abandonment are just to name a few. By following the mindset behind the rebellion against authority, one will most likely expose hidden secrets of the heart. The story of Elaine is one such example. As a child, she had an experience with evil. Her parents had divorced, her dad had left, and a terrified little girl had a visitation. From that time on, Elaine knew of the powers of darkness.

THE CASE OF ELAINE

The call came one Saturday morning. Katherine’s voice was shaken and distressed. “I need your help!” I agreed to meet with Katherine and her friend, Elaine, the next day. Elaine recounted her story. This bright-eyed, energetic college student had been paralyzed by fear. One night while in her dorm room, she felt an overwhelming sensation of another’s presence in her room. Unable to move or speak, she felt a crushing weight on her back as she lay still in her bed. Sweat poured onto her sheets as her body trembled with immense fear. She was not alone. Elaine knew it was her night to die. She felt a word being etched into her skin; it was “KILL.” Elaine did not sleep at all that night. The next morning she pulled her head from the covers, terrified as to what she might see. However, no one was there. She was all alone.

As Elaine told of the events that had taken place, I asked, “Are you ready to pray?” “Yes,” she replied. Depression had so

overtaken her that she had been forced to drop out of college. She could not function. The pills and the numerous visits to her psychiatrist seemingly had no effect. "Can you repent of your sins before we begin?" I asked. After what seemed to be a thorough confession, the Holy Spirit said, "Now ask her to do it from the heart." Something in Elaine broke. She fell to the ground, weeping and mourning over her sins in true confession and repentance before the Lord. After it was over, she lifted her head. I gazed into her eyes, but it was not Elaine looking back at me. Peering at me was the deepest, darkest evil I had ever experienced. Time for war! I explained to Elaine I had never been trained. I did not have a degree in theology. I was not an ordained minister at that time. I came only on the authority of the written Word of God. I clinched my Bible with all of my might. I began addressing the spirits one by one. My friend, Katherine, quoted scriptures as she stood behind Elaine. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." One by one, the spirits would manifest as the Holy Spirit gave discernment and leave, as they were cast out. At last, the Holy Spirit said, "Cast out the spirit of destruction." "Spirit of destruction, I command you out." There was a pause that seemed like eternity. Then suddenly a deep, rough, voice replied, "We will not go. We will kill her!"

With all the spiritual authority I could muster, I said, "No, you will not kill her. In the name of Jesus, I forbid you. You will leave now!" The demon spirit resisted. I pressed in. "You have no authority here, leave now," I commanded. Elaine's body was contorted; her back was arched like a cat's back while stretching and her eyes were filled with rage. Again I commanded, "You will leave without hurt or harm to anyone here, in the name of Jesus." The power of the Holy Spirit came on me as never before. It was though I was watching the event on the sidelines. I was doing the work, but God was the source and the power behind the work. Eye to eye,

I confronted the spirit. We wrestled for a little longer, then it said, "We will leave, but we will return." "In the name of Jesus, I forbid you to return. You are barred from this spiritual house by the Blood of the Lamb." Immediately the spirit left, Elaine reached her hands to the sky and began praising the Lord. Tears streaming from her eyes, she thanked God for His miraculous healing. Approximately forty minutes of thanksgiving had passed, and Elaine explained she had never felt lighter, the darkness was gone and her hope had returned. She had truly been restored. It was through the authority of Jesus, by the use of His holy name, that those spirits were forced to exit their dwelling place. It was through the authority Jesus passed on to His Church which allowed me both the privilege and responsibility to face the challenge of wrestling with powers of darkness and war on behalf of the Kingdom of God.

BOUNDARIES

Below are some recommendations that can be used as a means of developing in the area of submission to leadership or maintaining position within a leadership role. Each one is equally important. Often, individuals who are in need of deliverance ministry have not experienced role modeling in the area of establishing boundaries and recognizing proper lines of authority. Most frequently, they have lived a life where boundaries have not been relevant. Hurting, broken individuals are often in that place as a result of their personal boundaries being jeopardized in some form or fashion. In turn, they become individuals who also cross boundary lines, thus the hurting continues. Crossing boundaries can wreak havoc on any structure of authority. It is recommended to carefully look at each area of one's life and access proper lines of authority. It is vitally important for those who are in need of deliverance prayer to practice obedience to those who are in authority over them, and to do so without an inward resistance to that leader-

ship. It is also critical that prayer ministers begin to develop a keen awareness of those they minister to who might be out of line in the area of authority. Rebellion is often well disguised. Therefore, discernment is a necessary tool. When developing techniques for following proper authority, whether it is in the home, at work, or in the church, one may draw boundaries around areas of leadership roles and the role of a follower and choose not to cross over into someone else's place of authority. An individual should not allow someone to take the responsibility of decision making from them if they are in a position of leadership. It is never good to judge or criticize the decision of a leader although, in saying that, it is extremely important to have lines of communication open to freely discuss areas of concern. If an individual is not involved in a particular aspect of a family, a church, or a ministry, then it is wise to refrain from any judgment or assessment of another's role or responsibility in that area. Understanding God's perspective of authority as it is written in scripture will most assuredly realign boundaries which have potentially been crossed. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to study authority in light of scriptures.

In His Word, God puts great emphasis on the role, function and, expectations of His chosen leaders; therefore it is wise to refrain from any kind of retaliation, slander, or gossip against leadership. He holds those in leadership accountable for the souls He has given them to be responsible for. Therefore, it is wise for every leader to be keenly aware of such responsibilities and take great care in exercising proper authority over each and every soul, doing so in a biblically-based manner. Love and concern from leaders is the best measure of a good shepherd. It is also extremely important that an individual not accept a position of authority without being given the authority to perform his duties effectively. Responsibility without necessary authority is a recipe for disaster; therefore avoid the

temptation to take such a position. God allows good and bad authority. Perhaps this may be one of the most difficult concepts to grasp as one studies spiritual authority. It is much easier to say that a particular leader is not ordained of God if they fail to meet our expectation of what a leader should or should not be doing. This is an erroneous approach. God sometimes places in leadership those He intends to groom along the way and He will use their successes and their failures for the good. Nevertheless, there are times when leaders are to be held accountable for their actions, and clear guidelines need to be in place which defines what is, and what is not, acceptable behavior, along with the consequences that may be expected if those actions are deemed unacceptable. Mainstream denominations, for the most part, have a hierarchy to which leaders must answer. Charismatic churches are less likely to have overseers in their structure that will hold leaders accountable for the betterment of the congregation. When there are issues, individuals must take the responsibility to go to that person and openly discuss their concerns. However, if there is no resolution, they may take it to a higher authority. If there is no higher authority, take it directly to the Lord and trust in the absolute certainty that God is just and He will address the issue in His time and in His way. Do not take it upon yourself for any kind of retaliation.

SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

The authority of a leader is jeopardized when he or she participates in actions contrary to the will of God, especially sin. Moreover, those in any leadership position must take extreme care in displaying a lifestyle that is consistent with the mores set forth in the Bible. Sin, slander, rebellion, pride, following the desires of the flesh, jealousy and envy are just a few ways in which leadership roles may be hindered. The gifts of God will make room for a position to be given, but character and

integrity will assure security of that position. Sinful behavior will always bring some form of destruction. It may not be immediate, but it will come forth. Humility, obedience, submission to authority, dying to the flesh, and increased love, are ways in which one can grow in spiritual authority. One may decide to simply follow the attributes that Jesus exhibited. He set forth the perfect example of what the life of a Christian should look like. Spiritual authority is very important in the government of God, and understanding authority is a foundational principle in bringing heaven's promises to earth. Therefore it is a necessary part of receiving one's healing or deliverance. Moses is also a wonderful role model to look at when studying authority because he was given great authority to lead a nation, receive the law and the commands of God, and even to speak with God face to face. The character of Moses was one of great humility. What a great lesson in understanding promotion! Before promotion and responsibility comes humility. Decide to walk in humility. Decide to walk in obedience to the Word of God. Decide to submit to authority in the church and in the home.

REBELLION

Rebellion has many names: insurgency, upheaval, revolt, uprising, revolution, mutiny, disobedience, etc...Rebellion is ultimately against God, against His Word, and against His leaders. Rebellion keeps the offender from receiving the blessings of God and it must be confessed as sin and repented. In Galatians 5:20, rebellion is described as a work of the flesh, and in I Samuel, chapter 15:23, it is referred to as the same as witchcraft. II Thessalonians 2:3 tells us that it must come first and it will lead to the lawless one, which is the antichrist or son of perdition. Isaiah 63:10 tells us that rebellion grieves the Holy Spirit.

But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he became their enemy; he himself fought against them.

Israel's rebellion resulted in God Himself opposing His own people. His divine blessings would rest on those who were faithful, and He promised punishment to those who were faithless. The Apostle Paul taught that these lessons of the past were to remind us lest we ourselves fall. Rebellion against God occurs when we choose not to walk out a life that he has planned for us. It occurs when we refuse to follow those he has placed over us as our authority. Are their areas in your own life where you have chosen to rebel against the precepts of God or against his chosen leaders? Were you rebellious against your parents? Are you rebellious toward your husband? Are you rebellious toward your church or your employer? Do you heed the laws of the land?

An evil man seeks only rebellion; Therefore a cruel messenger will be sent against him (Pr 17:11 NKJV).

Stop and pray. Ask the Lord to forgive you of all of your rebellion. Ask him to give you strength to acknowledge rebellion when it rises up in your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to uproot the seed of rebellion that is in your heart. If there is a spirit there, cast it out in Jesus's name, and enjoy your new-found freedom!

Korah rebelled against the spiritual authority that had been set in place and he then enticed others to join in. The earth opened up and swallowed all who joined him. The Apostle Paul reminds us through his writings to the churches that these things were written to remind us of spiritual consequences to decisions and actions that were made in the natural. We must indeed heed such warnings if our intent is to grow spiritually in the Lord. Paul wrote to the Church of Corinth that these things are recorded so that we may not desire evil, and so that they would serve as examples to what might happen when we do.

Rebellion in the church most frequently starts with the

pointing of fingers. Pointing out the fault of those in leadership, usurping God-given authority, or undermining the authority in place is dangerous. Therefore, refusing to obey will bring dire consequences into the life of an individual. Words of reviling bring on the wrath of God, and it is important to understand that this precept carries a promise of consequences. God promises retribution. He promises to utterly destroy those who slander their neighbor, and He also refuses to tolerate those who have a haughty look or an arrogant heart. Blaming leadership for wrongdoing without discussing it openly with that leader is an injustice that will invariably affect the entire congregation. Murmuring and complaining, backbiting, or an inward resistance to obey will all result in dangerous consequences that can have spiritual implications far more comprehensively than our earthly minds can understand. It was because of all the grumbling in the tents when the people of God were in the wilderness that God Himself promised to make them fall. Many did not see the Promised Land. Their own actions against Moses brought about their demise. Challenging, questioning, accusing, judging, or discrediting leadership has promised reprehensible chastisement, therefore, it would be wise to avoid any behavior which might in some way harm those in leadership positions. Heed the warning and refuse to speak against things you do not understand!

He who guards his mouth preserves his life, But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction (Pr 13:3 NJKV).

Criticism, fault-finding, gossip, or slander, are a few of the instruments or tools Satan uses to destroy one's credibility. Whether it is at church, at work or at home, negative words can cause serious harm. Everyone will be held accountable for the words that have been spoken. One must guard his words carefully. If there has been a time when your words have been used to hurt someone else, repent of those words, ask for for-

givenness and do whatever is in your power to right the wrong that has been committed. Words that have been spoken over you by someone in leadership, that have damaged your soul, may be washed away through prayer, forgiveness, and transformation of your mind. You need only to accept the way God sees you and actively reject the negative words of man. Individuals in need of spiritual healing may need to look at their own conversations. Do they exalt Christ or condemn man? The words that are used can give a clear picture of what is in the heart. Although often disguised, in certain environments these words can quickly lead to issues of the heart

Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment (Ro 13:2).

CORRUPTION IN THE CHURCH

There are certain conditions which may be described as "spiritual abuse" which would remove the obligation to submit to those in authority. However, it is essential that, once recognized, an individual should come out from under such an organization. Spiritual abuse occurs when those in leadership impose actions or attitudes that are out of the realm of their authority over an individual, which in turn will take away an individual's rightful freedom. "*Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.*" There are leaders who erroneously assume that they should have the right to govern actions of their congregation that do not pertain to spiritual issues. Conversely, there are leaders who will attempt to use spiritual issues as a means of controlling a member of the congregation. Both are wrong. Often, there is an issue of control and manipulation at work hiding behind these actions. Spiritual abuse can be as minor as a pastor insisting an individual participate in certain functions within the church, to psychological abuse through manipulation, and the most extreme cases where there has been physical or sexual abuse. Spiritual abuse is most preva-

lent within churches where there is no accountability. Church boards that are set up with those who will simply agree with the pastor, or those who are set up simply as figure heads with no real voice, open the congregation to absolute authority. Whenever there is absolute authority, absolute corruption is most likely to be present. Avoid structures where there is little or no accountability for either giving or receiving deliverance ministry. It is a recipe for disaster.

Ezekiel prophesied, *'This is what the sovereign Lord says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?'* (Eze 34:2 NIV). God has given a set of guidelines and expectations for those who are to watch over souls. They are to strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the injured, bring back the strays, and search for the lost. They are to guard over those God has given them to minister to, as He clearly stated through the mouth of His prophet Ezekiel, and He will hold them accountable for negligence in these areas. Examples of potentially corrupt leadership are readily found in scripture. Pastors or leaders who follow man instead of God open themselves up for corruption. One who uses the office as a means for personal gain will eventually pay a very high price. God reserves for those who are called to teach a higher form of judgment than for those who are to follow. He holds them to greater accountability and responsibility. An individual who rules with force and cruelty, or lords over those given him, may be corrupt leadership. Churches which have a history of splits, or have found themselves in legal battles, may be displaying discord, slander and strife which has been ignored and allowed free reign. They have become an unsafe environment where congregational members are hurt or even destroyed spiritually. It is wise to take heed and resist joining yourself with such corrupt activities. The lesson of Achan is one where the entire congregation suffered for the sins of one man. Therefore, sin

allowed to go unchecked, or even embraced, will have dire consequences on everyone involved!

FALSE SUBMISSION

The word *submit* means to obey, to be under obedience, to put under, to submit self unto and, according to the *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, it means to yield to governance or authority. It also means to subject oneself to a condition, treatment or operation or to present or propose to another for review. Submission is to yield to consideration or decision, or to yield to the authority or will of another. In addition, it also means to defer or consent to abide by the opinion or authority of another. False submission is frequently encountered in the environment of deliverance ministry. Individuals who need to be set free from demonic spirits have learned quite well how to disguise them. Therefore, it is sometimes necessary to look at the emotions behind the story as one ministers to an individual where spiritual authority has been compromised. False submission is outwardly obeying by the action or attitude, while inwardly plotting failure, defeat, or non-compliance to the rules or instructions given.

While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

AC 16:17

The words spoken here by the slave girl were true words, however, the intent was certainly suspect. God knows the hidden intentions of our hearts. To grow in the Lord, or to obtain healing of the soul, one must start with being honest. False

submission allows the enemy a foothold. It also thwarts the efforts of true healing in areas of brokenness. False submission is often seen in those who are in need of deliverance. They sometimes will attempt to disguise a rebellious heart, especially in the scope of a religious setting. Therefore, it is imperative as one ministers deliverance to be aware of signs of false submission. Signs of hidden resentment, covert attempts to discredit authority, or justifying noncompliance with fictitious excuses may indicate false submission.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Balance between independence and submission will be in place where there is a healthy spiritual environment. There will also be respect for leaders, but not to the extent of being idolized or placed on a pedestal. Also, there will be concern for the lost and for the sick. Godly leaders will encourage maturity and promote hearing the voice of God for oneself. Freedom to follow the voice of God will be an expectation and there will be encouragement of the use of individual gifts and ministry callings. A healthy spiritual environment will encourage an openness to discuss problems without accusations of rebellion. Freedom to voice opinions in the proper forum, without fear of being excommunicated or pushed out, will be evident not just in word but also in action. Identification of gifts within the congregation, and proper use of them, will not be suppressed, but encouraged, and proper training will be in place to allow for order to be maintained. Freedom is highly valued in the New Testament. Jesus broke the letter of the law in order to be obedient to the Spirit of the law. He healed on the Sabbath, He allowed His disciples to eat grain on the Sabbath, and He consistently showed mercy to those the Pharisees deemed unworthy. Jesus valued freedom. He valued people. He refused to allow the traditions of man to hinder the works He came to do. The Apostle Paul also valued

freedom. He acknowledged the rights of the Gentile Christians to omit the Jewish custom of circumcision. He stood in opposition to Peter in Antioch. He refused to force Gentiles to conform to the Jewish customs.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

Jesus Christ of Nazareth is indeed our greatest teacher as we study the realm of spiritual authority. He taught with authority, He healed with authority. He responded to the political regime of the day with great authority. Even the elements were subject to His authority. He then passed that same authority onto those of us who receive Him as Lord and Savior. He gave us the instructions to heal, deliver, preach, teach, baptize, and evangelize from city to city, nation to nation, and to do it in His name.

Jesus displays His authority.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mt 28:18).

Jesus taught with authority.

And they were astonished at His doctrine: For he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes (Mk 1:22 KJV).

Jesus healed with authority.

Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed" (Mk 1:41 NKJV).

Jesus understood His authority as He stood before Pilate.

Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin (Jn 19:11).

Jesus displays His authority over demons.

They were all amazed, and kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him” (Mk 1:27).

Jesus passed His authority to evangelize, to heal, and to deliver those held captive!

And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils (Mk 3:14–15 KJV).

Jesus sent out workers who would minister in word and deed in His authority.

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore as the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Lk 10:1–2)

Jesus commissioned His followers to make disciples in His authority.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Mt 28:19).

Jesus also gave His authority to seventy more followers to work deeds of deliverance.

The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us (Lk 10:17)!”

To whom did Jesus give His authority to? He gave it to all who profess to be His!

See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will

hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven (Lk 10:19–20).

We have been given the authority as His disciples to carry on the very work He came to do. He did not add the prerequisite of degrees, accolades, or appointments. Those are man-made traditions and have very little to do with the assignment Jesus has given. The scriptures do, however, say that a man must study to find himself approved. Much harm can come if individuals move out in ministry and have not put forth the time and effort to understand scripture. Also, one who ministers must have his own household in proper order, under legitimate authority. Therefore, it is wise to be under a man or woman of proven spiritual authority before going it alone. As previously discussed, the Bible places much emphasis on the need to submit to authority. Why is spiritual authority important in the study of deliverance ministry? Well, for several reasons. First, to be a deliverance minister it is of great importance to be in proper order. God is a God of order and He requires it of His servants. Second, Satan waits for the opportunity to kill, steal, and destroy. Hence, being improperly aligned opens the door for Satan to inflict his destructive plans against the servants of God. Third, if one is in need of deliverance ministry, there is invariably a break in the divinely given order of things. Whether it is with parents, at work, or in the church, it is inevitably against God and His written Word. Understanding spiritual authority is essential in dealing in the Ministry of Deliverance.

THE RED HEIFER THE LAW OF PURIFICATION

There is a wonderful old hymn written in the 1800's that expresses one of the most foundational principles of deliverance ministry. This principle must be understood to effectively minister healing to those who are under oppression.

Would you be free from your burden of sin?

Would you o'er evil a victory win?

There's pow'r in the Blood, pow'r in the Blood.

Would you be free from your passion and pride?

Come for a cleansing to Calvary's tide.

There's wonderful pow'r in the Blood.

There is pow'r, pow'r wonderful working pow'r

In the precious blood of the Lamb.

The Blood of Jesus Christ is alive, it is powerful, and it cleanses us from defilement. Moses understood the power of blood as he followed the instruction of God to have the Israelites apply it to the doorposts and lintels of their homes as a means of protection from the Death Angel during the Great

Exodus. The nation of Israel was to proceed with haste as they departed from the place of bondage and servitude. This Old Testament record of events, as is much of Old Testament scripture, is a foreshadowing of the life and Blood of Jesus, and the promise of redemption, justification, and sanctification offered through it. Sprinkling the blood was an action taken in the natural realm which had supernatural consequences and the same holds true today. An action is taken in faith and by taking such an action God responds to that faith. The Word of God states that without faith it is impossible to please Him. Pleading the Blood of Jesus during a deliverance session is never about method; it is, however, about power. It is also about faith. The combination of understanding the power in the Blood of Jesus and the faith to apply that Blood is the basis upon which the Ministry of Deliverance is established. Building on the premise that Blood cleanses us through washing away the death that occurs through sin, with the life that is present in the Blood of Jesus, we see an Old Testament example which foreshadows this process: the purification rites of the Red Heifer.

The slaughter of the Red Heifer was used as a sin offering as its ashes were placed in water during the rites of purification. Sin produces death, thus a sacrifice was needed to bare the guilt and cleanse the sins of the congregation. Hence, the defilement that was obtained through contact with the dead was symbolically washed away as the rite was performed. This typology portrays the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His Blood as a means of cleansing one from the pollution and defilement that is encountered throughout an individual's lifetime as he comes in contact with the death produced by sin. The Red Heifer was to be a heifer without defect or blemish, which had never been yoked. It was given to the priest to be taken outside the camp and slaughtered. The priest was to be present, but was not to identify with, thus lay hands on the sacrifice.

Its blood, along with the ashes after it was burned, was to be mixed with water. The priest dipped his fingers into the blood and sprinkled it seven times toward the Tent of Meetings, which was the dwelling place of the Lord. The priest threw the sacrificial heifer onto the fire for burning, then gathered up the ashes, which were kept outside the camp. The priest then placed those ashes in a jar and poured fresh water over it. He was to take hyssop, dip it in the water and ashes, and sprinkle the tent with all its furnishings, the altar, and the people who were there.

For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood (Heb 13:11–12).

If anyone came into contact with a dead corpse, whoever touched the dead body became ceremonially unclean and had to be cleansed with the “*water of purification*.” Willful neglect of the provision for cleansing would defile the tabernacle of the Lord. Therefore, the rite of purification was necessary to maintain the integrity of the sacred temple. Jesus is that water of purification. He is the living water, and it is His Blood that purifies. It is the power in that Blood that allows us to be sanctified or cleansed from our sins and all unrighteousness. Sprinkling was, and is, a means by which the virtue of the innocent sacrificial offering (the Blood of Jesus) gets transferred to the transgressor. This has application for the Ministry of Deliverance as individuals are called to minister one to another.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God...to Jesus the Mediator of a New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel (Heb 12:22–24 NKJV).

During this annual rite of purification, the priest used cedar wood which represents the Cross of Jesus, and hyssop was used for its medicinal characteristics and healing virtues.

Scarlet wool was used to tie the hyssop together, which may be representative of the cords that bound Jesus to the Cross. This became the means by which the purified water was sprinkled. Such sprinkling took place during the Great Exodus as God commanded the Israelites to sprinkle blood on their door posts and lentils, so that the Death Angel would pass over. Thus, the celebrated Passover became a remembrance to God's children that He had brought them out of bondage and delivered them from the destroyer. Passover is a celebration of deliverance from the kingdom of darkness, thus it celebrates salvation and all the benefits of it. Cedar, hyssop, and scarlet wool were also used in the cleansing of the lepers, as many were healed and declared clean. Therefore physical healing also resulted through this procedure. Cleansing from sin and death, as in the purification rites of the Red Heifer, also provided spiritual healing. Here we see the complete work of Jesus represented in the Old Testament act of sprinkling. Hyssop was also used to provide the sour wine for Jesus as He hung on the Cross and said, "It is finished." The complete healing of the body, soul and spirit, which was available through rites and ritual in the natural, is now available through Jesus in the spiritual.

For if the blood of goats bulls, with the sprinkling of ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

HEB 9:13-14

FIRST IN THE NATURAL

The Word of God contains other principles which are foundational to deliverance ministry. Adam, being the first man

in the natural realm was good in every way. However, he was only a foreshadowing and prototype of what was to come. It was through Adam that men received their natural bodies. Jesus, the last Adam, was perfect, and it is through Him that we receive our spiritual rebirth. Moreover, it is through His death, burial, and resurrection that we receive our glorified bodies. Below are more examples of how the imperfect is only a shadow of the perfect, and prefigures true realities of the heavenly things of God.

But, it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual (I Co 15:46).

There are many biblical examples of the principle of "*first in the physical, and then in the spiritual*" found throughout scripture. This principle emanates from God Himself. He prepared for man an earthly father, and He will become their Heavenly Father when they become *born again*. First, man is born in the natural world, then he must be born of the Spirit. There is an earthly sanctuary, but a heavenly sanctuary awaits those who are God's chosen. There was the establishment of an Old Covenant where blood was supplied by the sacrifice of an animal, then there was the establishment of a New Covenant where the Blood of Jesus covers once and for all the sins of those who will receive Him. In scripture the law was written on stone in the natural first, though God knew from the beginning it was His plan to write it on the hearts of man by the Spirit of God. Old Jerusalem will be replaced by a New Jerusalem and the earthly army of David was only a shadow of what is to come when God brings forth His heavenly army! The principle of "*first in the natural, and then in the spiritual*" is important in understanding the cleansing process. Cleansing under the Old Covenant was ritualistic in form and function. It was an atoning by the slaughter of an innocent animal. Let's look closer at some of the principles of spiritual cleansing.

The word *taher* (Strong's # 2891) in the Hebrew language means "to be clean, pure." *Tahor* means *make clean, to purify, to be pure, clean and uncontaminated*" thus cleansing physically, ceremonially, and morally was a necessary ritual. God demanded of His people a pure heart. Sin contaminates and He desired spiritual purity, as well as moral purity from them although they were conceived and born into sin. The process of cleansing the nation of Israel took place first in the natural through the use of the blood of animals. Abraham was instructed by God to go to the land of Moriah and offer his only son as a burnt offering to the Lord. Abraham prepared an altar, tied his son, laid Isaac on the altar, and raised his knife to slay his miracle child who was conceived at a time when his parents were well past childbearing years. The Lord called out to Abraham and the child was not sacrificed. God Himself provided a ram for the slaughter just as He provided His Son, Christ Jesus, as our substitutionary sacrifice—first in the natural then in the spiritual.

This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

1 JN 5:6–8 NKJV

The rite of purification, dipping in the water and the blood, was once performed in the natural and now is available in the spiritual, through the Holy Spirit. Today, Baptism by water is, in a sense, the continuation of the rite of purification, as is the sprinkling of the Blood. John the Baptist set the stage for one who would come after him, the one who was ahead of him in rank, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. John testified that

he baptized with water so that the one coming, the true Messiah, would be revealed to Israel. He testified that he saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and that the Spirit remained on Jesus as he baptized Him in the river of Jordan. John testified to the word of the Lord stating that Jesus was the Son of God, and in Him, God was well pleased. John said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, Jesus's, however, was a baptism of the Spirit and of fire; it was into a new order. What was once born of the flesh was now being born of the Spirit and even Jesus, the Son of God, went through the waters of Baptism to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus came by water, the baptism of rebirth, and by blood, the crucifixion of the Lamb of God. John the Baptist did not want to baptize Jesus because he felt unworthy. Nevertheless, he was chosen to be the prophetic voice, proclaiming the Messiah, so that all that was written would be fulfilled. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward cleansing and an acknowledgment of the rebirth in Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior. Jesus came as living water to wash us internally as the Baptism washes us symbolically from the defilement of sin. We are spiritually reborn, and it is in the waters of Baptism that we are buried with Christ, so that we are to be resurrected with Him in our new glorified bodies.

Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. While this was a display of His servant nature, there was more. Jesus explained to Peter, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." He also told Peter that unless Jesus washed him, He would have no share with Him. He would be, in a sense, rejecting the purifying grace of Jesus, and although he did not understand at that time, Jesus explained that the time would come when He would understand. That time did come. Jesus knew there was sin knocking at the door. He knew Peter was going to give the devil a foothold. Jesus knew that although Peter had given his life to serve Him, he was going

to need a spiritual washing. He was on the verge of denying he ever knew the Son of God. Jesus came to minister, to pour out Himself for the good of others. He humbled Himself, taking the position of a bondservant to show to the disciples the eternal principle of spiritual washing and cleansing of the body and the soul from the pollutants of sin. He exemplified the true nature of God, and gave Himself as sacrifice, so that we might have a share with Him, through the Blood and the water, both testifying to the true nature of Christ. The spiritual washing that was to come is an absolute necessity for having share in the Kingdom of God. Spiritual washing is required to have a part in Christ, to become partakers of Jesus. He justifies and sanctifies all who are His, so willingly take part in the spiritual washing provided by Jesus Christ through His shed Blood, the power of the Holy Spirit and the washing of the water of the Word!

For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end. As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (Heb 3:14–15).

The Blood of the Cross washes. Without the shedding of Blood, there is no forgiveness of sin, and sin produces death. There is life in the blood. Jesus sacrificed His Blood so that our sins could be washed away. The Blood testifies to the saving power that was supplied by God to us through the Blood of His own Son. The blood speaks from the ground. It has a voice, better than that of Abel, who was killed by his brother, Cain. It says to the redeemed of the Lord, "be washed." It covers the death produced by sin with eternal life by faith in the Blood of Jesus. The Blood, which was shed on the Cross of Calvary, was indeed our penalty paid!

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness

that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Tit 3:4–5).

It is the Holy Spirit that bears witness with the Blood and the Water. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and knows all things. The Holy Spirit landed on Jesus and God spoke to John confirming that Jesus was indeed His Son. It was the Spirit who inspired John even in his mother's womb. It was the Holy Spirit who was to come to all who would receive Him. It is by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit that our souls are regenerated, restored, and renewed. There is a process of refinement that takes place, in all who are willing, to be purified from the defilement of sin and death. The Spirit offers regeneration, Baptism by fire, and the refiner's fire, which burns off all that is not of God. The Blood, the Water, and the Holy Spirit all point to Jesus as our Savior, our Redeemer, and our Restorer. The three testify. The three are in agreement. We are inwardly defiled by our sin and the sins of our forefathers. We are outwardly defiled by the guilt and shame that we wear from that sin. Just as we chose to participate in sin, we must also choose to participate in a spiritual washing. Let's take another look at the Old Testament process of purification and see what we can learn from the actions that were taken.

Why was cedar wood used in the purification process? Cedar was considered the "King of Trees" in the lands of Israel. The trees were found in the Sinaitic desert. The wood was used in the process of purification, in connection with scarlet and hyssop, *because of its resistance to decay and its great value*. Cedar trees were in God's garden. They were tall with beautiful branches and were often found beside the waters. Cedars were used in building beams and pillars. The wood was also most frequently used for carved work and was considered the most valuable kind of wood then known in that region. Hyssop is an aromatic plant of the mint family which

has a straight stalk and white flowers. The hairy surface of its leaves and branches held liquids well and made it suitable as a sprinkling device for use in purification rituals. The bunch of hyssop was tied together with a scarlet thread and was used *because of its medicinal characteristics as well as its structure.*

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow (Ps 51:7).

Scarlet wool was used in the vestments of the High Priest, the hangings of the tabernacle, the purification of the leper, the water of purification, and the scarlet cord of Rehab. It represents the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Symbolically, scarlet wool may be viewed as a type and foreshadowing of the Blood Jesus shed as He was hanging on the Cross. It prefigures the Blood of Jesus as it is used in the process of cleansing of our hearts and conscience from dead works.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most High Place by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

HEB 10:19–22 NIV

SPIRITUAL WATER

Purification rites quite frequently employed the use of water. Those in need of cleansing were required to wash themselves and their clothes. A person who was clean was to take the waters of purification and sprinkle it on the defiled, along with their tent and its furnishings.

A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water,

sprinkle it on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave (Nu 19:18 NKJV).

Even given the ritualistic nature of such a rite, God required sincerity of heart. Individuals who simply went through the process without a contrite heart were considered to be an abomination before the Lord. Jesus Christ is Living Water, the Word made flesh, which came to wash us just as in the rites of purification. This is our means of purification today. It is pertinent to understand that these Old Testament processes did not fade away into obscurity, but are used as a means of pointing us toward the relevance of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They have been substituted with a more perfect way, a way that once and for all is a final, completed work. It is accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit, as you drink from the Living Water, the water of the Word. Being washed by it occurs as you spend time studying, meditating, and reading the Bible. These principles are foundational to those who pray for deliverance or those who receive. Frequently, those in need of healing, body, soul or spirit, do not understand the fullness of what Jesus Christ did for each of us, and what His Blood still does for us today.

Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I give them will never be thirsty. The water that I give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life” (Jn 4:13–14).

CLEANSING THE ENVIRONMENT

A path to spiritual wholeness starts in the home. Set the atmosphere. Your home should be a haven for the Holy Spirit to dwell. Take out anything that defiles. Remove music, TV shows, movies, games, books, magazines, etc., that reflect displeasing images, or which are of the occult, or false religions. Remove any foreign idols that are used to worship false

gods or images, even those used just for decoration. Get rid of memorabilia that brings to recollection ungodly relationships. Forbid the taking of God's name in any form or fashion in your home. Destroy items that represent alliances with ungodly organizations: swords, rings, journals, etc. If you are not sure what might be defiling your home, simply ask the Spirit of Truth and He will guide you into all truth. Set the atmosphere by inviting the presence of the Lord into your home. Plead the Blood of Jesus over your family and your home. Play music of praise and worship. Dedicate your home to the Lord and to His purposes, and keep it clean, free from all defilement. Stop and pray now. Commit your home and welcome the presence of the Lord! Sprinkling the Blood of Jesus over the environment is an act of faith in that Blood. It is not a ritual or method, but a means of stating in the spiritual realm that there is power in the Blood, as well as an outward sign of acknowledgment in the New Covenant.

In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:21–22 NIV).

The power is in the Blood. Successful deliverance ministry is based on the understanding that the Blood still cleanses. Acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior strips spirits of their influence, and the Blood of Jesus releases their grasp. To plead the Blood of Jesus over those who are being delivered weakens the hold of the spirits who are present. Often there is a root or stronghold, which originally allowed the spirit access; it must be discovered and dealt with, both of which occur through the power of the Holy Spirit and the revelation He gives. Pray that the Holy Spirit expose the root or stronghold. Then, commanding in the name of Jesus that the spirit leave, will guarantee freedom from that particular spirit. If the root or stronghold is not dealt with, the demonic spirit

can return bringing more spirits back in. It is critical that a person going through deliverance ministry understand this principle and immerse himself or herself in the Word of God. The Word washes, the Word fills, and the Word is our weapon against the enemy of our souls! There are some constants seen throughout scripture as it relates to the Blood of Jesus. It purifies, atones, cleanses, and covers. Blood is the seed of life and life is symbolized by the blood. It is sacred to God. Blood is used for consecration as a means of separating to God what is holy. It is critical for right standing before God, and God required it in establishing His Covenant. The Blood answers to all of Satan's accusations because we have been redeemed by the Blood. The word *redemption* in the Hebrew means "to release on receipt of by paying a ransom price, to redeem, to deliver or to sever," and in the Greek it means, "a loosening particularly by paying a price." Redemption is the special intervention of God for the salvation of man. He provided the Blood of His Son Jesus Christ for the penalty of sin and moreover, purchased our freedom from the dominion of sin. Therefore there has been a price paid for each and every believer to operate in the freedom and liberty Christ provided for in His own Blood and are no longer subject to the kingdom of darkness: sin, guilt, and death.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree" (Gal 3:13 NIV).

First in the natural and then in the supernatural, the Old Testament required payment for the sins of the people, through the blood of sacrificed animals. This ritualistic method had to be performed yearly. Jesus became our eternal sacrifice and in the spiritual realm did once and for all what the old system could not accomplish. Thus, such a sacrifice of animals was an imperfect shadow of what was to come. Jesus offered a better sacrifice. Apart from the shedding of Blood, there is no for-

givenness of sins. The Blood of Jesus results in the deliverance from the power of sin, deliverance from the presence of sin, and deliverance from the permanence of sin. Herein lies the Good News; we have been delivered! As Christians, we have been delivered from the corruption of sin, its power, its presence, and its permanence. We are freed from any hold it has on us. It is, however, our responsibility to confess and repent from sin that we participate in once we have been saved. It is also our responsibility not to become entangled with sin and its author again. We have been bought back, purchased from the kingdom of darkness, where we were because of our sin. We belong to the kingdom of light, therefore, we are to walk as children of light and no longer allow sin to rule our lives in any area! Praise God, it is only by His grace that we can walk as children of the light. We are justified by the Blood!

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Ro 5:8–9 NAS).

The word *justification* means the act of pronouncing righteousness. It is a legal term referring to the state of being in which one is pronounced as being in right standing before the Lord. It is not a process by which sin is overlooked or ignored. The term simply signifies that the legal demands have already been met and one must acquit the accused. God is a holy God and man is inherently unrighteous, born into sin. Therefore, God has provided a means by which we can stand before Him. He made a covenant in the Blood of His own Son, which puts us in right standing. We are justified by Him and through His Blood once we accept Him into our hearts by confession; therefore, we no longer need to carry the guilt and shame that was produced in us through sin. We can boldly approach the throne of grace with the understanding that we are fully justified by His Blood. Hallelujah! Condemnation and guilt no

longer have a place, and must leave. We are not only justified, but we are sanctified by the Blood.

Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by His own blood (Heb 13:12).

The process of *sanctification* is accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit and the Blood of Jesus. It is the separation from all evil for a sacred purpose. It is the process of becoming more like Jesus, growing in holiness and becoming spiritually pure. The process of sanctification is a requirement of our faith. It is accomplished by God Himself, as He works in our lives, molding us and making us into His own image. It is also accomplished by the choices we make as we allow God to refine and purify us from the consequences of sin and the death that it has produced in our lives. He offered this promise of sanctification by means of a sign to His people, which was established through the honoring of His holy day, the Sabbath.

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord (Heb 12:14 NAS).

As discussed earlier in the text, the Mosaic rite of purification found in the Old Testament was intended to wash away the sins of God's people. This was an outward action that could not cleanse the moral and spiritual nature of a man, but was a symbolic reminder of the necessity for cleansing. However, in the economy of God, through His Son Jesus Christ, believers are washed by His Blood and the Word of God, and are under the New and Eternal Covenant. We are under a higher code of ethics. Believers have been redeemed or purchased back from the slavery under sin and evil, and have been placed in right standing before a Holy God. We are being made holy and transformed into His likeness by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. Rejoice now and praise God for all that He has done. As you begin to grasp this truth, you can also begin to fight the words, plans and schemes of the enemy when he

comes to kill, steal and destroy what God has so graciously provided for you.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me” (Ps 51:10).

Let this now be your prayer. Cry out to God for the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit to work in your heart. There is always more of God to have, more to understand, and more of you to be transformed into His image. Pray that the areas of hidden sin be revealed. Pray that the washing begin. Ask the Lord to fill your heart with a passion and desire to be like Him. Remind spirits of darkness that they have no control over you. You have been redeemed, justified, and are being sanctified. Those who believe that Jesus died, was buried and rose from the dead are in covenant with Him as His chosen people. If in covenant with an Almighty God, then He has given all the privileges gained through the Blood of Jesus. Demonic forces have lost all power and influence over you, once these principles have been accepted as truth. Comprehension of these principles of the power in the Blood is critical in receiving and maintaining, as well as praying for, the healing of the body, soul, and spirit.

BLOOD COVENANT

He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. He is mindful of his covenant forever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.

Ps 105:7–10

A covenant is a binding agreement between two parties. It is a legal treaty. God made a covenant with His people. He wrote it in His Word. He signed it with the Blood of His Son and He sealed it with the power of His Holy Spirit. This concept is of vital importance as one moves in faith for healing and deliverance. Foundational to every prayer of faith is the belief in one’s own heart that God will keep His promises. Let’s look at what these words actually mean. The word *covenant* denotes “*cutting*.” In this ancient custom, an innocent animal was slaughtered and cut in half. The two participants who were joining into covenant were thus vowing that if either broke covenant, the same fate as the slaughtered animal would fall upon them. Once the covenant was made, those involved would partake of a common meal, thus acknowledging their agreement. The blood of the

innocent victim was then divided; one-half of the blood was sprinkled on the altar and the other half was sprinkled on the people.

For the people of Israel, the sprinkling of blood was an outward action which was an acknowledgement of the atonement for their sins. Through this process, they were graciously introduced into fellowship with Jehovah, God. They were recognized as consecrated unto God and were His covenant people. In the Book of Genesis, God made a covenant with Abram. He promised that Abram's descendants would be as numerous as the stars, and that his heir would come from his own body. God brought Abram out of the land of Ur of the Chaldeans and promised to give him Canaan. God explained that his descendants would be foreigners in a land that was not theirs, and that they would be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. God promised Abram that He would judge the nation which had held them captive and that after such time, the Israelites would come out of that place of bondage with many possessions. Abram brought animals to God for sacrifice. They were then slaughtered and God Himself passed through the pieces. Then a smoking oven and a flaming torch passed between the slaughtered animal, which symbolized the glory of God as He confirmed His irrevocable Word. Henceforth, a relationship was established between God and His chosen people. It would be a bond that would promise posterity and greatness. An everlasting covenant was established that could not be broken. It was not reliant on man. It was a divine agreement that would be perpetually acknowledged because it was grounded solely on the sovereign will of God. Four hundred and thirty years later, God did just as He said: He delivered His people from slavery. While the Great Exodus from Egypt was a symbolic picture of salvation, it was also much more. There were four distinct aspects of God's promise which were fulfilled: He promised to deliver them

from their captors; He promised that He would make them His people; He promised that He would be their God, and He promised that He would bring them to a land of promise, the land of Canaan, as a perpetual holding, and a spiritual picture of the New Jerusalem that awaits them. God gave a promise of salvation, redemption, deliverance, and glorification in and through His covenant.

A *covenant* is a formal, solemn, or binding agreement, sometimes referred to as compact, which was a written agreement of a promise usually under seal between two or more parties, especially for the performance of an action. The term is indicative of a promise by pledge, and in the New Testament actually signifies, "*a disposition of property by will or otherwise.*" There are three parts of the Divine Covenant: the promise, the blood, and the seal. The *promise*, in which the words given offer a pledge, is a binding agreement, compact, or an oath. The promise is accompanied by an offer of sacrificial blood. The shedding of Blood was required in the establishment of the New Covenant, just as the first Covenant was ratified and dedicated by sacrifice. The blood which was provided through the sacrificial killing of an innocent animal was used to cover sin. Sin produces death, therefore a sacrifice of life was a necessary part which was employed; the life is in the blood according to the Word of God. Therefore, an animal was slain yearly as sacrifice under the Old Covenant. The Blood of Jesus offers a better way which only required a one-time sacrifice under the New Covenant; it was given voluntarily. Christ laid down His life by choice. The written agreement was then to be sealed. *The seal* used within the Old Covenant was circumcision. The seal secured the oath. It was an outward action, with an inward spiritual implication, and acted as a means of identification as God's chosen people. Under the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit seals those who have entered into covenant.

THE DIVINE OATH

A covenant comes with an oath which embodies certain terms of the covenant, thus making it irrevocable. In some covenants there are *Terms of the Covenant*: a collection of “if, then” conditions governing the agreement between the parties. However, the promise God made to Abram regarding the Promised Land had no other stipulations. It was a perpetual promise, one that man would not influence or change. God was, and is, faithful to His covenant. Possessing the land was a promise to His covenant people. Conquering the land would assure that God’s people, Israel, would experience His rest. Understanding that there are some conditional promises and some that are unconditional will allow the reader to grasp the importance of the Words of the King of Kings as they are given in this irrevocable contract! God is our King. He keeps His written covenant. It is important to understand such principles as they are conveyed in scripture. There are promises throughout the Word of God that are of great importance during the process of healing and deliverance. These promises are a written guarantee of the Word given to us by God. Standing on these promises in faith is the action which one must take to ensure victory. God said that without faith it is impossible to please Him, therefore, it is a prerequisite in obtaining the very promises that are written. The words of a king must not be taken lightly. God has exalted His Word and His name above everything. There is not one thing in heaven or on earth that is held in greater esteem. Therefore, if there is anything trustworthy, it is the Word of God.

I bow down toward your Holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything

(Ps 138:2).

His name and His Word are blasphemed among those who are lost and dying. They are being used as instruments

of Satan to do his bidding; that is to defile the holy things of God. There is nothing more valuable, or true, on heaven or on earth than the written Word of our King. His Word and His name are to be honored greatly. Those who believe will tremble at His Word and stand in awe of it. They will speak it faithfully and boldly proclaim it to others. The Word of God is pure, perfect, and sure. It has the power to sanctify, to heal, and to make free. It illuminates, exhorts, and makes the simple wise. It is enduring, effectual, and inspiring. It can create, regenerate, or destroy when spoken in faith. It has fruit-producing capabilities as it is sent out. In the heart of every believer, there is an undisputable fact: the Word of God is true. This Covenant or Testament is valid yesterday, today, and forever, no matter how the world chooses to challenge or change it in some form or fashion. The one who truly believes in Jesus will not be shaken by attempts to contest the validity of the Holy Scriptures because they are received by faith and by revelation. Henceforth, they cannot be disproved by man because they were given by divine intervention to the one who has accepted Jesus Christ of Nazareth as their own personal Lord and Savior. Most importantly, the Word of God is the final authority. The good news of the Gospel is now written in the believer’s heart; it is permanent, confirmed, and sealed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Forever, O Lord, your Word is settled in heaven (Ps 119:89 NKJV).

The Old Covenant and the New Covenant offer great insight into the plans God has for His covenant people. As discussed previously, things must first take place in the natural and then in the supernatural. This principle provides an understanding of the importance of the Old Testament happenings; most of which were used as foreshadowing of what was to come in the future. The plans and purposes of God did not change from Old to New, but were built upon from the

beginning of time. Jesus said, “*Before Abraham was, I AM.*” Throughout the Old and New Covenants, there is the promise, the blood, and the seal encompassed by this unbreakable agreement!

OLD COVENANT

The Promise

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Ge 12:1–3).

The Blood

Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he dashed against the altar. Then he took the Book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and said, “See the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words (Ex 24:6–8).

The Seal: Circumcision of flesh

You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you...So shall My covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant...Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant (Ge 17:11–14).

NEW COVENANT

The Promise

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast (Eph 2:8–9).

The Blood

In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This is the new covenant in My blood. Do this in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes (I. Co 11:25–26).

The Seal: Circumcision of the Heart

But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment (II Co 1:21–22).

What does this New Covenant seal of the Holy Spirit promise you? As a New Covenant believer, you now have a promised seat with Jesus in heavenly places. You have been circumcised by putting off the body of flesh and raised with Him through faith in the power of God. You were buried with Him in baptism, filled with the Spirit of God, seated with Him in heavenly places, and marked with His Spirit as a deposit of the heavenly good that is available for all who believe. You have been given authority to act as His ambassador and representative. It is only through the sovereign power of God that man can share in the benefits of the Kingdom. It is through His Spirit that man is empowered to act on behalf of the Kingdom. It is through the Blood of His Son that we have the authority to perform deeds of the Kingdom. Believers have been delegated and employed for the expansion of the Kingdom. How awesome is His plan!

In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; when you were buried with him in baptism, you were raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

COL 2:11-12

The seal promises you the pledge, or down payment on your inheritance. It is a mark of authority which must not be overlooked. The seal is more than an indicator of those who are marked and destined for Heaven. It is an official emblem providing those who wear it with equal power to operate as the one who first designated the seal. It is a statement in the heavenly realm and all powers and principalities must acknowledge. It is also a qualifying emblem of possession. Therefore, the seal of the Holy Spirit is a mark signifying that, as a believer, you are indeed possessed of God, owned by Him, and operate under His power and authority. It is a decree that proclaims you have been saved, redeemed, and reconciled, thus are bound for eternal glory.

In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

EPH 1:13-14

Please take note that both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant contained within them the promise, the blood, and the seal. Within the context of the Old Covenant was a promise which was fulfilled in the New Covenant. It is the promise that God would cleanse those who would receive Him from all defilement, from idolatry, and give each one a new heart and a new spirit. What was once defiled by the things of this world would be washed away, not externally and ceremoni-

ally, but inwardly and relationally. God gave a promise to His people that He would cleanse them from their uncleanness. What a beautiful promise of deliverance from evil!

I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

EZE 36:25-26

In the Old Testament, by way of eminence etched in stone, God established His law to be used as a method for pointing out sin, and for providing the commands and precepts regulating man's moral life. It was the school master or tutor showing the way. The law pointed man toward holiness by showing how tremendously incapable he is, in and of himself, to keep the law. God so graciously gave the true picture, through the written code, of the total dependence we must have on Him. Through the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments, God revealed His will, so that we may recognize our own transgressions and the burdens and bondage that they bring on us. It is in the law that God shows His holiness; the law is holy, spiritual, good, and just. It is a means by which He displays His righteousness and provides a blueprint for us to live by. It is our disciplinarian and it is meant to mold us, instruct us, and correct us. Justification comes through faith in Jesus Christ and there is no other way to obtain eternal life. However, we are to be doers of the law and not just hearers. We are to uphold the law. It is through the law that we have gained the knowledge of sin and, therefore men are without excuse. The law was given for our own sake, but the law of love requires a higher standard than the written law of old.

The New Covenant supersedes, but does not abrogate the Old Covenant; it is a more complete and perfect way.

The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth comes through Jesus Christ. The New Covenant is the law of love, and its preeminence will always keep those who claim Jesus Christ as Lord, submitted to it in action, however, not be bound to it as in slavery. It affords those committed to it the gracious duties and privileges of a redeemed people possessing the dynamic power obtained through His precious Spirit. The Gospel, submitting to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, is the way to salvation and stands in opposition to legal justification. However, the Gospel and the law are forever connected, and to destroy one is to destroy the other. Jesus Christ became our High Priest and mediator. The hearts that had been hardened because of sin and abominations would now be soft and pliable in the hands of God. Man fell away and their minds were darkened and they were destined to live a life alienated from God, but God Himself reconciled the unbelieving, through belief in Jesus Christ, therefore bridging the gap that once stood to separate sinful man from a Holy God. Believers, under the New Covenant, have freedom and liberty through repentance of sin, as they are restored to wholeness. Where there had been death because of sin, the Blood of Jesus Christ flows through His Body, the Church, and washes it clean. Death and darkness are replaced with light and life. It is in the flow of that Blood where the power for deliverance and restoration is found. Dead works and seared consciences are restored. What was once routine and ritual is replaced with reconciliation and relationship. The New Covenant offers the wiping away of defilement. It satisfies the demands of God's holy nature. Impurities are purged out, cast out, washed out, or burned out. It is the promise of being made holy, not only in standing, but also in action and deed. By whatever means, sanctification is a promise of the New Covenant recipient. Old Testament covenant participants were stoned for their sinful conduct since a just God required retribution for injustice.

Under the old system, which was a mere earthly shadow of the heavenly reality, there was only temporary relief from the guilt resulting from sin. However, under the New Covenant, that requirement was met by God Himself as He gave His Son. Therefore, justice has been served with the New Covenant, and Blood has been provided for the remission of sin. Guilt is permanently removed and sin, when repented of with a pure, contrite heart, is permanently wiped away.

The New Covenant gives believers an inheritance through a written will. Death has to occur before a will can be established. The Old Covenant also required death, the death of an innocent slaughtered animal, to become established. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the New Testament has been inaugurated to give believers liberty from all forms of darkness, authority over demon spirits, and freedom from the power of sin, sickness, and death. He was not only the testator, but the actual sacrifice, thus having become the necessity through His own death and meeting the requirements in His own Blood. In His written will, He generously left all that was His to His children. This will gives believers a seat in heaven with Jesus Christ. It allows for the believer to walk a life of victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Jesus Christ lived under the law, He died under the law, and He freed us from the law. He answered to every requirement of the law, thereby providing membership into the Kingdom of God. Henceforth, believers have become a vital asset in advancing that Kingdom. Believers gained access into the Heavenly throne room without fear of death in the presence of a Holy God because of the written will signed in Blood. A robe of righteousness is placed over everyone who accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, thus allowing for a holy position before the Lord. He willed His children His robe which is spotless and pure. A onetime sacrifice, voluntarily

given, made in a heavenly sanctuary, completed the efficacy of His sacrifice into eternity.

Through the New Covenant, each believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God distributes spiritual gifts for the growth and development of the Body, as well as the expansion of the Kingdom. Inherently, believers under the new system are empowered to work for the good of the Kingdom that becomes their responsibility and duty. It also becomes their desire. Faith and repentance are also duties of the believer. With freedom comes responsibility. Words written on stone under the Old Covenant would make their way into the hearts of those who would accept Jesus Christ. No longer would man need a teacher, but God Himself would provide the teaching and guiding of the Holy Spirit. It would be engraved on their hearts and in their minds by the finger of God. It is never far off, nor is it hard to understand. Comfort, guidance, and safety are also given through His Spirit, and revelation and spiritual power would now be accessible to all believers. This New Covenant provides the assurance of our faith; our hearts sprinkled from evil, and our bodies washed with pure, living water.

He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name (Ps III:9).

Understanding covenant is a critical aspect of faith, and it is critical to the process of healing and deliverance. It is important because it is God's promises, direction, and desires for His children. It also insures believers of their rights and authority in standing against the devil and his servants. We base our faith on what is written. God's Word is His covenant to His people and it is truth. When faced with difficult situations in life it is of the utmost importance that we have a firm foundation on which to stand. Our foundation should be built on principles that cannot be shaken. If we are to stand through difficulties, it is essential that we grasp the relevance

of covenant so that our faith may increase and, in a time of need, that faith will produce good fruit. If we believe God, then we must also believe His written Word in its entirety. It is in the presence of trust in His Word that we can receive the fullness of His promises. Faith must not be temporary or intellectual. It must come from the seed planted within us by God, watered by the Word, and acted upon with child-like acceptance. Faith is boundless. It is the confidence, conviction, and trustworthiness of the Word of God. It is reliance on Him because of His holy character and nature. It is the main ingredient of our salvation. It is a requirement of our prayers. It is the substance of things not yet seen, but already established within the heart. Faith in the Word offers a promise of sanctification, assurance of eternal life, and adoption into the Kingdom of God. The written Word is a valid, infallible covenant and the King of Kings has spoken. Praise be to God! A covenant is sacred and binding. It is binding not only on those who made it, but also on those who are represented by it. Therefore we, as Christians, should understand the agreements that we are under when we call ourselves part of the family of believers. We are in an eternal partnership through divine covenant!

I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness and you will acknowledge the Lord (Hos 2:19–20 NIV).

MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

There is no clearer picture of Covenant than the one represented in the Book of Hosea. Hosea, or *Hoshea* in Hebrew, denotes *salvation or deliverance*. The Book of Hosea is the first Book of the Minor Prophets as they are called due to the brevity or pithiness of the books. The prophet who wrote Hosea, and whom the book is named after, was in public ministry to the northern kingdom of Israel from 748 BC to 690

BC, around the death of Hezekiah. During this time, Israel was experiencing great prosperity and growth, but the moral climate had declined into spiritual adultery and corruption. God had a message and He wanted Hosea to bring it forth. It was a threefold, consistent message which still rings true today; God abhors sin, judgment is inevitable, and God's love and mercy are ever present. Hosea, through his marriage to an unfaithful wife, is a story and a message of relentless love. God's unfailing love for His unfaithful people and the covenant He made, that He would be their God, was patterned throughout the Old Testament scriptures. God sought reconciliation, not destruction. His plan was to bring Israel back into right relationship, and repentance was the key to doing so. Israel was steeped in the idolatry and wickedness which brought God's people into captivity and, if repentant, then restoration would surely follow.

God chose Hosea's physical life and family to represent a spiritual picture of the state of His people. Hosea took the wife of "whoredom" and married Gomer, a prostitute, by a divine order of God. Israel is depicted prophetically as Jehovah's adulterous wife, put away for a time and brought back into restoration, even after her unfaithfulness. Gomer bore three children and God Himself gave the names that were to be used. Found within the meaning of each of their names was a prophetic representation of the Word of the Lord to His people. Symbolically, each of the names conveyed a part of the prophetic message. *Jezreel* meaning "God scatters or God sows," was the name of the firstborn son. In judgment, it pointed to the sin of Jehu for the abominations committed by his house. It also prophetically pointed forward to Israel's future restoration. In II Kings 10:28–31 there was a massacre at Jezreel. Jehu wiped out Baal, however, he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, which was the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan. God reminded the people of Israel of the

dangers of idolatry, which is spiritual prostitution. Even in the face of infidelity, God reminded His covenant people of His promise, as He continued in faithfulness to the covenant of love which He held for His children. Prophetically, it was a promise of the incoming of the Gentiles.

I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called, 'Not my Loved one. I will say to those called, 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God'" (Hos 2:23 NIV).

Lo-ruhamah, the name given to the second child means "The Lord will no longer have pity, or no mercy." God was reminding His people of the dire effects of sin. He was, in effect, saying that He would lift His compassion from an adulterous nation. Through their actions they had brought about separation which resulted in the loss of divine favor and protection. The third child was *Lo-ammi* which signified "the breaking of covenant relationship between the Lord and Israel." The Lord was reminding His people of the seriousness of breaking covenant. Such an act would inevitably lead to separation between Him and His children, thus also affecting generations to come.

Then the Lord said, "Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people and I am not your God" (Hos 1:9 NIV).

The marriage bond between God and the Israelites had been broken by unfaithfulness; reconciliation was sought, not divorce. God places such an emphasis on covenant. Our culture today has a very difficult time seeing the relevance He places on it as we realize an astronomical divorce rate. But to God, marriage is a binding covenant "till death do us part." God and Israel had this kind of bond, a covenant. It was His desire that they would be His faithful Bride. Hosea and his unfaithful wife, Jesus and His Bride, the Church, and God and His people are all examples of covenant. Relationally, God expects from His people the same commitment that is

expected in a marriage, pure fidelity. He desires devotion, loyalty, faithfulness, and allegiance. But just as Gomer, Hosea's wife, had a distorted view of love, so did the people of God. They had been unfaithful to God by submitting themselves to the idols that had permeated the culture in which they lived. They accepted the way of pagans and turned their backs on a holy God. They bowed down to false images, images that could not speak. They chose to immerse themselves in things that were of no value. God wanted more for them and from them. He wanted their love. He wanted them to reflect His nature. He wanted for them what was real, true, and pure. Gomer is a portrait of society today, a society that believes that love can be bought, or that love is for self-gratification. She represents a culture which believes that one loves for the sake of receiving something in return. This twisted concept of love was the plight of the children of Israel. The pure, undefiled love of God, however, is never-ending, unfailing, and always faithful, even in the midst of unfaithfulness. Hosea brought Gomer back and received her as his wife, even though she had been defiled, as prophetically the Bridegroom, Jesus, will receive His Bride, the Church. However, it will be without spot or wrinkle, undefiled, sanctified and pure. Historically, this action represented God taking back His people from the bondage of Egypt through their settlement into the land of Canaan. This multifaceted dimension of Hosea's prophecy must not be overlooked. It is foundational to establishing the truth of God's Word as it relates to His promises and to the depths of the unconditional, relentless love He has for His children, even those who had been unfaithful to Him. Israel displeased their God. They broke His covenant and rebelled against His laws, thus rejecting the gracious, ever-abiding love He had for them.

"Put the trumpet to your lips! An eagle is over the house of the

Lord because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law" (Hos 8:1 NIV).

Israel had made kings and set up princes without His guidance. They had relied on idols of their own making, idols of silver and gold that were really nothing at all. These idols held no power and offered no benefits, yet the people bowed down to that which was useless. Therefore, the Israelites did not yield fruitfulness. They were barren and non-productive because of their spiritual prostitution. They had become like the very things they had served and worshiped, and God was exceedingly displeased. They worshipped Canaanite deities, giving them acknowledgment and thanksgiving for the fertility of the land, thereby committing the greatest atrocity: forgetting their Maker. *Ephraim is blighted, their root is withered, they yield no fruit (Hos 9:16 NIV).* God is a just God. He had no other option than to hold His people accountable for the sins and great offenses they had committed against Him. Israel knew God; they had walked with Him and obligated themselves to His service. Therefore, the judgment would begin with His own first!

For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God (I Pe 4:17)?

He will remember their iniquity; He will punish their sins. What else can He do but bring correction to those who claim Him as their King? There is a judgment for all who are disobedient and for those who persistently ignore the guidance and instruction of the Lord.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, whoever disobeys the Son will not see life but must endure God's wrath (Jn 3:36).

Repentance was, and is, the cry of God's heart. It was, and is, His will that those who love Him come to Him with a repentant heart, seeking Him and thus acknowledge their guilt before Him. It was a small price to pay to enter back into

communion with their God. Simply repent and understand that with repentance comes a promise.

I will return again to my place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face. In their distress they will beg my favor (Hos 5:15):

The promised restoration always follows such a cry from the heart. God would not turn His back on His people. He would restore them, heal them, and bring them back under His great care and His divine favor. It was not God who had broken covenant. It was not God who had turned His face; it was a sinful people who had a rebellious nature. The Israelites were the ones who had decided to do things their own way, ultimately causing separation from God. God was waiting with opened arms and He would reclaim His people as His own children with a straightforward acknowledgment of guilt. As Israel would accept the error of their ways and seek God, He would once again move on their behalf and show them the favor that awaited them as a covenant people.

Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, or sword or battle, or by horses or horsemen, but by the Lord their God” (Hos 1:7 NIV).

Through the Book of Hosea, one can learn some foundational principles which will lead him out of oppression into freedom. Much oppression is rooted in sin. Sin is eventually exposed and that exposure or judgment is meant to lead us back to God. Where there is judgment, there is also available the hope of repentance and restoration. Our sin alone is a kind of self-imposed punishment because it brings on guilt and shame. Without a doubt, there is a cause and effect that comes into play when spiritual laws are violated. Spiritual laws are impactful. They are written in the Word of God as a form of protection and guidance. Thus, when they are ignored, serious consequences take place.

The more they increased, the more they sinned against me; they changed their glory into shame (Hos 4:7).

However, repentance is every man's way out. The call of the prophet today has not changed. Repent and turn to God while there is still time. It is the call of every true minister of God. How can one please God and walk contrary to His laws? Remember, Paul taught that we should no longer abound in sin. Yes, we are saved by grace. Grace is the free gift of salvation given, as we accept Jesus into our heart and confess Him as Lord and Savior. We are, however, also commanded to be sanctified, cleansed from all unrighteousness which must begin with the confession of our sins.

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all come to repentance (II Pe 3:9).

The character of God is so beautifully displayed in the Book of Hosea. God is merciful and His loving kindness endures even to the unfaithful. He loves the unfaithful, the unlovable, and even those with reprobate minds, because it is truly His desire that no man should perish. Receive His love today. Say yes to the tearing down of every barricade or idol that has separated you from the love of God.

...I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them (Hos 11:3–4).

God does not break His promises, He keeps them. Man is the covenant breaker, full of sin and deceit. Hosea prophesied the incoming of the Gentile nation. It was not just a promise to the Israelites, but to the whole world, if only they would believe. God desired love and obedience from His covenant people. He desires the same from us today, as we too are His covenant people. He yearns for us to truly know Him, to serve

Him, and to seek Him. It is through obedience to His Word that we honor Him as God.

...For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the Lord (Jer 33:11 NKJV).

BLESSINGS OF THE COVENANT

The physical captivity of God's people was more than a historical account; it was a type and shadow of spiritual deliverance. First in the natural, and then in the supernatural, God used Israel as a guiding light for the whole world to see. He gave us a glimpse into His goodness and mercy as He worked on behalf of His chosen nation of Israel to set the captives free. Deliverance is a promised covenant blessing. Deliverance is freedom from anything that binds, blocks or hinders the work of God in the children of God, and God has given His people the right and privilege to be freed from those things. Deliverance is the process of obtaining liberty from anything that causes bondage, oppression, or slavery. It is the emancipation from the enemy from whatever form or fashion he has had influence, control, or has bound an individual. Pharaoh kept God's people from worship. He held them captive. He refused to allow them the freedom to perform the duties necessary for service unto God, but God intervened and set His people free!

And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I

am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Ex 6: 5-7 KJV

Shalom (Strong's #7965) or the word *peace* signifies wholeness which includes health, well-being, happy, prosperity, rest, safety, favor, and harmony as covenant blessings. This word stems from the root word *shalam*, which means "to be complete." Jesus Christ, the King of Peace, came as the peace bearer to bring wholeness to His people. This is our covenant inheritance. The chastisement of peace was upon Him. Therefore, through His suffering, the peace of God has been transferred to His people through the covenant.

You shall worship the Lord your God, and I will bless your bread and your water; and I will take sickness from among you (Ex 23:25).

Health and wholeness were part of the plan of God from the very beginning. It was not until the fall of man, when Adam and Eve followed the voice of the devil, that death actually showed up on the scene. Sin is at the root of various kinds of sicknesses, although not all sicknesses, and it is the cause of physical death being introduced to the human race. Sickness in one's physical body may result from a spiritual sickness within one's soul. God has given the promise of healing from such things through His covenant.

'Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.' (Jer 33:9, NKJV).

Prosperity is a covenant blessing. It is the desire of God for His people to walk in prosperity. The word *prosper* actually means "to help on the road, or succeed in reaching." This suggests a progressive and active state of well-being. It means to be right, successful, proper, and correct. The word signifies proper alignment as well. Prosperity would occur simply

because of being right or fitting. There is a mind that is prosperous, and that is one which is fixed on the things of God, and not the things of this world. The Preacher of Ecclesiastes encourages the believer to enjoy the blessings of God, and to understand that anything of significant value will be rooted in the goodness and justice of a holy God. May you prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers! Spiritual blessings passed down from one's forefather is a covenant blessing. In the Book of Genesis, it is recorded that one brother stole the father's blessings from another. All possessions of the family, property, financial resources, aspirations, and spiritual vitality, were to be transferred from the father to the eldest son. Patriarchal blessings were the right of every firstborn and were usually transferred verbally as the father chose to speak over his child, all the privileges he would pass on to him. It was strongly believed by the Israelites that the blessing, like the curse, would effectively release power to determine the destiny and the character of the person it was spoken over. Therefore, the father's blessings were highly treasured in the sight of God's people. They understood the spiritual implications of such an act. Isaac had two sons. Esau was the eldest, and Jacob was favored greatly by his mother. Isaac had a deathbed blessing awaiting his eldest son when Jacob dressed up and portrayed himself as Esau. Isaac's failing eyesight and weak physical stature had contributed to the confusing episode. Jacob, the supplanter, had coerced Esau into handing over his birthright and then he deceitfully stole the blessing reserved for the oldest son. Do not allow your inheritance to be traded for a "bowl of soup" as Esau did, and do not allow the trick of the devil to steal your spiritual blessings promised through an unbreakable covenant with a Holy God!

Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription; "The Lord knows who are His," and, "Everyone

who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness" (II Ti 2:19 NIV).

COVENANT BREAKERS

Who are the covenant breakers? What does this mean? Covenant breakers are those who refuse to abide by the covenants established by God. It refers to those who are faithless, and those who continue in their transgressions. Covenant breakers are also those who continue to commit abominations against God, thus refusing to honor Him as God. They are those who cannot be persuaded to enter into covenant with God, or those who refuse to keep covenant. The term can also imply or presume a state of peace, interrupted by unrighteousness. Hence, a covenant keeper is one who has determined to agree, or assent to the terms of a covenant. Please remember, the gift of salvation is free, but grace was never meant to be a justification for sin. God is a holy and just God, and He has provided a means by which sin can be effectively dealt with. It is not to be ignored or overlooked because one is under the grace of God. He desires holiness, and that is a choice. Breaking covenant will invariably result in the judgment of God, if not turned away through repentance. He has promised His wrath upon all those who are disobedient. Paul so graciously warned the Church of Colossae to put to death whatever was in them that was earthly and sensual. The same warning is applicable today. We no longer need to be ruled by our carnal desires or controlled by evil. Moreover, we have a choice and the ability to resist the influence and oppression of sin, as believers in Jesus Christ. In Him, we have been given the power to put away the things that displease God. It is a choice to become a covenant keeper. The actual process is then left up to the power of the Holy Spirit. Remember, it is by grace that you are saved, not through the works of the law. However, it is important to understand that God requires us to become like

Him, and that means to become holy and undefiled. Let's look at those who commit abominations:

Do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, says the Lord (Zec 8:17).

Those who speak false oaths are an abomination unto the Lord. There is an agreement made with the father of lies, Satan, when a false oath is given. Do not be deceived. One must choose the side of truth or stand in error. There has been an obvious break in covenant when one willingly persists in sin. God Himself promises sanctification, but each man must choose to willingly submit to the refinement and purification process.

“But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you (Ex 31:13 NKJV).

God has blessed His people with a sign of a covenant promise in which the honoring of His holy day is a promise of sanctification. Willful and persistent neglect of celebrating the Sabbath is an abomination, but celebrating it brings promise.

If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestors Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

ISA 58: 13–14

Misusing the name of the Lord was a sin punishable by death under the Old Covenant. Please remember, Jesus did

not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. We have a higher call to heed the moral precepts set forth in the Holy Bible. Jesus brought to completion the fulfillment of the law, where it was just a partial revelation under the unconditional law of the Israelite theocracy, or the Decalogue. Therefore, to misuse the name that is above all names is an abomination before the Lord.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name (Ex 20:7).

Marriage is a covenant of the Lord. God has instituted marriage between one man and one woman. He considers it holy and honorable and stands as witness to the agreement. Divorce is, without question, a breaking of that covenant. Malachi describes it as violence that covers one's garment. Take heed! It is breaking covenant! Fornication, which is sex outside of marriage, is also an abomination, and a breach of covenant with God.

Who forsakes the companion of her youth, and forgets the covenant of her God (Pr 2:17 NKJV).

Homosexuality is an abomination and it prevents one from being in covenant with God. God cannot honor what He has not ordained. Please, my friend, do not be deceived. Continuing in sexual sin is a promised path to destruction! We can easily add to the above list all sexual sin: adultery, bestiality, fornication, incest, rape, and so on. Sanctification is not a choice, it is an expectation!

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination (Lev 18:22).

In the passage below one may see that the underlying result of sexual immorality is uncleanness. God has issued a call to holiness. It is clearly written that God desires holy vessels, void of defilement. Therefore, sexual immorality of any kind requires a turning away from those ungodly actions or

thoughts, and turning toward God in sanctification. It is His will that one be cleansed from all that defiles.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger in all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but to holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

I TH 4:3–7 NKJV

False brothers, or those who claim to be of the faith but are not, false teachers, and false prophets all defile the sanctuary. They bring in destructive opinions and malign the Word of Truth. They even deny the Lord, Jesus Christ. They bring swift destruction upon themselves. Their intent is to pull one away from their pure devotion to Jesus Christ.

When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it—My house—and when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations (Eze 44:7 NKJV).

God is a covenant keeper. His words are true. They are trustworthy. They are life giving. “*I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord*” (Eze 16:62). God expects His people to be covenant keepers also. We, as believers, have entered into a covenant. We are to do our part in fulfilling the expectations set forth in His Word. Truly, to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind is to obey Him, thus keeping covenant with Him. Receive the blessings of God!

Now if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine (Ex 19:5).

These are just a few examples of ways individuals break covenant. There are many ways to turn away from God and choose a life that does not honor Him as Lord. God so graciously supplied the means by which individuals gain eternal life, but He also points out the path that leads to destruction. If you have been walking in a way that is out of covenant with God, take this time to confess your sins, and decide in your heart to turn from them and walk in the path of righteousness. The decision is yours to make. It is one of greatest importance, more so than any other decision you will ever make. The Kingdom of Heaven awaits such a decision, and the angels rejoice when the lost come home. Here is your invitation to do just that. Come and receive all the benefits and provisions promised under the eternal and everlasting Covenant. Receive the inheritance available, and determine to make God your Heavenly Father who graciously desires to adopt you into a new family of eternal significance. Jesus Christ, the voice of the Bridegroom, calls. Just say to the Lord, “I do!”

RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT

Moses was God’s man of choice. He had been called, commissioned, appointed, and anointed to do the task. God had given Moses the privilege to lead His people out of the land of bondage into the land of freedom. God asked Moses to be His mouthpiece. He then sent Aaron to assist him. He was to remind the people of Israel who they were. He was to remind them of the covenant they had with God. The foundation of the Church was being established, built on the apostles and prophets. Moses was given a divine mission, with a divine sign: the burning bush. Moses was in the presence of a divine God. The directive: “Bring My people out!” God had heard His

people. He knew their sorrows, and He saw their oppression. He needed a deliverer, and Moses accepted the call. However, with this privilege, God gave Moses further instructions:

But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord whose name is Jealous; is a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods, and make a sacrifice to their gods, and one of them invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.

EX 34:13-17 NKJV

Once the children of God reached their destination, they were to begin tearing down the idols of the land. He warned them to do so unless they would become tempted in joining in the same atrocities. Such mayhem would most assuredly bring disaster to God's chosen. It is essential that one understand that God has made promises to His people, and that we as covenant people can trust in those promises because we can trust in the one who gave them. We can, and must, take Him at His Word. Successful deliverance ministry has a prerequisite. That prerequisite is faith in the written Word of God. It would be impossible to fight the unseen world if, in fact, there is little or no faith activated in the process. Jesus Himself scolded His own disciples who could not cast out a demon because of their lack of faith. Faith is built in us by hearing the Word of God and understanding His written covenant to His people. We must therefore have a deep belief within us that what is written is truth, and it is that truth that will set us free. Just as Jesus stated to Satan when he tempted Him in the wilderness, *"It is written...!"*

Hosea recounted the past while prophesying the future,

even as it relates to the birth of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He prophesied the heart of God, both as showing how God desires mercy rather than sacrifice, and acknowledgment rather than offering. Hosea prophesied the fate of a nation and of the future. He prophesied the destruction of the high places of idolatrous worship to false deities, satanic worship and the consequences His people would have to endure. Hosea prophesied the incoming of the Gentiles as acknowledged by both Paul and Peter. Hosea prophesied victory over sin, death, and the grave, which we receive through Jesus Christ, by faith. God shared many of the foundations of which the Christian faith was established on, with one prophet. What a beautiful example of covenant, and the relentless love God has for His people!

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Jesus taught His disciples to pray. The church readily embraces the model set forth in *Matthew 6:9–13*.

Our Father in Heaven,

Hallowed be Your Name,

Your kingdom come,

Your will be done,

On 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 the evil one.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever,

Amen.

However, often under a veil of deception, many people of faith have determined that they are excluded from the effects of evil or the evil one. Bearing the tag of “Christian” has con-

vinced them that they are excluded from being demonically influenced or oppressed. Peter walked with Jesus and saw the miracles first hand, yet in a time of being carnally minded Satan used him as a mouthpiece to attempt to lure Jesus from His destined path. The Apostle Paul was attacked by a messenger of Satan who was sent to torment him. Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and fell dead in the sanctuary. What a commentary! We see, within the very walls of the church, addiction to pornography, high divorce rates, and a variety of other addictions and vices. We no longer mimic society, but surpass it with an astounding rate of defeat in some of these areas. Hiding in the pews, and even amongst church leadership, issues of bondage abound. Areas of weakness and habitual sin act as gateways to the spirits. These spirits desire to manipulate, intimidate, dominate, and even destroy the life of a Christian. The goal of the enemy of our souls is to entice Christians to “fall away from the faith.” Hearts grow cold, decisions are made, and vows are internalized... “I can never be good enough!” Pastors, motivated by political agendas, refuse to move with God’s Spirit. Therefore, reluctance to teach, preach, or pray against these forces lead our congregations further and further into ritual, routine, and complacency. “Don’t look for a demon behind every bush,” is a common phrase. Who is looking? Do we really know where and how to look? If we find them, then what do we do?

BE FREE!

The word *deliver* (Strong’s # 1659) in the Greek means “to set free, or make free.” Deliverance is the process by which an individual is freed from any form of darkness, oppression, bondage, habitual sin, or unclean spirits in which they are

entangled. It is a means of being set free through the understanding of the written Word of God and the infallibility of that Word. It is the process by which the lies of the devil are replaced with the truth of God’s Word. Hence, freedom occurs because strongholds are demolished, demons must flee in the name of Jesus, legal rights of the enemy are taken back, and truth becomes a constant in an individual’s life; not in theory, but in application.

To be *delivered* actually means “to give over, to commit or to commend, or to hand over to another.” It is a technical term implying jurisprudence in the sense of paying a price, thus handing something over to someone. To give something or someone into another’s hands is to commit them into their care. Places of bondage are places where one is being enslaved to something or someone in a particular area of their life. Therefore, “to deliver” is actually to take out of the influence or control of something or someone, and put it in the hands of another. It also means “to give over or transfer political power,” thus it is often used in both a military and judicial sense “to give over one’s power or control, or to grant victory to someone.” This power packed term can also refer “to the giving of one’s heart to another to be concerned about it.” To deliver can signify “to put in one’s heart to do a particular action.” Deliverance is a covenant promise, and complete freedom is the overlying result.

And these signs will accompany those who believe; by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in a new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover”.

MK 16:17–18

Scripturally, Christians are commissioned to cast out demons. To deliver one from the burdens and bonds of slavery

to sin and demonic influence is a mandate to all who believe. Those who believe will cast out demons. This is a mandate given to the Church. There is an effective way to cast out demons and it is only by using the name of Jesus that we have any authority to cast out demonic spirits. It is truly the responsibility of every believer. Demons, or unclean spirits, are often given legal right to enter a person through defilement related to idolatry, ungodly associations, participation in the works of darkness or lawlessness, and agreements with the devil. Sometimes an individual has given the devil a foothold or legal ground to harass or torment and it should be identified, and then renounced. Legal ground granted within an individual can occur by a variety of avenues: deals, vows, pledges, broken covenants, that are in direct conflict with the Word of God and the plans God has for that individual. Legal ground can also be established by agreement. The devil plants a lie in the mind, and then an individual believes that lie. Consequently, a stronghold is formed. Satan has gained access based on a faulty way of thinking. Deliverance ministers, or those seeking deliverance, must ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any legal ground the devil may have gained, as well as identify strongholds. Subsequent renouncement of such agreements breaks their binding effects and opens the way for release from them.

Another way for the devil to gain entrance is through a lifestyle that is in direct conflict with the Word of God. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. You will reap what you sow and sowing to the will of the devil, which includes feeding the desires of the flesh, will eventually lead to corruption in your life. Sin defiles. What was clean becomes unclean because of sin. It gives the devil a foothold which becomes a stronghold. A stronghold is a fortified place. As defined in *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, it is a place that is dominated by a particular group or marked by a particular characteristic. An ungodly stronghold, once formed, allows

for the strongman, Satan's demonic force, to take position in an effort to maintain that ground. Strongholds are destroyed by replacing the lies with the truth of God's Word.

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col 1:13 NKJV).

As children of God, we are free. Positionally, Christians are no longer bound in the kingdom of darkness. We are no longer under the rule of Satan or his demons. We are freed from his authority and made complete through the redemptive work of Christ. Scripture is clear on this basic, fundamental precept. However, functionally, without doubt, there are those who have given Satan a foothold in some area of their life. When a foothold has been established, it becomes a stronghold. Moreover, as mentioned above, a stronghold becomes the legal ground upon which Satan can stand to torment, harass, and discourage us. Therefore, it is critical for us to understand every area of our lives where we may be out of the will of God. Once those areas are established, we are ready to proceed with deliverance. Paul reminds us in Galatians, chapter 4, that we, who are heirs, *if we are minors*, are no different from slaves. Slaves are in bondage. We have been adopted into the Kingdom, so it is time to receive the promised inheritance we have already been given! Hence, there is a need for spiritual cleansing and purification. Spiritual cleansing begins at the moment of salvation. Jesus Christ washes away, with His Blood, the death that was produced in us by our own sinful nature. He gives us eternal life and establishes His everlasting covenant with us. However, there are defilements that an individual has come in contact with, as he or she interacted with the world, which must be addressed. Most often this defilement is the result of sin from which an individual has not truly given up, or the root cause of that sin still exists. The residual effect is the presence of pollutants which have taken up residency.

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (II Co 7:1 NJKV).

What do we cleanse? According to Apostle Paul we are to cleanse our flesh and our spirit. How do we cleanse our flesh and spirit? Sanctification, or perfecting in holiness, is the process by which believers are to separate themselves from evil and from all that defiles. This process of sanctification is the process of cleansing our flesh and spirit. The word *filthiness* in this text refers to the contamination contracted during sexual immorality, the worship of false gods, religious defilement, unholy alliances with idols, and involvement in pagan feasts and sacrifices. There are several Hebrew and Greek words that render the word as meaning “foul matter, anything that soils or defiles, uncleanness, or impurity,” and was used in the context within the Jewish culture to indicate the cleansing of themselves and the temple from the defilement obtained through idolatry. The Apostle Paul taught that there are demons behind such practices and he warned the Church of Corinth, the beloved, that they must be cleansed from this *defilement*. Paul lays down some very stringent guidelines in II Corinthians 6 which will assist in understanding things from which we are to be separated. The Apostle Paul gives us a list of four specific areas from which an individual must separate himself: (1) being yoked to unbelievers, (2) agreements with Belial (another name for Satan), therefore any demonic force, (3) works of darkness or practice of lawlessness, (4) idolatrous practices and agreements with idols (demons).

This separation is absolutely critical. There are many other references in the Holy Scriptures of what will defile an individual, along with the consequences of such defilement. Let’s look more closely at some of the ways an individual can become defiled. Association with the ungodly defiles us. Christians are not to be bound together with unbelievers. If

we do become entangled with unbelievers, we take the chance of becoming defiled. (*Hag 2:12–14*)

Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals” (I Co 15:33).

We are taught that friendship with the world is enmity with God. Therefore, as believers in Jesus Christ, we are to separate ourselves from those who are enemies of God. Our relationships are to glorify Him. The Apostle Paul takes things further as he warns the Church of Corinth not to associate with anyone who is sexually immoral, greedy, idolatrous, a reviler, a drunkard, or a robber who calls himself a brother or sister in Christ. Such a person defiles not only themselves, but also the Church. This is our mandate and it is clearly laid out in scripture. It is for our own good and we have been completely warned of those things that will defile.

Agreements with Beliar (an evil spirit in the intertestamental literature; under or identified with Satan) defiles us! We are either in agreement with Satan or in agreement with Christ. Believing the lies of the devil and his demons which have been sent to harass is simply agreeing with him. How can one be in agreement with Satan and still be a Christian? Believe his lies! We have to be on guard with our helmet of salvation and proactively cast down, take captive, and destroy every vain imagination, argument, or thought that rises up against God and His Word. One may ask himself, “Is this a godly thought? Is it in line with the thoughts or actions of a Christian?” If it isn’t, then cast it down!

For the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ. We are ready to punish every disobedience when your obedience is complete.

The Church of Corinth was in the midst of a city that was notorious for gross sexual immorality, steeped with idolatry, and filled with the practice of paganism. These societal issues had cross-pollinated into the body of believers there. Paul was faced with the challenge of encouraging them in the process of perfecting holiness, as in finishing or completing the process by ridding themselves of all defilement encountered while participating in these ungodly actions and associations. Participation with darkness or lawlessness defiles us! If we take on the title of Christian, then we are to live up to our new name and nature. Sin and righteousness cannot coexist simultaneously. When we choose to operate in a sinful fashion, we are participating with lawlessness, thus we become defiled. What was pure becomes impure. We open ourselves up to receive unclean spirits if we continue participating in darkness. We are to make a clean break from all sinful habits. We become a slave to the sin we serve, thus persistent, willful disobedience will undoubtedly ensure bondage. We are to be finished with persistent sin. We are to be remorseful when we fall into sin. Participation with darkness in a specific area of life is to be void of truth and without light in that area. It is in this place where one will become defiled. We are to be children of the light, to walk in light, and to be light to the world. Light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it. Therefore, come out and be separate from all forms of darkness!

Participation with idolatry defiles us! We are warned not to participate in any form of idolatry. Behind idolatry, Paul taught that there were demon spirits in operation, empowering useless idols. Bowing down to such forces (idols, false religions, false gods) is nothing more than bowing down to demons. In the Jewish culture these two words, *idol* and *demon*, were often used synonymously. Idolatry is a very dangerous practice which is rampant within our culture and is also found within the walls of the church. We may not see

bowing down to statues, but is anyone out there bowing down to images (pornography), bowing down to money (the love of it), which is greed, or bowing down to our bellies, which is gluttony. What about self-pity, arrogance, stubbornness, or pride, which are other forms of idolatry? These are several forms of idolatry which are mentioned in the New Testament and they will undoubtedly defile. We are to come out and be separate.

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols (I Co 10:14).

The Apostle Paul stated in I Corinthians 10:20 that he did not want those of the Corinthian church to be partners with demons. Partnership with idolatry is partnership with the demonic. This text was in reference to warning those professing Christians not to take part in any pagan practices. He further warned against participating in any idolatry. Once again, there are demons behind the works of idolatry. We are to flee from it! We will look closer at idolatry in *Chapter 8*, “Bowing to the Beast.”

“Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty”(II Co 6:17–18).

SEPARATE YOURSELVES AND BE HOLY

The word *defile* means to render unclean or impure. It is to corrupt the purity or perfection of someone or something. *To defile* means to debase, desecrate, pollute, or profane. It means to make physically unclean, especially with something unpleasant or contaminating. It is to violate the chastity or sanctity of someone or something. It denotes contamination. The verb meaning *to defile*, assumes the former state was one of purity. The very act of defiling must start with the presumption of a state of cleanliness, devoid of impurities. Therefore,

if a person is positionally considered clean, what then can defile?

For I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy (Lev 11:44)...

Defilement is the result of coming in contact with anything that defiles. Pollution of any kind of uncleanness; ceremonially, physically, spiritually, or morally, is to be avoided by the Christian community. Distinctions between holy and unholy, clean and unclean, righteous and unrighteous, are to be made. The Church has a responsibility before God to draw the distinction between what is acceptable or unacceptable and the only true reference is the Word of God. Therefore, consecrate yourselves! Rid yourselves of all that defiles. Unclean spirits are allowed to operate because of unclean actions, thoughts, or deeds!

“You must keep the Israelites separate from the things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them” (Lev 15:31 NIV).

Miasma (Strong’s # 3393) is the Greek word for *defilement*, which signifies making the pure impure with defilements or pollutants. In other words, it denotes the actions and involvements which contaminate a person in his intercourse with this world.

For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning (II Pe 2:20 NKJV).

The word *pollution* in this reference is pertaining to spiritual contamination by demonic influences; therefore, one has been defiled by their interaction with the world. The text emphatically states that one can become entangled again, thus rendering a state in worse condition than the previous state of being. It is a specific reference to the false teachers of the day

who had received the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the way of righteousness, and had experienced the cleansing power of Christ, but eventually rejected Him and led others to do the same. These false teachers were empowered by seducing *spirits*. They were demonized, acting under the control of an *unclean spirit*, a *seducing spirit*. *Daimonizomai* means “*to be possessed of a demon, or to act under the control or influence of a demon.*” It is important to note that throughout the New Testament the word *demon* is most often translated as *unclean spirit*. Below is a list of additional ways in which an individual can become unclean or, in other words, defiled. New Testament scripture is replete with unquestionable directives to encourage the reader to avoid any kind of defilement which will result in uncleanness.

Evil intentions defile. The word *koinoo* (Strong’s #2840) used in the Book of Matthew is a Greek word which means “*to render unholy, unclean, to defile.*” Here, it is clear to see that evil intentions will defile an individual, thus rendering them unclean. It is easy to see that an individual who would commit murder is defiled. One less obvious reason for defilement is slander. False accusations will also defile. Both stem from evil intentions of the heart. Take heed and do not participate with evil.

For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defiles a person... (Mt 15:19–20).

Giving place to the devil defiles. In his letter to the Church of Ephesus, Paul sternly warned them to give no place or foothold to the devil. The Greek word for *place* is *topos*, which is indicative of an area, region, locality, or “*room*” which is occupied by a person or thing.

“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil (Eph 4:27–28 NKJV).

Paul warns the Church to be careful not to give place to

the devil, thus handing over ground to satanic control. Please note that he warns the church. Within this passage we learn that it is in our power to hand over or to not hand over any ground to the devil. That is a privilege of every believer: the right to choose. Non-believers do not carry such an honor since they themselves have no power to stand against the devil. Metaphorically, the word *topos* can also mean a condition, opportunity, or occasion. Therefore it is possible for us to give the devil an opportunity to kill, steal, or destroy. However, Satan cannot take ground that we, as Christians, do not relinquish to him, except for a case like that of Job where God granted limited access to Satan. If one persists in sinful actions, he opens himself up to the opportunity to allow Satan to come into his heart. Christians, this warning is for us! Bitter envy and self-seeking attitudes defile. It becomes so rooted and grounded in an individual that they choose to overlook the sinfulness of such attitudes. However, James clearly teaches that such actions are demonic.

But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast or lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but it is earthly, sensual, demonic (Jas 3:14–15 NKJV).

Rid yourselves of all that defiles! If one says they accept scripture in its entirety, then it is hard to deny the lesson James was stressing within this particular text. James was interested in practicality. He emphasized “duty rather than doctrine.” He was more concerned with the day-to-day decisions that faced the Jewish Christian audience. The relevance today, as one studies the Ministry of Deliverance, is that these are common issues to be addressed within the church environment, because *they are demonic*. Remember, James was addressing the Christians, and most probably Jewish Christians. He was not speaking to pagans, but to the Church! Is there any practice or behavior in which you are currently involved that you have

to hide? Is there anything that you are involved in that could hurt, harm, or destroy you or your family? Is there anything in your life that has taken your thoughts, time, and worship away from God?

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

Can Christians choose in certain situations, not to resist the devil? Can Christians decide to participate with the devil, or be enticed into sin? It would be unrealistic for anyone to think that at some time in their Christian walk they have not participated in some form of darkness. The extent of that participation is what needs to be looked at. Willful, consistent participation with the devil in areas of your life can open a person up to the influence and control of Satan and his demons. Ananias and Sapphira are New Testament examples of Christians who knew truth. They were part of the community of believers and yet they chose to lie to the Holy Spirit.

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself” (Ac 5:3 NKJV)?

Please look closely at this passage. Ananias and Sapphira decided to participate with the devil. In turn, the devil took up residence and filled their hearts. They were members of an Apostolic Church in Jerusalem, led by the disciples of Christ Jesus, and witnesses of signs, wonders, and miracles, yet they still made a conscious decision to lie to leadership and to the Holy Spirit. They had given “*place*” to the devil in their hearts because of greed, which is idolatry. “*Why has Satan filled your hearts?*” Why? Apostle Paul, in II Corinthians 11:3, warns us that he is concerned as he writes to the Spirit-filled Christian Church of Corinth, that in their thoughts they might be led astray from the sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Is it possible? Yes! He also warns them of the dangers of receiving a “*different spirit*.”

For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed or another spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit readily enough (II Co 11:4).

Paul clearly demonstrates through these scriptures that Christians can be deceived by another spirit, one who is not the Spirit of Christ Jesus, but one from a different gospel. He was, once again, speaking to the Church! Take note that he said they received a different spirit readily, thus giving place to the devil!

God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (II Ti 1:7 NKJV).

The spirit of fear defiles. Fear is a means by which we give Satan a foothold. When we lay down faith and pick up fear, Satan gains ground. They are mutually exclusive. You cannot walk in fear and faith at the same time. Do some Christians live in fear? Where did they get it? Where does it reside in them? How can they get rid of it? Please note, the passage clearly indicates a spirit. It does not indicate a mindset, although, in all actuality, a fearful mindset will be present before a spirit will take up residency. However, here we see the word “spirit.” We know it did not come from God. Paul is encouraging Timothy not to accept a spirit of fear because it is not given by God, but to rekindle the gift of God he had received through the laying on of his hands. If Timothy could not be affected by a spirit of fear, then Paul would have been remiss in warning him. Timothy had evidently shown lack of boldness in his witness, and Paul lovingly reminded him that such a spirit was not from God.

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled (Heb 12:15).

Bitter roots defile. Satan can get a foothold through bitter roots, therefore defiling the one who holds to them. Bitter

roots give the devil legal ground because the person holding the bitter root has come into agreement with the devil. They may be justifying their thoughts and actions. They may be convincing themselves that they are justified in harboring bitter feelings against someone else. Bitterness is in direct conflict with the Word of God and the nature of God. We are to love everyone, especially those of the household of faith. We are to love God, our neighbor as ourselves, and even our worst enemy. Bitter roots will destroy. Can a Christian have bitter roots? Most assuredly! However, when we do fall into such sin, God provides a way out. Therefore, to be free from the tricks, schemes, and bondages of the devil, we must decide to get rid of the bitter roots that defile. Once the decision is made to release those who we have held captive to our resentment, Satan loses his foothold and we are freed from whatever demon spirit had empowered those evil thoughts or actions.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Mt 6:14 NKJV).

Unforgiveness defiles. We must forgive. There is no other option. We cannot expect God to forgive us if we are unwilling to forgive others. Forgiveness is a precious gift God gave us so that we would not be ensnared by the devil. He requires it of us so that we can become more like Him. He also wants to teach us that it is a powerful tool against the devil, because it is the very opposite to the devil’s nature. How beautiful! Practice forgiving. II Corinthians, chapter two tells us that we can be outwitted by Satan if we walk in unforgiveness. I Peter, chapter five, verse eight states that the devil roams around seeking whom he may devour. Therefore, believers are warned to be vigilant, sober, and aware of the dangers. If it is not possible, why be warned? Church, we must wake up to the warnings of Apostle Paul. He was so diligent in his concerns.

He pleaded with the church to heed these warnings, so wake up! Come out of your place of slumber and be warned.

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him (I Jn 5:18 NKJV).

Sin defiles. Sin will give Satan a foothold and therefore will defile. Living a sin-free lifestyle will keep the devil from having access into our lives in every area. We are to give no place to the devil. Believers, therefore, must live a life of confession and repentance to protect against the times when they do fall and miss the mark. The Greek word *phtheiro* means “to pine, to waste, to spoil (by any process), to ruin especially by moral influences, to corrupt (self), defile, destroy” (Strong’s #5351), and it is used below in reference to the physical body becoming defiled. The body is the temple of God; it belongs to Him. However, according to the scripture below, it can become defiled, thus inhabited by an unclean spirit. There are numerous ways for the physical body to become defiled. One such way is through ungodly sexual unions.

If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are (I Co 3:17 NKJV).

Tame (Strong’s #2930), the Hebrew word for *unclean* signifies “to be foul, to be unclean ritually or morally, contaminated, defile or pollute (self), to be to make or to pronounce (self) unclean. Uncleaness is caused by coming in contact with unclean things.

When any one of you touches any unclean thing—human uncleaness or an unclean animal or any unclean creature—and then eats flesh from the Lord’s sacrifice of well-being, you shall be cut off from your kin (Lev 7:21).

God places great precedence on the state of being clean, therefore one is to avoid becoming unclean. There are many ungodly behaviors listed within the Pentateuch which result

in uncleanness. These behaviors contaminate. They pollute. They are behaviors which will defile and bring one into a state of uncleanness, therefore the opposite of clean. One such behavior is a forbidden sexual relationship. Leviticus 18:6–18 lists twelve distinctly forbidden sexual relations which will cause uncleanness. The subsequent chapter in Leviticus instructs one to live a life of holiness, as commanded by God Himself. Therefore, there must be a sacrifice of repentance for sin that has broken one’s relationship with God, and such a sacrifice is efficacious only as an individual is truly willing not only to confess, but also to turn. It is written that Jesus is returning for His Bride, who is without spot or wrinkle. The term *spiloo* (Strong’s #4695), in the Greek, means “to make a stain or spot” and so “to defile.” The tongue defiles, the flesh can be defiled, one’s garments can be defiled, and religion can be defiled. Religion that is defiled in this text means “spotted, moral defilement, a spot, a moral blemish” but Jesus is coming for those who are not defiled, those who are spotless, and unstained.

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world (Jas 1:27).

Such religion is a spotless religion. Care for the widows, care for orphans, and keeping oneself from pollutants, defilements and uncleanness related to ungodly behavior is the mandate set forth here within scripture. Spotless and undefiled is the state of being for which Jesus is returning!

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron (I Ti 4:1–2).

Paying attention to deceitful spirits will defile. The scriptures speak of those who were members of the Body of Christ who would pay attention to spirits which were deceitful. They

would submit themselves to those spirits and would be led astray, thus giving place to the devil. This scripture speaks directly about false teachers who misalign the truth to distort the Gospel. We see that there were deceitful spirits leading the way. God is a God of freedom. He will no more force you to maintain your faith, as He will force you to become saved. Those who were once believers turned away from the very truth that saved them and they renounced that faith. Do not give the devil a foothold for it will surely defile! If we can give place to the devil, where is it? Where is that place we have given him located?

Then He said to me, "Mortal, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in his room of images? For they say, "The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land" (Eze 8:12).

False images defile. Are they in a place outside of ourselves or could they be, as Ezekiel describes in his vision of idolatry, within the temple of God? You are the temple of God. Do you have a "room" of images? Ezekiel was describing the idolatry that would take place in the temple of God, desecrating it. What do you idolize? Can you describe the images? Are there things that you bow down to or submit to, or love more than God? Images are false, however, they may appear to be real. They seem to give you what you want, to answer to your fleshly needs. They are a temporary fix, pleasurable for only a moment. Nothing real can come from them. Are there any false images you are bowing down to in your mind? Where do you spend your time, your energy, your money? The answers to those questions may shed light on what, or who, you really serve. New Testament scripture clearly indicates that individuals can be morally defiled, spiritually defiled, and physically defiled through thoughts, actions, or deeds. Pornography is the clearest picture of such defilement. The images being gazed at are false, and those who subject themselves to it are

serving a false god of lust. Drug use also supplies the user with a false image of euphoria and many times they will do whatever it takes to get the next high.

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn 8:31–32 NKJV).

THE ANSWER

Understand that it is the truth that makes you free. In the Book of John it is written that Jesus spoke to those Jews who had believed in Him and He said, *"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."* First and foremost, it is the truth of God that will make you free. As the conversation progressed, the Jews who were present declared to Jesus that they were descendants of Abraham, and they had never been enslaved to anyone. Jesus goes on to teach a very important lesson about deliverance. He told them that whoever commits sin is a slave to sin. Therefore, sins that go unconfessed, or not repented of, become our master, thus we are then in bondage. Becoming a slave to a particular sin simply means to obey the desires of that sin. We are to resist the devil. We are to stand against the wiles of the devil. We are not to make room for Satan. Know the truth! Second, it is obedience to that truth. Truth that has not been appropriated in one's life has not been allowed to produce the good it was intended to produce. Therefore, as a person receives the Ministry of Deliverance, they should decide in their heart to set their mind to obey the written Word of God. Making a conscious decision to obey, and professing that decision, is a powerful tool against the enemy. Obey the truth! Third, and most important, it is belief in and an intimate knowledge of Jesus and His teachings. Decide to believe it is all true and available for you. Jesus taught that we do have authority over the forces of evil that prevail in

this world. He taught that we are subject to the one we obey, and He taught that we are no longer bound to believe the lies of the enemy because His Word is truth. It is the measuring rod by which we live our lives. Fourth, it is breaking all agreements and associations with the devil. With a decision of one's will, places that have once been given over to the enemy through behaviors, thoughts, or mindsets which stand against the truth, can be taken back and submitted to God. All ground that the devil has gained is then reestablished in truth, and freedom is obtained as a result.

INSTRUMENTS OF SATAN

Can individuals be used as instruments of Satan? *"Get thee behind me Satan..."* In Mark, chapter eight, verse thirty-three, Jesus commanded Satan to get out of His way. Peter, a beloved disciple of Christ, was used as an instrument of Satan. He was a dedicated student, he loved Jesus, and he had committed his life to following Him. However, Peter gave place to the devil. Satan used his mind and his voice to do his bidding in an attempt to thwart the purposes of God. Peter was rebuking the Son of God. He had obviously forgotten to whom he was speaking. Peter was not the leader; he was the follower. Although, at first glance, it looks as though he was speaking out of great compassion and love for Jesus, Peter had clearly overstepped his authority. Jesus proceeded to give us the true motive of Peter's heart; Mark, chapter eight, verse thirty-three... *"For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."* How often have we been mindful of the things of man? How often have we sought the approval of man over the approval of God, or feared what man may think of us over what God thinks of us? What a lesson for us today. How easily we can fall into the trap of thinking we are doing something good, having the best of intentions, until Jesus shines truth into our situation, and the Holy Spirit brings conviction to

our hearts. We can learn many lessons from Peter. Remember, Jesus had warned Peter that Satan had desired to sift him like wheat. Satan wanted Peter. Satan wanted to use Peter. Satan wanted to destroy Peter. Jesus had warned Peter that this terrible time would come. Jesus had also told Peter He had prayed that Peter's faith would not fail him during that time of sifting. We can be used of the devil. Just as Peter was sifted, we too will be sifted as wheat. At that time, we must rely on our faith. It is in the time of sifting that we find out who we really are in Christ. God already knows. He just wants us to know. Christianity does not free us from attacks of the devil. It does, however, give us the ability to get through those attacks. We are, as the Bible promises, more than conquerors!

THE CHAINS OF LEGALISM

Legalism defiles. Galatians is a book of freedom and it is sometimes referred to as the Magna Carta of the New Testament. Paul teaches that there is justification by faith. This central New Testament doctrine is so unmistakably depicted as one journeys through the book. However, Paul is not the original author of this doctrine. It was also spoken out of the mouth of the Old Testament prophet Habakkuk. Paul used an allegory of two women in the Old Testament as a teaching to free those who questioned their liberty in Christ Jesus. We too, can learn from this allegory. There were two women, Sarah and Hagar, who represent two covenants: the Old Covenant with its legal demands, and the New Covenant that says it is by grace that we have been saved, not by the works of the law as a means of obtaining salvation. As believing Christians, we are free from the works of the law. Christ has freed us. We are free from any elemental spirits, weak beggarly spirits who are not gods, and we are free from being in bondage to them. This is our position. This is our ground. This is our Christian liberty. Paul explains that we are children of the promise, no longer

children under rules and regulations, bound to special days, months, or seasons. We are free!

The story of Sarah and Hagar gives us a lesson on freedom, and the binding effects of legalism. Sarah, who was a free woman, reflected the freedom we have under the New Covenant. Hagar, who was a slave woman, represented The Old Covenant with its binding effects. Thus, it required the obedience to the law, with all of its rules and regulations, as a means of obtaining salvation. Apostle Paul provides a picture of the two women in Abraham's life. Sarah was given the promise to birth a child but, in her haste to see the promise come to pass, she gave her slave, Hagar, to Abraham. Hagar then gave birth to Ishmael. Difficulty arose, jealousy set in, and what was to be a promise of God was disrupted by the intervention of man. Abraham's firstborn son was not the promise. Hagar, the slave woman, therefore, represents the bondage to the law with all its demands. She had a child, Ishmael, but he was not a child of the promise. God eventually kept His word to Abraham. He and Sarah gave birth to a child, Isaac, who was truly the child of the promise. Sarah, therefore, represents the promised freedom obtained through the Blood of Jesus Christ, the mother of the promised son, and the representation of the New Covenant. Now let those chains fall off—salvation is a free gift. The truth taught through this allegory may be used to free those held captive to the bondage of religious spirits, spirits of legalism, or any other oppressive force that tries to influence individuals from receiving the fullness of the grace obtained through the New Covenant. You have been set free. You are free. You will be eternally free in Christ! You are no longer to submit yourselves to the bondage of any kind of elemental spirits of the universe. We all fit into one category or the other. As we proceed, ask yourself, "Where do I fit in? Who is my spiritual mother?" You are either a spiritual offspring of Sarah or a spiritual offspring of Hagar. You are

either born of the Spirit or born of the flesh. You are a child of the Spirit or a child of the flesh. You are a child of the promise or a child of the law. You are under a spirit of adoption or under a spirit of bondage. You are either a slave of righteousness or a slave of sin. You are either led by the Spirit or led by the flesh. Once these questions have been answered, you can use the answers to remind and strengthen yourself as Satan comes to torment. You are no longer bound by the chains of legalism, but are free. It is because of that freedom that we all are to submit to His laws, out of love for Him and a desire to please Him and do His will. Henceforth, one can submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee.

For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin (Ro 7:14).

Sin can sell us into slavery if we submit ourselves to it. The Bible reads that we will be slaves to whatever we obey. If we obey the sin nature, the old self, then it stands to reason we can allow the devil an inroad into our life. However, we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Sin so pollutes that our minds are in great need to be transformed. Yes, we have been set free from the law of sin and death and it does not own us anymore. We must, however, stand firm and not submit ourselves again to those spirits that once controlled our lives. We must learn to put off the old nature and refuse to walk in the flesh. We see these precepts outlined in the Book of Romans. The Apostle Paul made the distinction that we, as Christians, are the true descendants of Abraham. Again, in Galatians, we read: "*Therefore know that only those who are of the faith are sons of Abraham*" (Gal 3:7 NKJV). Jesus cast out the spirit of infirmity and he called the woman with the issue of blood, who was in the synagogue, a daughter of Abraham. Could this mean she was a daughter of the promise? Absolutely! She was considered part of the heavenly family. The New Covenant begins at the point of salvation.

Once saved, you become part of the heavenly family, an heir according to the promise. Paul teaches us that once saved we are no longer subject to these spirits. He asked why, then, do we want to submit to them again? Why do we want to be enslaved by them again? If you are of the family of Abraham and Sarah, then it is time to destroy the lies, replace them with the truth of God's Word, and resist the desires to submit to those spirits.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Eph 2:8–9 NKJV).

COMBATING UNCLEAN SPIRITS

The process of deliverance, or combating unclean spirits, is one in which an individual directly addresses an evil spirit and commands it to come out of its dwelling place. This is also sometimes referred to as a power encounter. Power encounters are simply head-to-head combat. Once an evil spirit is discerned, it is commanded out in the name of Jesus. Preliminary work is a critical step in maintaining deliverance. Individuals seeking deliverance should understand the freedom available to them in Christ Jesus. Those who receive deliverance prayer, once they understand how the spirit gained entrance, will be more willing to deal with areas of their life that need to be healed spiritually. Therefore, it is quite important to bring understanding to any area where legal ground was given to the devil. Once the ground is identified, the individual should then choose to break agreement with the devil. Power encounters or "casting out" combined with the removal of any legal ground given to the devil, are very efficient ways of dealing with deliverance issues. Breaking down strongholds is another means by which deliverance occurs, and this topic will be addressed in more depth in the following chapters. Often, the recipient of prayer may not realize that they have a faulty way

of thinking or a belief system that is diametrically opposed to the truth of God's Word. Revelation of the Holy Spirit will guide even the novice as they are in a spiritual conflict of their own or on behalf of another.

"Casting out" is the act of commanding a demon to come out of an individual in the name of Jesus. The term is one which the church tends to run from. There are fears that arise even at the sound of the word. However, Jesus teaches us that we, as His disciples, will do the very things He did and even more. Why did we see Jesus performing these acts? Were the demon spirits around only during the earthly ministry of Jesus? Where did they all go? In the pigs? A rhetorical question, no doubt, but certainly a noteworthy one. One must ask himself these questions as he delves into the study of the Ministry of Deliverance. If we are to minister as Jesus ministered, where are those who have demonic spirits which must be cast out? The Bible must be accepted in its entirety. Demons are real, angels are real, hell is real, and heaven is real. We cannot run from what we do not understand. The *New Unger's Dictionary* puts it this way, "The denial of the existence of angels, as that of a personal devil and demons springs from the materialistic, unbelieving spirit, which in its most terrible form denies the existence of God." Ask the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth, to make His truth clear to you.

OUT OF THE TOMBS

When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. Suddenly they shouted, "What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. The demons begged him, "If you cast

us out, send us into the herd of swine;” and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water. The swineherds ran off, and on going into town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood.

MT 8:28–34

In this case, the two men mentioned were possessed. Possession indicates complete ownership by Satan. We see in the scripture that these men were so fierce that even the strongest individuals of the area were afraid to pass by them, and avoided them. They were living in the tombs. The tombs, the home of the dead, were comfortable residences for those who were possessed of the devil. The same account is recorded in Mark, chapter five. We see that at least one of the men was manifesting demonic spirits by constant howling and cutting himself with stones. He had been restrained with chains, and even the chains and shackles could not hold him. We see another characteristic taking shape. They called out to Jesus as the Son of God. Quite the lesson for us to remember, that even demons believe in the deity of Jesus and they shutter at His name. The demons had a voice. They cried out to Jesus. They begged Him not to torment them before their time. Surely, to be in the presence of Jesus was sheer torment to them. They asked, “*What have you to do with us, Son of God?*” Clearly they were implying that there was no association. The words of the demons were accurate. Even they believed and shuddered! What agreement does Christ have with Belial? Belial is another name for Satan, which means worthlessness, or lawless one. What fellowship does light have with darkness? What partnership is there between the righteous and lawless? Moreover, what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? The demons knew their time had come. Jesus proceeded to ask the

demons their name. They replied, “*My name is Legion; for we are many.*” Such a term implied a great number 4000 to 6000 strong, who were well organized in their efforts. With a simple command “Go!” the demons exited the body of the man and went into the herd of swine. First in the natural and then in the supernatural, Jesus symbolically summoned them to their place of eternal destiny, the bottomless pit, also known as the abyss. He had chosen the most unclean of all animals, the swine, to house them. How appropriate was such housing for the filthy, unclean spirits! The abyss is a place of immeasurable depth. It is the abode of the lost dead. It is another word for the unseen world, the place of torment, or the lower regions. *Roman 10:7*, “*or, ‘who will descend into the abyss?’*” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). This scripture was quoted from *Deut 30:13* where the word *sea* is substituted for the abyss. The sea is sometimes prefigured in scripture as the bottomless pit. Not one scene from this incident is coincidental. As we watch the case study of exorcism unfold, we see Jesus prophetically sending the demons to their eternal home, the home of the lost dead, the place they feared the most. Eternal judgment awaits them; first in the natural, then in the supernatural.

As we delve into this account closely, we see in Luke, chapter eight, that the exorcism was successful. The man who was possessed was clothed, in his right mind, and sitting at the feet of Jesus. The Gospel accounts in Mark and Luke focus on just one of the two men. Deliverance from evil spirits will always result in those who were possessed finding Jesus. The resultant behavior of the individual who was freed will ultimately judge the work. It is important to note that the people who watched the episode unfold were not so elated. Could it be because they had lost revenue through the destruction of their income resource, the pigs? Could it be that they were frightened by such divine power? The Bible states that they were seized with great fear. What was it that made them fear such a beautiful

transformation? The once demonized man rejoiced as he went throughout the city proclaiming what great things the Lord had done for him.

We see another incident of possession in the Bible. Acts, chapter 16, tells of a slave girl who followed the Apostle Paul throughout the city. She was possessed with the spirit of divination. Literally translated, this verse indicates she was possessed by a python spirit. A python spirit chokes its prey by cutting off the air. It tightens its grip so that with each breath it forces more and more air out. This spirit was trying to block the flow of the Holy Spirit by spewing its influence. The girl was a fortune-teller who had made much money for her employers. She was inspired by the worship of a false god, Apollo, who was worshipped in the city of Delphi. Just as in the case study above, the demon-possessed girl rightly acknowledged that these men were servants of the Most High God. The demonic voice proceeding from her mouth acknowledged that the men traveling in Paul's missionary team were speaking truth, which leads to salvation. Paul, however, was not pleased with her proclamations; instead, he was very annoyed by them. She had been mocking the sacred work of God being done in and through His servants. Nonetheless, once again, even the demons acknowledged the Most High God. This is another characteristic frequently seen in deliverance sessions, a tendency to mock the work of deliverance. To acknowledge God, but to refuse to worship Him, is the greatest of all travesties. Paul tells us in Romans, chapter one, that men are without excuse. They knew God, but chose to worship the creature instead of the Creator. They refused to honor Him and give Him thanks. The result: their minds became darkened, their thinking futile, and He eventually turned them over to an abased mind. God gave them up to follow their own lusts. He allowed them to degrade their bodies and exchange the truth of God for a lie, to worship images that couldn't talk or walk.

He allowed them to exchange the glory of a living God for a false, dead thing. In that process they claimed to be wise, but really became fools. He turned them over to their own degrading passions and exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural intercourse; men lusting after men and women lusting also after their own kind. Thus, they became filled with every kind of evil and wickedness. To know God and not to honor Him is a very dangerous and destructive thing! Take heed, my friend. Seek the deliverance needed to bring wholeness into your life or the lives of those you love. Time is short and there is much work to do. Will you join in? It is noteworthy to recognize, in the instance of the slave woman, that there is no record of Paul sending the spirit to a particular place. We must also take note that the people of the area were very displeased with the work the missionaries were accomplishing. Just as in the case study of Legion, the townspeople were angry. Their income had been jeopardized. The loss of revenue was no small thing to them. They were so angry that they had Paul and his coworker, Silas, thrown into jail. Could this have also challenged their belief system? Look at this case:

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

Ac 16:16-18

This spirit of divination was called out by the Apostle Paul. He simply commanded the spirit to come out, and it did just that. The spirit was not subject to Paul. It was subject to the

name Paul used. The demons did, however, recognize Paul's name in the case of the Sons of Sceva. He commanded the spirit of divination to come out in the name of Jesus. Please note: the spirit came out of the girl that very hour. We may therefore acknowledge the deliverance was not immediate. In some cases of deliverance, one may witness the exiting of a demon spirit immediately, and in other cases it may not be immediate. There are biblical instances of both scenarios. We also read that her owners were distraught when they realized their hope of making money was gone. Therefore, it is evident through this particular passage that she had been transformed and could no longer perform the duties of a fortune-teller. Most importantly, her behavior had changed after her encounter with Paul. Followers of Christ have been given that same authority. We have been blessed with the same responsibility as Paul was given here because Jesus came not only to die for our sins, but also to empower the Church to do what He did.

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

EPH 3:8–10 NKJV

MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD

The Church has a mandate. The Church, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and with the authority given to us by Jesus, has been charged with the responsibility of displaying the power of God and the mysteries of the Gospel. It is through the Church that the principalities and powers see the wisdom

of God manifested in the earthly realm. It is the responsibility of the Church to bring into being the promises we have been given, thus testify to seeing His glory, as these promises are implemented. What are principalities and powers in heavenly places? This question is extremely important, especially in the Ministry of Deliverance. It is critical that individuals who are involved in such ministry know and understand their rights in the spirit realm, and not because someone told them what their rights and authority are, but because it is clearly written for those who have eyes to see. Principalities, powers, and dominions are ruling authorities in both the visible and the invisible realm. The term “principlity” is a term referring to a particular territory or jurisdiction of a prince or ruling entity, such as seen in the Book of Daniel when it is written concerning the Prince of Persia and the Prince of Greece. Satan is the prince of the power of the air and is the spirit who works in the sons of disobedience. Thus, he exercises global authority. There is a celestial hierarchy of angels. *The Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* ranks them from lowest to highest of the nine orders: angels, archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim. We do not see such a ranking clearly within scripture, but there is a hierarchical structure in place. How does the Church make known the manifest wisdom of God to powers and principalities? There are godly and ungodly ruling authorities. The Church makes known the manifest wisdom of God to powers and principalities by fully accepting and implementing the authority that has been given it by Christ Jesus. We are to display His wisdom and power on earth that He might be glorified in and through us, His children. Jesus gave us, the Church, keys of the Kingdom that are to be used.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Mt 16:19).

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

The principles of binding and loosing must be viewed in light of the scriptures. To “bind” can be taken literally, or figuratively. The same is true with the term “to loose.” Therefore, both terms should be looked at in each of their possible applications. In one context, the terms may imply the authority of the Church to “loose” someone who has been bound by sin, through effectively ministering the Word of God. But the terms may also imply “permitting or forbidding” spiritual forces or demons from performing their actions or requests. Jesus was referring to the Church as a whole when He gave the keys to the Kingdom, as well as to each member individually. We see the handing over of the keys to the Kingdom is a means by which the will of God is accomplished in and through His children. Jesus gave the apostles the keys, and then He demonstrated what they were to accomplish in His name, and with His divine power and authority.

And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day? (Lk 13:16).

Jesus set this woman free from the bondage of Satan. He loosed her from the spirit which had crippled her by laying on hands and declaring her free! In the progression of these scriptures, we see Jesus teaching the disciples about the authority He gave His Church. He gave them the keys to the Kingdom. He gave the disciples and seventy more believers His authority. We have likewise been commissioned, Church, to take the keys and to perform the same works as Jesus did. Keys of binding and loosing are tools given to tie up or bind the strongman. This, however, is just one interpretation. Some scholars believe it is in reference to forbidding and permitting, which is just as effective and will certainly suffice in the case of deliverance ministry. One thing we can be certain of: binding and loosing are of great value to the Church. This

technique is also used in reference to the establishment of truth by preaching the Gospel and freeing those held captive to the powers of darkness. Keys of the Kingdom opened the door of the Gospel to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. Keys of the Kingdom also opened the door of knowledge of the revealed will of God. Plenary authority of Christ’s apostles is recorded in Matthew, chapter sixteen. Jesus was passing on His authority to perform the works that He did and to do those works in His name. He was leaving the Church His power and provision for accomplishing the task of spreading the Gospel, healing the sick, setting the oppressed free, and declaring the Day of the Lord. If we choose to accept the terms binding and loosing as terms of empowerment to fight a spiritual battle on behalf of the Lord Jesus, in His name and with His authority, then the following verses indicate that we should first bind the strongman as we enter into that conflict. Below, we see in *Matthew 12:28–29*, that there are steps that should be taken. Binding the strongman is spiritually making him inoperable or, in other words, forbidding him the freedom to interfere with the work and will of God that is being done.

But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. Or how can one enter a strongman’s house and plunder his property, without first tying up (binding) the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered (Mt 12:28–29).

Jesus, as he had an encounter with Legion which is recorded in Luke 8:30, had given permission to the demonic spirits to go into the herd of swine. Remember, binding and loosing can indicate forbidding and permitting spiritual entities to act. In this particular case, Jesus permitted the demons to enter the swine. Jesus was less concerned about the welfare of the demons or the swine. His main concern was loosing this man from the multitude of destructive demons that

had held him captive. As you proceed in deliverance ministry, bind the strongman. Do this in faith. Believe that God has given you the authority over powers, principalities, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 6 that it is these with whom we are to engage in combat. Once the strongman is bound, the house in which he has taken up residency is ready for plunder. In this reference, plunder would mean taking back all that was stolen by the devil. Satan has his foothold in a particular spiritual house. Tie up whatever representatives he has guarding that ground, watching the fortified stronghold, and take that ground back. The root word “principal” from the word “principality” implies a chief or head, one who employs another to act for him, subject to his general control, one who is most influential; in other words, a strongman. Bind him! Now cast him out! Trust the Holy Spirit as He leads you. He will show you the strongholds and the places which have been handed over. He will show you the demon that guards the ground which has been given to Satan. Take the authority Jesus has given you to cast out the unclean spirit in His name. In most cases, there is more than one demon in a spiritual house. Once the strongman is bound, then the less influential demons leave as they are commanded out. Remember also that it is only by the Spirit of God that demons are cast out. It is His Spirit in us. It is not something that should ever be attempted in the flesh, but only under the direct leading of the Holy Spirit.

MICHAEL'S STORY

Michael was a rather large, afro-American man in his early twenties. He had come to receive prayer at the request of his spiritual mentor and friend. He had been in serious trouble with the law and had been arrested on numerous occasions. His last altercation had proven to be one which had the potential of sending him to prison. He had been charged

with armed robbery. Michael was searching. He had heard the Gospel message, but he struggled internally with deep-seated issues of unworthiness. As we discussed the direction of his prayer session, he was confident in moving forward, declaring that many of his problems were simply out of his control. As I began to pray for Michael, the spiritual atmosphere immediately changed. Demonic spirits of anger, bitterness, and rage quickly manifested. Michael had previously confessed his sins and committed to turn from them. He also decided to give his life to Jesus and proclaimed his allegiance with Christ. Issues from his childhood began to surface and the root of much of his life's history was uncovered. Abandoned and abused as a young child, Satan had planted in him a brutal hatred for his parents. However, he willingly chose to forgive them for their atrocities, and as he did, a murderous spirit manifested.

I gazed into his eyes and knew that spirit had the intention of harming me, as I watched Michael's hand ball tightly into a fist. Instantaneously, I began to bind the spirit, “Spirit of murder, you are bound. I bind you from hurting or harming us in any way. In the name of Jesus.” Michael's arms fell at once to the outer side of each of his legs, and they pressed tightly against his thighs, wrists pointing upward, and his fists were still in an unyieldingly firm grip. It was though someone had actually grabbed them and tied them to his legs. “I can't move my arms! I can't move.” Michael looked at me with great desperation. He was very perplexed and asked, “Is this for real? I can't move my arms!” “Michael, you tell me. Is it for real?” I replied. After a few moments, I calmly sat down and explained to him the power of God being manifested in the face of evil. He broke, and consequently all that hardness that had been stored up in him for so long came pouring out. It was the moment I had been waiting for. All that he had heard regarding the Gospel message became real in an instant. The very thing Satan had used to destroy his life, God had used

to display His manifold wisdom to powers and principalities of this world. Michael was changed that day. He was free. He was a new man in Christ Jesus. The following week I passed Michael on the street. Ominous and menacing, Michael was intimidating in stature, one you would most likely prefer to avoid if at all possible. His countenance, prior to our final prayer session, had been very dark and he exuded a vicious character. At that moment, however, this man looked at me with the eyes of a child, which in itself was a great accomplishment. Previously, Michael could not look anyone in the eyes, but kept his head hung over in shame. He now came up to me and hugged me. "Michael, you look so different. Even your countenance has changed." "I am different! I'm free!" With a boyish giggle he thanked me as he turned and walked away.

The Bible teaches that life and death are in the power of the tongue. It is also written that by our words we will either be justified or condemned. Words spoken in faith are powerful tools which have a binding effect. There is no greater tool in fighting the demonic forces than the speaking forth of the written Word of God. It is pure truth and it has tremendous binding and loosing power in the hands of a true believer! Have you decided something about your life or future by internalizing an agreement with God or Satan? Have you promised God something and later decided not to fulfill that particular promise? Perhaps Satan has told you repeatedly that you are a failure, a loser, or he has tried to devalue you or convince you that you have no purpose in life. These questions hopefully stir up introspection. They are meant to start the probing into past or ongoing agreements. Stop here and ask the Holy Spirit to show you agreements you have made with the enemy. Ask him to show you where you may have bound yourself with your own words. Ask him to enlighten you to any promises you have made to God that you have failed to uphold. Now ask God for forgiveness for those things and break the power

of those words by the Blood, and in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Jesus said, "Now go and sin no more." It is very important to keep your promises. Bear in mind that they have a binding effect!

Spiritual entities are prohibited from operation by binding them with the words of our mouths, spoken in faith, just as Jesus did. Jesus forbade the demons that were in the man in the synagogue from speaking. He commanded them, cast them out, and rebuked them. He addressed them directly. Jesus, through His teachings, gives credence to the Ministry of Deliverance, and the Church must do the same. We have that same authority in His name. He has handed that authority over to the Church. The Church is you! Words can be very powerful tools against the enemy. We are to do as Jesus did. We are to permit or forbid. We are to proclaim freedom. We are to cast out with a simple command. Jesus knew the most effective way to fight the devil was with pure words of truth. In each scenario where the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness, He said, "It is written." He did not stop there, however. He used His spiritual authority. Moreover, we must know how to wield our sword as Jesus did. The sword of the Spirit is the greatest of all weapons in our arsenal against demonic forces. It is the spoken truth and it is in direct conflict with Satan because there is no truth in him; he is the father of lies. Binding and loosing, the keys given to the church are, therefore, the usage of all provisions we have been given by our King and Savior, Jesus Christ. He has given us the same authority He has over powers and principalities, over spiritual wickedness in high places, so that we might fulfill our mandate. Words have a binding effect, and as we speak and believe in faith, we can do strategic warfare against forces of evil that prevail.

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke" (Isa 58:6 KJV).

Deliverance ministry is at the very heart of God. It is accomplished through a simple command spoken, “I cast you out in the name of Jesus.” It is accomplished because of the Blood of Jesus. It is accomplished through the authority of the name of Jesus. It is accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is accomplished through the use of the keys of the Kingdom: binding and loosing. It is accomplished by the word of your testimony. It is accomplished to glorify God. It is through these principles that all deliverance ministry will proliferate, and that is what Jesus wanted from His servants. He wanted us to duplicate His work, multiply His workers, fight against the devil and his servants so that the Kingdom of God would advance on the earth. The word of your testimony is more than your personal victory over darkness. It is also the written Word of God that you acknowledge as truth. As you speak it out, it becomes a truth that you personally testify to as being true. One cannot pray scripture they do not believe and expect it to happen. What is your personal testimony? Make known the manifold wisdom of God to the powers and principalities as you take hold of your spiritual authority and forbid the demonic hosts henceforth from having any control or influence in your life, or the lives of your loved ones!

THE BROKEN SEAL

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked with him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the day of redemption of those who are God’s possession—
-to the praise of his glory.

EPH 1:13–14 NIV

Blood seals. Each of us at some time or another has had an inner conversation where we have desired something so much that we would be willing to do almost anything to get it. Unwittingly, we may have vowed in the spirit, locking into an agreement with the enemy because of a need, desire, or craving. We possibly have aspired to achieve the unachievable with a cost, perhaps an ungodly cost. We may have, at some point, made a verbal agreement in the spirit realm decreeing a statement of an ungodly origin. Understanding the implications surrounding these issues is fundamental to the Ministry of Deliverance. Often, people are subjected to the kingdom of darkness and are unaware of its consequences until there has been the light of God’s Word brought into that place. However, there is an alarmingly high number of Christians who have been affected by the powers

of the occult because of poor decision-making at some time in their life. This becomes all the more evident as one moves into areas of deliverance ministry. Whether it is known or unknown to the benefactor, the affect of satanic involvement in the occult is death; death to the soul, death to the natural body and, ultimately, death to the spirit. As Christians, we understand that we wear the seal of the Holy Spirit through Baptism. We understand that the spiritual implication of such an act symbolizes our dedication to God: it says we belong to God. The seal of the Holy Spirit is a means by which we are protected from evil, and we have the promise that we are sealed for the day of redemption. It is a sign of our inheritance and distinguishes us as being one of God's children, chosen for His eternal Kingdom. It is a sign of ownership. Being sealed with the Holy Spirit is an acknowledgment that we have legal right to operate in His authority.

Seals have had many uses throughout history. Universally, they have been used to attest to the authenticity of a document, an object, or title of land. They were used as a means to prevent tampering. Therefore, if a seal had been jeopardized in any way, the legitimacy of the material sealed would come under scrutiny. They would attest to the weight and quality of an object. In antiquity, it was a common practice to seal coffers, doors of houses, and tombs. Often there was a portable object or instrument used to stamp a copy or impression of the actual signature in clay or wax. Clay was frequently used due to its moldable characteristics, however, it was not uncommon to find cylinders made of gold, silver, rock, ivory, jade, or glazed pottery. The stamping instrument, or cylinder, would contain an inscription on it which would validate the usage of a signature, thus allowing for the one holding the cylinder the same legal rights as the one from whom the signature originated. Seals were also used as an emblem of authority. Kings frequently used seals, oftentimes in the form

of a signet ring, as a means of giving legal rights to stewards who were allowed to operate in their power and their authority. Therefore, the one wearing the signet ring could act with equal authority as the one who it represented. The cylinder, when used, was frequently suspended by a cord around ones neck or arm, and was used to stamp the authorizing signature. Consequently, the one who possessed the cylinder was free to exercise indistinguishable and unquestionable power of the one who held authority. Throughout the Bible, we see evidence of the use of seals for various purposes: as evidence of a covenant, to establish, settle, or determine an issue, to validate ownership, to grant or assign a duty or permission, especially by a king. Frequently, seals were placed on an article of special value or given to a person deserving of great recognition. Zerubbabel, Prince of Judah, was a man chosen by God to perform a function. He was chosen to lead the first colony of captives back to Jerusalem. He accepted the mandate of God to rebuild the temple and was responsible for laying the foundation. He was quintessential in holding a special place granted him by God. Listed in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, he was indeed a messianic figure pointing to the Savior of the world who would ultimately lead His people out of captivity and who would lay the spiritual foundation of the Church for all people who would receive Him. Zerubbabel did, in part, what Jesus Christ did in full, and God honored him.

In that day, says the Lord of Hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, son of Shealtiel, says the Lord, and make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the Lord of hosts (Hag 2:23).

In Isaiah, chapter eight, verse sixteen, we see a directive, *"Bind up the testimony, and seal up the law among my disciples."*(NIV) Herein lies an example of a document or covenant, which had been sealed. God had given Isaiah a word that was to be written on a large scroll, tied, sealed, and given

to the prophet's followers. Later, if contested, the prediction would prove to be true. The words of prophecy concerning the Assyrian invasion were to remain sealed until the time of its fulfillment. At that time, God Himself would validate it by the actual occurrence of events. History would be the corroborating factor.

Figuratively, the term *seal* as it is found in the New Testament, implies permanence, confirmation, approval, and being impenetrable to man but known to Christ, for all believers, by the power of the Holy Spirit who seals them. Believers have the assurance that they are found acceptable before God. They have the assurance that they cannot be taken out of the hand of God and that they are the righteousness of Christ. They also carry the rights and powers authorized by Jesus, to be His disciples. The seal of the Holy Spirit allows a believer to act in the name of Jesus, under His authority and through His name to accomplish His purposes. If you are a true believer, then you have been approved, confirmed, and wear a seal of ownership by God Almighty, father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The seal of the living God, or the name of Jehovah engraved on the heads of the faithful, is documented in scripture. Ezekiel envisioned the protection offered through being sealed or marked by God, as the Lord instructed the executioners of the city to place on His faithful, a mark that would distinguish them from the rest. They were to mark those who were grieved because of all the abominations that took place in Jerusalem, with a "tau" which is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet made in the form of a cross, or an English "t." Those who wore the mark were to be spared, as the rest of the city's inhabitants were to be utterly destroyed. In the vision, Ezekiel witnessed the directives of God to His servants, the warring angels.

...and said to him, "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of those who sigh

and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it...Cut down old men, young men and young women, but touch no one who has the mark. And begin in my sanctuary...

EZE 9:4-6

In the beginning of Genesis, there is another example of being sealed or marked by God. Cain had killed his brother, Abel, because of jealousy, and God informed him that he would be cursed from the ground, the very ground that had received his brother's innocent blood. God also informed Cain that he would be unproductive in his labor of tilling the ground and he would be a fugitive and a vagabond. Cain, being fearful of the consequences of his sin, cried out to God. He was certain he would be killed due to the exile, henceforth incurring the lifting of God's protective presence. God then assured Cain that he would not die, because God placed on him a mark. This mark would deter any attempt to take Cain's life; he had been graciously spared by divine mercy. God would be judge; He would not allow man to pass further judgment on Cain. Cain had been marked. Marks and seals are also witnessed in the Great Exodus. Moses had instructed the elders of Israel to slaughter an innocent lamb, take hyssop and dip it into the blood, and then sprinkle it on the lintel and the two doorposts of their homes. He promised the people that He would not allow the death angel or destroyer to enter that home, but pass over it. Passover, the Jewish festival commemorating the deliverance of God's people out of bondage, was forever to be a reminder of the faithfulness of God as His people were sealed with the blood. Henceforth, a perpetual ordinance was to be celebrated. His people had been marked. Other examples of being marked involve the sealing of God's saints, angels, the 144,000, which possibly represent the faithful Jewish remnant of the "great tribulation," and all who are His. Seals upon the foundation of God and the people of God indicate ownership,

authenticity, security, and destination. There is a judgment awaiting those who are found without “the seal of God” on their foreheads or in their hearts.

Jesus impresses His mark on believers through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is His desire that those who accept Him as Lord will walk like Him, talk like Him, thus, become transformed into His image. The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians, chapter six, verse seventeen, “*From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*” (NKJV) The Greek term for marks or brand is *stigma*. In this particular reference, the implication suggests the marks were ones with which a master marked his slaves. Paul had once been a slave to sin, but was now a slave of Christ who had purchased him, and was branded with the marks of ownership by a glorious Savior. Henceforth, he was branded as a “bondservant of Christ Jesus.” The same is true with Satan. He desires for His followers to be imprinted with His very image. He has a brand of his own. The devil is a counterfeit. He cannot create but he can mimic the Creator with illusion and trickery. He too, offers a seal to his chosen ones. It is a seal of their inheritance (albeit evil) and it serves the devil’s purposes well. When there has been a seal placed by faith, through the spoken word, it becomes an invisible shield. It forms a blinding, blocking barrier around those dedicated to the god of this world, preventing them from receiving eternal truths.

SEALS OF SATAN

Seals of Satan can readily be discovered through the power of the Holy Spirit and awareness that seals of Satan actually exist. Quite frequently, a person receiving prayer will say, “I read the Bible, but I just can’t understand it.” Statements such as these should send up a red flag to those who are ministering deliverance. They must not be taken lightly. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the ministers must seek direc-

tion from the Lord for the reason behind the block. It cannot be discerned in the natural, but is only spiritually discerned. Often, the recipient may have been actively involved in Satanism. Some may have been involved with the devil through the lifestyle of parents or relatives, and some may have been sealed as the result of satanic ritual abuse, or habitual occult practices, just to name a few. Sealing an individual can take place “*in utero.*” Many times seals are placed upon children or other unsuspecting victims and quite possibly demonic seals are agreed upon before the child is actually born. Those who have been involved in Satanism will often dedicate their offspring to Satan. Perhaps they may perform an infant dedication at birth. This action would have the same spiritual effect as a Christian dedication, except the baby would be sealed for the devil, thus claiming the life for evil intentions and a promise of dedication to the service to Satan. Sealing an individual can occur as the parent or parents pass down from one generation to another, spirits encountered through occult practice. Superstition or the practice of witchcraft during pregnancy, depending on the particular ritual performed, can place a seal on an individual. Seals may occur through contracts, conception to birth rituals, baptism into a false religion or ungodly organizations, internalized oaths, agreements with Satan or occult involvement. Metaphorically, a seal is in a sense, a locked door. Those seals may be broken in the name of Jesus. The Holy Spirit will enlighten the minister of deliverance that a seal is present and the recipient of prayer will, most assuredly, acknowledge that fact.

Written agreements, or pacts, may also be enacted as a way of coming into agreement with the devil, thus sealing an individual into covenant. These types of agreements most commonly involve a formal agreement between two parties, often involving a representative of the occult being one of the two, who require a signature on an actual agreement. Seals are

established in conjunction with contracts or pacts as a pact may also require the shedding of blood, which is a common practice in establishing a covenant. Often termed as making a pact with the devil, the one involved will agree to serve Satan if he will provide a certain request or favor. Vows and oaths have an effect of sealing an individual into an agreement. There may be seals placed by a verbal statement or an oral agreement made in an attempt to make a deal with the devil. It may require a signature but most frequently it is simply an inner desire. Inner desires may potentially cause a seal to be formed. In such a case an individual may want something so badly that he has vowed to himself to do anything to get the desired object, thereby giving the devil an opportunity to open an unholy route to that very thing and he is, therefore, marked. The individual has just come into agreement with Satan and has a binding covenant.

The Bible gives some insight into the power of vows. It is written that it is better to not vow at all than to vow unto the Lord and fail to keep it. The Lord would surely hold that individual accountable. The devil can also hold you accountable. He is spirit, and man has the right and ability to speak with the devil spirit to spirit, although this is profoundly unadvisable. We know that God is spirit and to speak with Him we must do so in truth and spirit. Likewise, the same ability is available for those who choose to deal with the devil. Remember, Satan spoke to Jesus in the wilderness and offered Him all the kingdoms of the world if He would only bow down to him. Satan tried to make a deal with Jesus. He can certainly try to tempt believers into some kind of a deal. Luke, chapter four, verses one through thirteen, are all about a deal, a kind of arrangement. Satan pleaded with Jesus Christ after His forty day fast to come into agreement with him. He desperately wanted Jesus to worship him, and for such a decision, the devil promised Him all the kingdoms of the world, with

all their glory and authority. Jesus, however, refused to agree with the devil, and no deal was made! Satan is just as prepared today to deal with the servants of Christ as he was in dealing with Christ Himself. Satan knows the power of such an agreement and will continually attempt to ensnare the believer, thus sealing him in association with an unholy vow. Ministers of deliverance must be aware of the real potential of internalized oaths and the power of such oaths as they minister to individuals who are trying to escape the grips of Satanism or the occult.

Seals are also made when a person is baptized into a false religion, joining an unholy alliance which requires an oath or a contract with the devil through unholy vows. Breaking such a seal is a tremendously important step in the life of an individual who desires to obtain freedom from the darkness and oppression to which they have been bound. Baptism into false religions will unquestionably place a seal on the individual. False baptisms are meant to do just that. There is only one real Baptism and that is Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Baptism under any belief other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, with the acknowledgement of His death, burial, and resurrection, is demonic. Therefore, anyone who has been baptized into any other name, religion or organization wears a seal that has blinded and blocked him from receiving the truth of the Gospel. Even those who attend church regularly and claim the name of a "Christian" may indeed be sealed from receiving the Gospel in their heart. They may have "head knowledge" but it has not penetrated their heart. These seals must be destroyed. Therefore, ministers of deliverance should carefully investigate the possibilities of seals. Seals create spiritual barricades which must be appropriately dealt with and removed for a deliverance to be successful.

ALLEGIANCE TO THE BEAST

As described in the Book of Revelation, the mark of the beast is a seal, often represented as the number 666, which is stamped on the forehead or right hand of the followers of the Antichrist. The mark or imprint of the Antichrist will invariably ensure that those who have it will suffer the same fate as the beast. Wearing the seal of the Antichrist will require allegiance to the beast, obedience to the beast, and worship of the beast. The beast's main objective is to claim for himself the veneration that is reserved for God alone. Just as the seal of the Holy Spirit is unseen but very real and present in the life of a true believer, so is the seal of the spirit of the Antichrist. The First Book of John clearly indicates that the spirit of the Antichrist is already in the world. False prophets who refuse to acknowledge that Jesus Christ came in the flesh act as a voice of their father. One can be moved of the Holy Spirit or moved by the influence of an evil spirit; therefore, we are to test the spirits. Those sealed to Satan move under the direction of the antichrist spirit, hence, they stand in opposition to the true will of God, the *seal* being the signature of the Antichrist. The Antichrist, the false prophet who acts on his behalf, and Satan "the great dragon" complete the trinity of evil. This seal, just as the seal of the Holy Spirit, is invisible to the natural eye but the effects of it are very real.

"And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they will have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name" (Rev 14:11 NKJV).

Seals are often invisible; however, there are also visible symbols which carry a suggestion of identification. Visible symbols can reflect an authoritative stance of faith, doctrine, relationship, or convention. They may also represent a particular belief, attitude, or association. Symbols are often an indication in the natural of something in the supernatural,

and they can give an indication of the form of satanic influence to which an individual may have been exposed. All occult activity will result in some form of a seal. There may be an actual occurrence where blood must be shed. Frequently, an individual will have a scar on their left palm. Most likely, this person has been involved in Satanism witchcraft, or some type of secret society. Demonic symbols or visible seals are prolific in demonstrating the power of seals and their meanings in the realm of the supernatural. Satanism and Neo-pagans, especially Wiccans, use a symbol known as the pentagram. This symbol is a five-pointed star with five straight lines. It has long been used as a symbol of faith in the worship of the goddess Venus, consequently giving credence to their affiliation with the false god. One commonly accepted understanding is that each of the five vertices represents the five elements of the universe: earth, air, fire, water, and the quintessential spirit. Wiccans, as do other occult groups, practice the summoning of the "elemental spirits" at the beginning of their rituals. It is their belief that these elements have demons assigned to them. Paul addressed this issue of elemental spirits in the Book of Galatians.

Inverted pentagrams are a sign or symbol of Satanism. LaVeyan Satanists use them as a symbolic recognition of rejecting the Holy Trinity. Additionally, the inverted pentagram represents the carnal nature of man, where spirit (the single point) is subservient to matter (the other four points). Research in the study of demonology indicates that all demons have their own signature, collectively referred to as the *seal of demons*. These seals are representative of their own signature or mark. They are used to disguise their real names, thus hiding their identity in an effort to maintain ground or work covertly. Such seals are used in the invocation (chant, spell, incantation) and convocation of spirits during occult activity.

Tattoos are also a means of identification and they can serve

the function of a seal. They are forbidden in Old Testament law. In the Ministry of Deliverance, it is critical that those who minister have an understanding that individuals who have demonic tattoos claim association with the occult, and are marked with a visible sign that signifies an association with evil and Satan himself. It is much more than a so-called form of body art; it is a significant spiritual statement which the powers in the spirit realm acknowledge. Individuals who wear a mark can receive healing, deliverance, and forgiveness for such an association, but permanent removal is strongly suggested.

BROKEN SEALS

Tori was beautiful, young and vivacious, with a tenacity for God. She was desperately seeking fellowship with the Lord; something more than the ritual and religion that she had so frequently seen in several of the churches she had visited. I met Tori at a women's conference held in Jacksonville, Florida. I had been asked to be the Director of Prayer Ministry for that conference and had called together over forty intercessors to cover the event. We had been meeting monthly for almost a year in preparation, and I was confident that the Lord was going to do awesome things. Tori came in for prayer. I immediately discerned an unclean spirit present. As I began to pray, I noticed a tattoo on the Tori's shoulder. I heard the Lord say, "Ask her about the tattoo." I did. Tori explained that it was simply her name written in Chinese. It also had several tropical looking flowers around the name. It meant nothing. We continued to pray, and again I heard the Lord tell me to ask her about the tattoo. I did. She said she did it on a whim, and there was nothing more to her tattoo. She just liked the look of tattoos and decided to get it several years before. We discussed her past briefly and began to pray again. For the third time, I heard the Lord say, "Ask her about the tattoo." We had been making little or no progress up to this point. I

stopped praying and looked at Tori. "Tori, God has told me three times to ask about your tattoo. I know you said it is only your name, but God has been very persistent about this tattoo." Tori looked at me with astonishment, as though I had reminded her of something long forgotten. It was as though someone had turned on a light and shined it into her past. Tears welled up in her eyes, she fell to the ground and cried out to God in immense agony. "What is it?" I asked. Tori began her confession. One night in the midst of a drunken stupor, this beautiful, young woman had decided to get a tattoo. She had no money at the time and agreed to pay for the tattoo by performing sex with the man who etched her name into her skin. Tori had taken on a new image during that process. She had been sealed with an image of uncleanness...the cost of one tattoo. Once she had confessed with a true heart of repentance, I cast the spirit out in the name of Jesus. It left her, and she was restored to wholeness. "I have never felt so clean!" she proclaimed.

WASH IT AWAY

For breaking seals or dedications to Satan, anoint the person with oil on the forehead in the sign of the Cross (*Eze 9:4*), plead the Blood of Jesus Christ of Nazareth over everyone in attendance, and then proceed by asking the person to renounce Satan and all his works. It is suggested by this author to do this in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three times just as Jesus asked Peter three times to answer the question, "Do you love me?" after Peter had denied him. Individuals who have been sealed must then confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ and it is also suggested that this be done in the presence of at least two witnesses. Many references are made in the Holy Bible that explicitly requires a vow or oath be given or taken in the presence of two or more. Here, it is a case of spiritual principle. Whenever

there are spiritual principles laid out in scripture it is always wise to follow them. Also, those who are seeking deliverance and emancipation from spiritual bondage must also confess their sins, ask for forgiveness, repent and renounce association with the devil. Please note: the methods cited above are just suggestions and are not meant to be a rote formula, as far as the number of times renouncement is stated, or the sign of the Cross. It is not to be viewed in a legalistic manner, therefore, always follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in all you do, and be careful to look at scripture as the measuring rod. Prayer ministers should then proceed to break the seal or dedication, rededicate the person to Jesus, and have the individual also do this verbally. Next, break the seal of Satan in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, perform the deliverance, and command the spirit or spirits to leave. Once seals have been broken, deliverance may begin. Deliverance is determined to be necessary when a minister with the gift of discernment discerns the presence of an evil spirit. There is no guesswork. The Ministry of Deliverance is successful when those involved operate under the specific gifts required to accomplish the task at hand. One may discover a demonic spirit through a word of knowledge also. There are nine spiritual gifts provided through the power of the Holy Spirit, and He distributes them as He chooses. They are instrumental in the efficacy of deliverance sessions, and are vital tools used to unveil the works of darkness.

...how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God (Heb 9:14).

THE STORY OF JAKE

It was a typical Sunday morning and I was on my way to the church office for intercessory prayer before the service. Dr.

Helms was in his office. He stepped out to greet me. "I'm glad you're here. Could you come into my office?" Sitting on the couch at the far end of the room, was a young, handsome man in his twenties. He had coal black hair and striking features, however, there was something quite extraordinary about Jake. He had a nail pierced through his nose. He was dressed in all black attire. Locks of every kind dangled from his chain belt. Inscribed in his forehead was the number 666. "Pastor, what does he want?" "He wants to be healed of alcoholism." At first I thought this must be some sort of a joke. After all, this church was a pillar in the town, a church filled with upstanding members of community. We were unaccustomed to seeing such a character come in for a visit, let alone to receive healing ministry. Dr. Helms asked, "Will you talk with him?" I walked across the office and sat on the sofa beside the young man. He repeated to me his desire to be healed of alcoholism. He explained that he had been in the woods the previous night, reading the Bible. It was customary for those involved in Satanism to read the Bible as a tool for interjecting confusion where possible. He said he had heard a voice ask him, "Will you follow me?" He knew it was God. He threw his hands in the air and said, "Yes."

Jake was about to enter a world he had never known. "Jake, there are some things we have to address first. Are you willing to allow us to pray with you?" I took Jake into the conference room adjoining the pastor's office. The intercessors gathered around, laid hands on him, and fervently prayed. Tears came to his eyes, remorse filled his heart, and his confessions came forth. "Jake, will you please join us for the church service?" Approximately three hundred heads turned as Jake walked down that isle. Beautiful stained glass windows of Jesus as the Shepherd of His flock faced Jake as he approached an empty pew. I raced off to join the choir members as they entered into the main sanctuary. The pastor brought forth a wonder-

ful message on the love and grace of God. At the end of the service, I witnessed the most beautiful sight I had ever seen. Jake made his way to the altar and literally threw his body over it. He was now in covenant. After the service, several prayer ministers joined me as we prayed deliverance prayers. Broken seals...one by one, the spirits manifested. Contortions of the face, hands, and body mimicked the character of the spirits as they were exiting. The spirit of death was called out. Jake's head dropped, his eyes rolled in the back of their sockets, leaving only the whites exposed. He started to violently convulse. I continued commanding the exit of that spirit. Jake dropped over as if he were dead, just as seen written regarding the boy with the deaf and dumb spirit recorded in the Gospels. Jake wasn't dead. He was free. He came to and began to praise the Lord for what He had done for him. Jake was well on the road to recovery as he left that dead man lying. He put on the new man in Christ and was radically changed. Eight weeks of discipleship followed. Almost daily we met with him, reading and studying scriptures. Jake renounced his past association with the prince of darkness and committed his life to serve and follow Jesus Christ.

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Here are some suggestions that will be helpful whether you are giving or receiving deliverance prayer. Biblically, we are to proceed with caution and deliverance should only be conducted under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Whether praying healing prayer for you or for others, there are some foundational guidelines that can help aid the process of deliverance. The Holy Spirit is your guide! Individuals committing to deliverance ministry should be keenly aware of the significance and ramifications of praying deliverance prayers. The Word of God tells us that the demons will return and bring seven more powerful, and the last state will be worse than the

previous state. This is not a casual warning. It is a spiritual law that must be taken seriously. Make sure the one receiving deliverance prayer is ready to be committed to fill their spiritual house with God's Word. Also those who are initiating the prayer request for healing and deliverance should be committed to read and study the Holy Bible. The Word cleanses us. Reading the Word of God is a necessity in the long-term success of deliverance ministry. As discussed in chapter six, "Mirror, Mirror, On the Wall," the need for such a ministry often stems out of a faulty belief system or a series of lies that have been held as truth. Therefore, reading the Bible on a consistent basis will build a stronghold of truth in place of the deception. Those seeking deliverance should realize the process of deliverance will most likely guarantee warfare, and they will need to be prepared with that understanding. The devil does not play fair. He does not sit back and ignore the potential of his children being kicked out of their dwelling place without a fight.

All those who participate in deliverance prayers should understand their authority as a child of God. Trust that it is to the Name of Jesus that all demonic spirits must submit. It is not you, your ability, or even your giftedness to which they submit; it is the name of Jesus. Also, another important aspect of deliverance healing prayer is faith. Remember, without faith it is impossible to please God. Fighting in the unseen realm has an entirely different set of rules, and those rules are solidly based in scripture. The Apostle Paul taught us that we are to fight powers, principalities and spiritual wickedness in high places. We cannot use natural weapons, weapons of this world, but spiritual weapons are required. Therefore, faith in those weapons will ensure success as we proceed. It is a given in scripture that deliverance is one of the responsibilities of a true believer. In the commission given in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus passed on His authority over spirits that we

might advance the Kingdom of God and serve Him in this way as the works of the devil are being destroyed. To do so, it is essential to know that spirits can invade Christians through doors that have been opened through repetitive, habitual sin, idolatry, or ungodly associations which give the devil a foothold and create defilement.

ASPECTS OF DELIVERANCE MINISTRY

Deliverance should accompany inner healing. Inner healing is just another term for restoration of the soul. In other words, in the Ministry of Deliverance, one should look for areas of brokenness that have left the recipient of prayer wounded. Pray for healing in those areas. Bind the spirits first, forbid them to interfere and then, if needed, pray deliverance prayers. However, always follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. The Lord promises to restore the soul when one cries out to Him with sincerity of heart. Remember, spirits may enter through an array of opened doors, areas where Satan was given a foothold or an opportunity. Some examples are listed below:

- Trauma (a spirit of fear, for example)
- Generational sins
- Abuse—physical, psychological, sexual,
- Blood pacts
- Internet pornography
- Movies or music that glorify evil
- Occult activity, books, horoscopes
- Levitation
- Mind control games,
- Dungeons and Dragons
- Electronic games which involve killing
- Ouija boards

- Psychics, mediums
- Witches, shaman, or witch doctor
- Lack of spiritual covering
- Word curses, vows
- Ungodly covenants or associations
- Satanism, New Age
- Sexual immorality, perversions, incest
- Homosexuality, adultery
- Bestiality
- False Religions
- Yoga
- Fighting techniques (based on Eastern culture and religions)

In the Ministry of Deliverance demons will test you, but they know they must come under the authority of the name of Jesus. Sometimes they will challenge you to see if you really know (*Ac 19:15*). Once demons are discerned, it is not necessary to yell at them as you cast them out. They can hear you. However, it is important that you speak with authority. At times, you may need to stop and allow the recipient to rest and make sure they are comfortable. Demons will sometimes put up a fight, often trying to hide. They will mock the deliverance minister or the process of prayer, sometimes saying things such as, “You can’t make me leave. You are not strong enough.” Such comments should be countered with truth, such as, “I cannot make you leave, but Jesus can and in His name I command you and you will leave this spiritual house, now!” It is not suggested that a deliverance minister get into a discussion with demonic spirits, because they will use conversation as a trick to lure a minister away from the intended path God has set up. It is important, though, to frequently remind them that it is through the Blood of Jesus and

His name, that Satan and his demonic hosts are overcome. Demons will lie, therefore ministers cannot, and should not, rely on their information. Sometimes they will be able to distort the body, or parts of the body in unnatural positions. At first, this could cause alarm, but it is at such a time when the Holy Spirit will give boldness and confidence to finish the work. He will also give ministers the strength to stand in the face of some very strange happenings. Demons will look for fear in the eyes of the prayer ministers, but the presence of God is so incredibly tangible during the prayer sessions that fear does not have a place. One should never go into a session alone. Remember, Jesus sent the workers out into the cities two by two to minister. There are times when the spirit being cast out will resist. It may even threaten to harm the minister of deliverance. Hence, it is vital that proper steps are taken to ensure safety. Other important steps might include having a telephone in the room where the deliverance session is being held. Many deliverance ministers require that waivers be signed before praying with an individual, eliminating the potential for lawsuits.

Demons will sometimes threaten to kill the person as they are exiting the body, and can affect the physical body, as seen in the case of the sons of Sceva (*Ac* 19:15). They can tear and rip at the skin. They can cause bleeding of the nose, throat, or mouth. They can cause bruises on the skin. They can contort, twist or manipulate facial features. Demons can cause foaming at the mouth (*Lk* 9:39), and can cause some forms of paralysis (*Mt* 4:24). Demons can cause some blindness and deafness, although not all cases are of a demonic nature (*Mt* 12:22, *Mk* 7:37, *Mk* 9:17). They can sometimes cause seizures (*Mt* 17:15). Demons can throw individuals in their grasp to the ground (*Lk* 9:42). Demons will, at times, have supernatural abilities and strengths; therefore, in a session there should always be at least two individuals present (*Mk* 5:3). There may be a need

for three. Most frequently, it is a good suggestion to have a third person simply reading the scripture out loud and off to the side, as the ministry proceeds. Also, while praying for a man, it is wise to have a man on the team, as a precaution.

Demons will sometimes try to divert your attention from them by pointing to another demon, "He is still here, why don't you pick on him?" This is indicative of a delay tactic. There can be an almost child-like mentality, however, do not let your guard down. Satan is well aware that once a house is divided, it will fall. He will not divide his own house. However, being well aware that their time has come, the spirits will often give a last ditch effort to try to maintain their ground. Jesus had Legion tell Him his name, therefore, it is possible and suggested to ask the demons their names (*Mk* 5:9). There were also times where Jesus chose to rebuke or silence the demonic spirit (*Mk* 1:25). Demons may have supernatural knowledge about the deliverance minister, and may attempt to share it. They knew Jesus was the Son of God, when others, church going members of the synagogue, did not recognize their own Messiah. As individuals are praying, ministers must stay alert and keep their eyes opened, constantly watching for any kind of change that might occur. It is the change that will often reflect characteristics and the name of the demonic spirit. Look for a change: a change in the voice inflections and intonation, a change in the eyes, a change in the facial features, a change in the body position, a change in hand movements. Also, there may be a time when the receiver of prayer becomes rigid.

Demons can present themselves as an imitation of Jesus to individuals who are in need of deliverance (*II Co* 11:4). The demon spirit may attempt to convince them to do something ungodly, such as to get a divorce, or do something harmful, such as murder or suicide (*Mt* 17:16). They may simply try to entice their host to harm themselves. Those who are deceived

most frequently believe they are doing it because God told them to. Any instruction an individual claims to have received from the Lord must line up with the Word of God or it is to be discarded as false. As ministers of deliverance are confronted with such issues, they must be able to explain the error of the individual's thinking through biblical truth. It is also imperative, if there is the possibility of suicide, that the proper authorities be alerted. We are instructed to test the spirits; therefore, ministers should adequately discern the various voices that they hear. When the voice of an individual speaks out of character and nature during a prayer session, then there is a strong indication it is demonic. Mary Magdeline and the men of Gergesens had more than one devil; Mary with seven and Legion with 6000, therefore numbers can vary greatly within individuals. The most important fact to remember is that the demons will recognize the Holy Spirit in you. It is suggested to maintain eye contact. Frequently, the receiver of prayer will be unable to keep their eyes opened. The demonic spirits have great difficulty gazing at the Holy Spirit in the eyes of the minister. The individual will explain that they cannot keep their eyes opened. Simply explain to them that it is important to do so, and encourage them to fight the desire to close their eyes. Truly, when this occurs for the first time, the minister of deliverance will have a much deeper understanding of the scripture, which is *Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col 1:27)*.

MANIFESTATIONS

Manifestations of the demonic nature will feel unnatural to the recipient of prayer. They will invariably recognize that something quite extraordinary is occurring. It is good practice to discuss the possibility of manifestations, so that they are not alarmed during the actual deliverance session. Also, recipients of deliverance prayer should clearly understand that they

may stop the process at any time. They should be informed that they can choose to leave at any time, and they should not be persuaded into exploring any area they do not wish to explore. Freedom within the session is of the utmost importance and should be clearly defined before a session begins. Manifestations can vary greatly depending upon the circumstances under which a spirit has gained access. More importantly, they will be congruent with the nature of the demonic spirit. The manifestation will be a reflection of the characteristics of that particular spirit, and the name of the spirit will correspond quite frequently to its distinctiveness. Every individual is different and the situations which brought on bondage are diverse, therefore, no list can capture every manifestation that may occur. The examples below are intended to provide examples of what you might expect while performing a deliverance session. The good news is that the manifestation indicates the release of demonization as spirits are exiting the body. Please keep in mind that the Holy Spirit is there to guide and lead you.

- Convulsing- Lk 9:42, foaming at the mouth- Lk 9:39.
- Speaking in the plural, as in "we or us"- Lk 4:34.
- Throwing an individual unto the ground-Lk 4:35.
- Coming out with a loud shriek- Mk 1:26.
- Trembling and shaking violently—a part or all of the body- Mk 1:26.
- Tearing the skin, bruising an individual- Ac 19:16.
- Becoming violent- Mk 8:2, supernatural strength- Mk 5:4.
- Mute- Mt 9:33, blindness- Mt 12:22.
- Throwing an individual into water or fire -spirit of suicide- Mt 17:14.

- Causing an individual to cut themselves—spirit of self-mutilization -Mk 5:5.
- Rigidity: fingers become rigid, stiff, gnarled, or tingle and become numb or parts of the body become rigid- Mk 9:18.
- Contorting of the face, often in the appearance of the nature of the demonic spirit that is being cast out.
- Inability to open or keep eyes opened, eye movements: such as the pupils may dilate, become dull, or appear to fade in and out, as the spirit wills. They may roll back in the head exposing the whites of the eyes. Converging or diverging of the eyes—spirits do not like to look a true believer in the eyes. There is something about Christ in believers, as shown through our gaze, which implies authority.
- Bleeding from nose, mouth or ears.
- Demonic tongues—this is only discerned through the power of the Holy Spirit via a person with a mature, proven gift of discernment. The person receiving deliverance will recognize afterward, by his or her own admission, that the tongue was evil and not of the Holy Spirit. They will often witness an evil presence inside of them as the false tongue begins to speak.
- Deep breathing, coughing, uncontrollable yawning, or halted breathing.
- Uncontrollable laughing or mimicking-mocking spirit.
- Lump in the throat—One can sometimes see the lump move or can feel it, or it may become lodged in the mouth as it is exiting.
- Hissing, slithering across the floor, or motions mimicking a cobra preparing to strike, flickers of the tongue -This

- usually indicates spirits of the occult or witchcraft and may also be characteristic of lying demons.
- Falling to the ground as one passes out, or blanks out- Mk 9:18.
- Palpitations—the person experiences a fight or flight sensation and may run—demonic avoidance.
- Physical pain—is often felt in part of the body, which has been influenced by spirits. For example, spirits associated with accidents, traumas, or vows/oaths that are made in a pact with secret societies or organizations such as Masonic Lodge where they oath their own bodies to a curse.
- Temperature in the room becomes cold, or the person feels cold, or a certain part of their body becomes cold.
- Churning in the stomach—the person may feel the spirit moving around in the stomach area; often a person may feel they are going to vomit, which occurs frequently.
- Sexual movements—The person may move as though they are experiencing a sexual act or as though they are in labor. This most often is indicative of demons contracted through molestation, rape, incest.
- Growling, barking, spitting may be indicative of false religion, witchcraft, or Satanism.
- Bellowing like an angry bull and nostrils flaring excessively is quite often indicative of a rebellious spirit.
- Foul smells, roaring—occult activity.
- Sudden migraine or headaches-possibly indicates spirits associated with mind control, religious spirits, false religion or idolatry.
- Pressure on the head, shoulders, chest, throat, mouth, or stomach.
- Claw-like motions, or change in facial features, which

may mirror some of the characteristics of a certain animal because of the act of bestiality, or idolatry of animals or their images, and may exhibit web-shaped hands.

- Lizard-like movements, hands cross over each other, as a lizard would crawl or movements with the tongue that mimic a lizard.
- Inability to say “Jesus Christ” during deliverance—this is almost always associated with the deaf and dumb spirit and is a very common manifestation.
- Violent attacks or more commonly, threats of attack: choking, hitting, kicking, foul language.
- Round, golf ball sized shape, which moves under the skin—it may be seen while it is exiting the body.
- Unnatural body movements or contortions—the person may experience their extremities flailing about or poses that could not be normally performed, such as the back arched like a cat or scorpion.

Spirits exit the body through different avenues. It is not uncommon for those who receive deliverance to fall to the ground and appear temporarily to be corpse-like (*Mk 9:26*). The physical manifestation of a demon is the evidence of his exit. Although it is not always necessary, the manifestation of a demonic spirit is one of the means by which one can judge the success of the deliverance session. The best evaluation of a deliverance session will be seen in a noticeable change in the life of the one who received it. There may be no visible manifestation. The demon may exit through the head, the throat, mouth, or nose. This can sometimes be evidenced by a perpetual or uncontrollable yawning, coughing, or burping. Vomiting seems to be a very frequent means of exiting. It is wise to have a trash can close by, and a box of tissues. There are times when the recipient of deliverance prayer may choke

or the airway becomes temporarily blocked. In such a case, do not panic. Ask the Holy Spirit to remove any block and command the loosing of any spirit that is interfering with the airways.

Demonic spirits may exit the body through the ears or the eyes. They may at times leave through the fingertips, hands, feet or toes. Recipients of prayer are often able to describe the mode of exit the spirits have chosen, or it may be witnessed by the natural eye in many cases. The demonic spirits will sometimes manifest in the mouth with visible signs which appear to be a ball rolling under the skin and then leave through the mouth. Occasionally, unclean spirits will exit through the sexual orifices, and it will seem as if the receiver of prayer is going through a spiritual labor process. Examples of this kind of exit are sometimes seen in those individuals who have been raped, molested as a child, or involved in incest, especially by a servant of Satan. Spirits will also leave through the back or off the shoulders. The recipient of prayer will sometimes feel a lifting off of the shoulders or a release of a grip from the back or spine area. The receiver of deliverance ministry will invariably describe feeling light afterwards, and will begin praising God, hence the evidence of exchanging the heavy yoke of bondage for a yoke which is light, the yoke of Jesus Christ. They will often raise their hands and begin thanking Him for His goodness. The Ministry of Deliverance will always bring glory to the one true Deliverer! There is sometimes a visible change in the facial structure. Features are softened and there is a less pointed appearance. This is especially noticeable in those who had been involved in the occult or witchcraft.

...Wisdom makes one's face shine, and the hardness of one's countenance is changed (Ecc 8:1).

BOWING TO MOLECH

The rate of abortion in America is astronomical. It has become

a scourge upon modern society as we know it. The force behind abortion is Satan. Satan came to destroy the children as God was preparing Moses to be a deliverer for His nation, Israel. A decree was given by Pharaoh to destroy all male children. Later, another Deliverer was being raised, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. King Herod, out of fear of losing the throne, ordered that all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under be killed. His attempt to destroy the Great Deliverer failed! Children are a gift of God, precious in His sight. Satan takes all that God upholds and attempts to defile or destroy it. Satan wants to wrap the mothers of the dead in a shroud of guilt and shame; he knows that a part of them died with their child, as sin is a promised path to death. It is a grave cloth that many cannot take off. They wear their mourning perpetually and never reach the abundance of life that Jesus Christ gives.

...because they have given their offspring to Molech, defiling my sanctuary and profaning My holy name” (Ex 20:3).

Abortion is sent to destroy servants of God before they have a chance to be born. It uses the weapon of pride to fight its battle. Recognize the spirit behind the deed, and repent! *Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils (Ps 106:37 KJV).* If you have participated with the *spirit of Molech* by having an abortion, or by dedicating your child to Satan, please stop and pray. There may also be cases where a voice instructed someone to kill their own child. If any of these things apply, then ask the Lord for forgiveness. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Now forgive yourself and the father of your baby by a simple decision, although your heart may not feel it. Spiritual decisions are made based on principle, not feelings. Feelings are fleshly, part of the soul, and they will undoubtedly lead you astray. Principles based on the Word of God will lead you toward Him. Command, in the name of Jesus, that the spirit of Molech leave. Remind him

that he is now barred by the Blood of Jesus and the Cross of Calvary, and may not return. Ask to be cleansed from the guilt and shame, and take off the grave clothes. Often there is also a spirit of death involved, so do the same if deemed necessary. Now, take a deep breath and praise the Lord for what He has done. Remember, you have been justified and the accusations brought against you have been erased. You are acquitted!

RENOUNCE THE HIDDEN THINGS OF SHAME!

Renuncements are an important aspect of deliverance ministry. This is a process by which the person involved with works of darkness makes a formal declaration that they refuse to follow, obey or recognize that particular thing. It involves a decision to disclaim or reject what was once accepted or believed. There are very powerful consequences in the spirit realm when the word of our testimony lines up with our actions. We are serving notice in the realm of the spirit. We are declaring a breaking of allegiance with Satan and his demons, a breaking of fellowship with lawlessness, a breaking of communion with darkness, and a breaking of agreement with temples of idols.

But we had renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in the craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God (II Co 4:2 NKJV).

Paul vindicated his own ministry by telling us in *II Corinthians 4:2* that he and those under his ministry had renounced the false teachers of Corinth. We too, should follow Paul's example and renounce hidden things of shame, especially involvement with the occult, false teachers, false prophets, and false doctrines. Renounce, by verbal proclamation, any organization that practices unholy acts or beliefs and all false religions. Serve notice now! Be free in Jesus's name!

PROCLAIM LIBERTY!

The word *proclamation* means to make public by announcement. In English law, it refers to a formal announcement or a “royal proclamation” made under the great seal, of some matter which a king desires to make known to his subjects. Such would be the case in a declaration of war, a statement of neutrality, or a summoning of the governing body. Proclamations declare that a change is coming, and it is often associated with the legality of that change, by the decision of one’s will.

You yourselves recently repented and did what was right in my sight by proclaiming liberty to one another and you made a covenant before me in the house that is called by my name; (Jer 34:15).

As you are praying, proclaim liberty over one another. Proclamations made in faith can move mountains. Proclamations, under the leading of the Holy Spirit can bring about creative miracles, healing, deliverance, and restoration. Jesus gave us this lesson as He cursed the fig tree. He taught His disciples that with God nothing is impossible. He wanted them, and us, to understand Kingdom principles and bring those heavenly promises into our earthly realm, thus displaying the manifold wisdom of God to powers and principalities. Nothing is impossible with God, if you only believe. Now proclaim your freedom. He whom the Son sets free, is free indeed!

“For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says, “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them”.

ΜΚ ΙΙ:2–24 ΝΚΙΥ

Jesus gave some very careful guidelines on proclamations. He taught that we must first speak out to the mountain. A mountain can be any hindrance or obstacle that stands in the

way, or in the way of someone for whom you are praying. It can be a physical hindrance or a spiritual hindrance. It may be financial, a sickness, an addiction, a failing marriage; it can be anything that blocks the abundance of life that Jesus came to give. It may be a demonic spirit or a stronghold. Whatever the case, identify the mountain and speak to it. The second lesson He gave was that one must not doubt in his heart. Doubt itself is a mountain or hindrance that must be removed. The Bible reads that without faith it is impossible to please God. In the Book of James, it is written that a man who is double-minded is unstable in all his ways and may not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Doubt impedes the process. Doubt guarantees disappointment. Doubt stops the flow of the Holy Spirit. Do not doubt! Third, you must ask in faith, knowing that you will receive the thing you have asked for. The key here is not only what you speak, but it is what you truly believe in your heart. To speak with your mouth and doubt in your heart will inevitably lead to the inability to succeed in that area of prayer. God has given each of us a measure of faith, which will increase as we hear and receive the Word of God. It is with this measure of faith, and the subsequent increase, that we can ultimately pray with success. Praying out of the realm of our ability to believe will simply frustrate and discourage. A *believing* must take place before *receiving*. There is a confidence that comes with the prayer. It is with an attitude of confidence that the request that you have made has already been answered. It is an assurance that God has everything in His control and you can simply rest. Believe you have already received it! The Apostle Paul also taught the importance of proclamation.

“My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom of men but on the power of God (I Co 2:4–5).

All proclamations that are efficacious are those issued under the power of the Holy Spirit. Such proclamations will be manifested in the natural realm, with a demonstration of power. The leading of the Holy Spirit is the cause and effect of manifested proclamations given in faith, under the direct unction of the Holy Spirit, as God Himself is displaying His glory to man. With every prayer there are stipulations, however. Praying the will of God is a prerequisite. Praying His plans and purposes over our own desires is a stipulation. The prayer itself cannot be of selfish motives. It cannot be one of fleshly desires that feed the ego. Intentions of the heart should line up with the desires of the Lord if one expects to receive an answer to prayer. Prayers should be based on promises, and it is in that place where one can move with great confidence and boldness. Proclamations are not only those of removing mountains or obstacles. They can also be proclamations of faith based on the Word of God. We should proclaim blessings over one another, the written promises of God, and the rights we have inherited through our covenant privileges. Proclamations are statements of faith, witnessed by two or more, that give notice to the spirit realm and spiritual beings, that you have a solid foundation to stand upon as you make a request and you will not be moved. Therein lies the victory! God hears and answers those who pray with clean hearts so we ourselves, as we stand on His Word, should be in right standing with the Lord.

BREAKING ALLEGIANCE!

There may be further steps you need to take. The Lord may ask you to destroy anything associated with hidden things of shame. Fear not, and simply ask for guidance, (add comma) and the Holy Spirit will lead the way! Destroy any item or article that may suggest an allegiance with ungodly associations, whether it be a person, an organization or a false

belief system. Below we see those who were involved in the occult confessed and disclosed what they had been involved in, and then they destroyed those things as an act of public renouncement.

Also many of them who became believers confessed and disclosed their practices. A number of those who practiced magic collected their books and burned them publicly; when the value of these books was calculated, it was found to come to fifty thousand silver coins.

Ac 19:18–19

CHILDREN AND THE DEMONIC

Can children have a demon? According to scripture they can. Let's look at the account in Luke, chapter nine, verses seventeen through twenty-nine in which a child was unable to speak. The demon kept him from hearing and it would throw him to the ground. The child would grind his teeth and became rigid and foamed at the mouth. The demon would cast the boy into the fire and into the water in an attempt to destroy him. Even the disciples could not cast the demon out. Jesus said it was because of their unbelief as He proceeded to deliver the child. We see in this account that Jesus prohibited the demon from returning. Four distinct principles emerge from this account. First, children can be possessed by a demon. Second, unbelief can deter the attempts to set someone free, and third, one can forbid a demon from returning to the dwelling place from which it was commanded to leave. We can do the same, in the name of Jesus. Fourth, this demon attempted to kill the child. Demonic possession is very real and can result in death if not addressed.

INCOMPLETE DELIVERANCE

There are a myriad of reasons why a recipient may not receive complete deliverance. These reasons should be clearly under-

stood by both the prayer ministers and the prayer receiver. Lack of faith, unconfessed sin, curses or inner vows that have not been dealt with are all hindrances to deliverance ministry. There may be issues of sin of which an individual is not willing to confess and repent. They may not want to be healed. Such an example is where their sickness has become their identity. The prayer ministers may actually feed their need for attention. In John five, verse six, Jesus asked the man on the mat, *“Do you want to be healed?”* An odd question, no doubt, but Jesus taught through it that there are those who chose not to be healed. Potentially, there is a disobedient lifestyle from which a person refuses to turn. It is not uncommon to find those who are truly seeking deliverance, but just in specific areas of their life. Therefore, they will close off a particular area and refuse to address it. This will impede the process. Ministers of deliverance must be able to explain the potential blocks such a decision would result in. Unforgiveness and bitterness will prohibit the work of the Lord in an individual’s life. Also, those who believe Christians cannot have spirits will not be receptive to prayer. Even within the same body of believers there may be an array of opinions; therefore it is advisable to know the fundamental beliefs of those who are to be the recipients of prayer ministry. Blocked memory can impede the process of deliverance. There are situations that a minister of deliverance might encounter where the recipient cannot remember a certain timeframe in their life. Frequently, such memory loss is the result of a severe, traumatic situation, so topics that need to be addressed may be buried deep and hidden within the subconscious mind. It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that these issues can be dealt with. God is so gracious and, in His time, He will reveal. Therefore, it is best to proceed with caution, and listen intently to the leading of the Lord. Frequently, such issues that may have been left

unresolved should be addressed through inner healing before deliverance.

Those trapped in some form of legalism, or those heavily influenced by a religious spirit, can most assuredly hinder the work of deliverance ministry. Religious spirits have their host convinced that they are in the right, even if their thought processes or actions are in direct conflict with the Word of God. Often, these individuals who are held captive by the demonic spirit will be able to quote scripture quite easily. They will seem to have an understanding and will often rely on the scripture as justification. Characteristically, they will chastise others using scripture as a means of punishment or in a threatening fashion. They may quote scripture, but it is not in the spirit of love. Those held captive to a religious spirit may correctly quote scripture but it will be out of context. They also may mimic the gifts in a charismatic setting in such a way as to disrupt the congregation, such as claiming to have a “word,” and the word given is jumbled or nonsensical. At times, the manifestation of the religious spirit is overlooked or simply labeled as poor judgment. It is only when the recipient of prayer acknowledges his desperate need to change and have a willingness to do so, that there can be any real success. If the ministry team is not in a right relationship with one other, it will block the flow of the Holy Spirit, and thus impede the process. It is imperative that there is unity of spirit when teams of prayer ministers meet for deliverance prayer. Disunity is a prescription for failure. It will insure a blockage, and most likely prohibit any real move of God. Therefore, prayer ministers should keep themselves from being disgruntled or frustrated with one another. Quick resolve is the best directive as one ministers in spiritual warfare. Also, ministers who need cleansing themselves will most assuredly be ineffective. Therefore deliverance ministers must strive diligently to live a life of holiness and repentance. Many other issues may

prevent a successful deliverance. Denial, where the individual refuses to accept the real problem, an unwillingness to resolve past pain, guilt, or anger, and improper motives all hinder the process of deliverance. Taking a spiritual history at the onset of the ministry time will often speed the process. Past history will also give a picture of areas of interest, which can eliminate the potential for wasting valuable time. That being said, it is always a good practice to simply pray and ask the Lord if this particular situation is one which you are to be involved in, and then trust the Lord as you go forth.

PREPARE TO BE CLEANSED!

Prepare the room for deliverance; consecrate each person present, the room, and all that is in it to the Lord. Remember, this is an act in faith in which all involved are being set apart for the worship and service of the Lord. Ritual is dead work, however, spiritual principles carry weight if applied correctly in faith. Plead the Blood of Jesus over the environment. Sprinkling the Blood is indeed a spiritual act and can be clearly illustrated by the example of the purification rite of the Red Heifer found in the law. In prayer ministry, it is the Blood of Jesus which does the cleansing as it is sprinkled over an individual who has come into contact with death through sin. Ask the Lord to cleanse the environment, and fill it with His presence. Bind the forces of darkness, all elemental spirits of the earth, the air, fire, water, the underworld, and the strongman. Forbid any interference from evil spirits. Dedicate the time and effort to the Lord for His glory. Confess any and all sins you may have committed. These steps will allow for a better spiritual hearing on the part of the prayer minister. It will also push aside any hindrances that may be sent to interfere with the Ministry of Deliverance. Playing music softly in the background, which exalts Christ and acknowledges His Blood, is a very effective tool as one enters into spiritual

warfare. Music that pertains to the Blood of Jesus becomes a useful weapon during the time of ministry. The evil spirit harassing Saul would leave as David played his music; this is a good example to follow. Once the environment is prepared, then prepare the individual in need of deliverance by having them personally affirm their faith in Christ. It is very important that they humble themselves before God. In a deliverance situation it is not uncommon for the recipient of prayer to place too much emphasis on the deliverance minister or the process, instead of understanding that it is truly the Lord with whom they are meeting. Deliverance is never about man or man's ability; it is about God and the sincerity of heart, when an individual chooses to be honest with himself and with his God. Humility and reverence are the requisite dispositions for all involved. Confession and repentance are the most important elements of deliverance prayer. Recipients of deliverance prayer must confess any known sin and ask for forgiveness for any unknown sin. Forgiveness is another crucial element and the recipient of prayer should forgive all people who have hurt them in any way. As previously discussed, there must also be a clean break with any and all occult activity, and ministers of deliverance should prepare the individual to be released from curses, vows, and ungodly sexual ties, once decisions for change have been confessed and witnessed.

The actual deliverance prayer is quite simple. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and under His authority, command the demon spirit out. It is a popular practice within the deliverance community of ministers to tell them to go straight to Jesus Christ to dispose of them as He wills. The Bible tells us that they will go to the dry places, thus it is safe to assume that one could command them to go to their preferred places of habitat, the dry places. The Apostle Paul did not assign them a place of dwelling, and Jesus could have sent them to the pit or abyss, but He chose not to. Follow the leading of

the Holy Spirit. After the demons have been commanded out, pray that the Holy Spirit seal all entrances where the spirits have entered, and that the Lord fill those areas with His light and the power of His love. It is good practice to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to fill the person with characteristics of Jesus that are opposite of the evil that has been cast out. The Holy Spirit is never to be commanded to do or perform anything. He is to be asked in a prayerful, reverent manner. For example, where there has been anxiety, ask the Holy Spirit for peace, where there has been hate, ask the Holy Spirit to fill them with love, where there has been lust, ask for purity, or where there has been fear, ask for faith. Remember, you must be prepared for battle! Apply the Blood of Jesus over yourself, your family, the recipient of prayer and their family, your property, your finances, your health, your home, and your vehicles. Deliverance prayer is warfare and these suggestions are for safety as one enters into the spirit realm on behalf of others. It is good practice to prepare spiritually through fasting. Fasting in and of itself is a form of warfare. God hears a heart that is willing to sacrifice their very sustenance to minister for the betterment of another. Also, Jesus laid down a clear precedent which indicated that there are some demons that only come out with prayer and fasting, thus a fasted lifestyle is critical. When performing deliverance prayers, it is also good practice to ask the Lord to send a heavenly host of angels to do His pleasure, and to guard you. Angelic hosts of heaven play a significant role in warfare and it is to the benefit of deliverance ministers to realize that it is not they who are actually fighting the battle. It is the Lord, and He has at His beck-and-call, a powerful force to work on His behalf. Lastly, ministers of deliverance, as well as those who receive deliverance ministry, should clothe themselves with the whole armor of God.

Most importantly, follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. Deliverance ministers do not need a check list of topics to

cover. There is a specific direction to go in and God will truly light the path. There is a tendency at times to go through a long check list which addresses issues on a broad scale to look for possibilities that may be the root cause for an individual's difficulties; resist that desire! Tune out your fleshly hearing and tune into your spiritual hearing, carefully listening to the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit will quickly tell you or show you through a word, a vision, or a scripture where you are to begin. Then it is simply taking one step at a time as He reveals to you mysteries that are uncovered. You and your prayer partner must work closely together, as each will be given different parts of the puzzle which will unravel hidden issues. Also, teams are essential for safety, and one should never pray alone with a person in need of deliverance ministry. This comprehensive path will involve confessions that are witnessed by two, repentance, inner healing of past wounds, proclamations, renuncements, the breaking down of strongholds, and casting out demonic spirits. Sessions which include all of these areas will ultimately be the most effective and thorough deliverance ministry.

Ministering hope and healing to individuals who have been broken through sin, trauma, abuse, neglect, abandonment, or generational curses requires great patience and great wisdom. Those who do so must do so with the most gentle, loving attitude, never haughty or overbearing. They must also work with the utmost confidentiality. Pastors who violate confidentiality open the entire congregation up to continued damage to those already wounded, as well as to the potential for lawsuits. It is a dangerous ground to work, therefore heed the warning and find a pastor who truly cares for those who are under his watch. Also, deliverance ministers should only work in a church where the pastor believes in and understands the Ministry of Deliverance. Once again, deliverance ministers are under the covering of a pastor. The work of deliverance will

bring warfare and many times churches are unprepared for it, and such residual fallout is often blamed on those who minister deliverance. Lack of training and unexpected warfare that arises with such a ministry can bring confusion into the local church. Therefore, it is essential to prepare everyone involved with a strong foundational teaching on deliverance prayer. The Bible clearly states that we are to do the very things that Jesus Christ did and deliverance was a very big part of His ministry! Please do not ignore it, but embrace it through the solid biblical principles and the pattern Jesus set forth as He went from town to town healing the sick and curing those who were troubled with unclean spirits!

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL

And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

II Co 3:18

Most everyone has heard at some point in his or her life the childhood story of Snow White. Peering into a mirror, the wicked witch chants:

Mirror, mirror on the wall,

Who's the fairest of them all?

Hoping for a positive response, the witch was greatly disturbed upon hearing the mirror counter with just the opposite of what was anticipated. Image, be it real or imagined, is a foundational building block in understanding our relationship with God. It is foundational to effectively operating in the Ministry of Deliverance. Image is the reproduction of a form or being. It is the exact likeness or a visible representation of someone or something. God puts such a value on image that He created man in His own likeness, after His

own divine pattern. What an awesome concept! This truth is a hard notion for the most mature of Christians. We are created in His image. We are to reflect His image. We are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory.

As believers, we are to be a representation of our Father in heaven; our model being Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The difficulty arises when we, like the witch in the children's story, gaze into a proverbial mirror and receive information that is faulty, twisted or an illusion. How do we see ourselves? This will set our course. It can determine the success we experience, as well as the failures we have had to endure. The principles within God's Word confirm over and over that we become what we believe in our hearts we are. We are also taught through scripture that we become like the thing we worship. Therefore, it stands to reason that our thinking must be aligned with what the Word of God says we are, and we must worship God, and God alone. Who we are is determined by a myriad of factors, some that can be altered, and some that cannot. Dwelling on those things that cannot be changed is counter-productive. However, how we view those things which cannot be changed can alter the eventual outcome of our lives. Each and every person is uniquely created, with an individual blueprint, with a plan and purpose behind the creation. In the Ministry of Deliverance, we often see the destruction brought about through distorted images of oneself. Effective deliverance ministry can often pinpoint those distortions, find the event or lie where the distortions became what seemed like reality, and bring truth and clarity into that place.

We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim) We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes and we looked the same to them (Nu 13:33 NIV).

How do these distorted images of self come into being? Where do they stem from? Can they be corrected? The answer to the last question is, categorically, yes! Change must consist

of replacing the old way of thinking with a new way of thinking. Renewing of the mind requires a proactive decision. It takes a concerted effort on the part of the person who holds these distortions and it must be based on truth. Satan attempts to distort man's image of himself, especially as it relates to the likeness of God. He uses age-old techniques to strip one's identity with a consistent barrage of tricks, schemes, reminders of our past failures or sins, and even the sins of our forefathers. The Word of God gives us a true picture of whom and what we are. It must become our blueprint, erasing the faulty thinking with a renewed awareness of what we are to see as we gaze into that proverbial mirror on the wall.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good, and acceptable and perfect (Ro 12:2).

We must change our way of thinking according to scripture. Negative mindsets often begin with critical and judgmental thinking. Thought patterns develop at a very early age and are enforced through the family environment. Unhealthy attitudes are passed from generation to generation. Throughout the Old Testament, we see issues of sin and poor decision-making passed down from father to son, and then to grandson, and so-on. Faulty thinking can skew one's vision of self as well as how one perceives others. Skewed vision will most frequently be rooted in sins of self: pride, rebellion, rejection, false humility, or self-pity. In an attempt to have one's needs met, where there may have been a void early in life, methods are developed for self-protection, self-promotion, or self-preservation. These attempts to fill the void actually replace the plan God has designed. He, being our protector, our shield, and our sustainer, has been usurped by one's own frail attempts to fulfill those things missing in their life. Self-motivated techniques form strongholds that stand in opposition to fully trusting in God. Frequently in the Ministry

of Deliverance, when there have been fractured relationships, distrust and blame is pointed toward God, thus further alienating the one in need of restoration. Strongholds that were meant to protect and secure actually block the flow, preventing an individual from receiving the tremendous love of God, the Father. There is a solution; it is found upon the pages of the Holy Bible.

You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph 4:22–24).

Putting away your former way of life is not a small task, but it can be accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit. Decide in your mind what kinds of thoughts have been destructive and actively cast them down. Replace those negative mindsets with the truth of God's Word by clothing yourselves with the new self. Let His Word be your light. Choose to put on the new self, as if it were a garment. Put it on each day; resist the devil and the old way of life. This requires active participation on your part. It requires commitment to change. It may also require some investigation. Where did these destructive mindsets come from? These destructive thoughts have a beginning. Identifying the origin of such thinking can expedite healing in that particular area. Often, understanding of where and when a certain pattern of thinking took root will lead to a willingness to release caustic mindsets, mindsets that become spiritual strongholds.

A *stronghold* is “a fortified place” and a *strongman* is “one who leads or controls by force of will and character or by military methods.” A spiritual stronghold is a mindset or way of thinking that is engrained and automatic. It is a belief system that is stringently accepted as truth. It is an immovable, uncontested way of thinking that may or may not be

true. However, the one with a spiritual stronghold often has difficulty in accepting any other opinion. Strongholds of truth based on scripture must replace strongholds of error. Strongholds of error have a *strongman* who leads or controls by force. The *MacAuthur Bible Commentary* offers a solution: “The formidable spiritual strongholds manned by the forces of hell can be demolished only by spiritual weapons wielded by godly believers—singularly the “sword of the Spirit.” It is important to determine the root of strongholds, as well as where they were first established, then one must learn to apply truth to that place where the stronghold was formed. Arguments, thoughts, ideas, philosophies, and speculations can result in the formation of ideological forts, and if based on a lie or flawed thinking, will invariably hinder one's relationship with God by barricading oneself from receiving the love of God, the truth of the Gospel, or the fullness of God's Word. Start by simply asking the Lord to expose the strongholds in your life. Trust that it is the will of God for strongholds to be demolished. Here again we see through scripture that it is a proactive decision on our part to stand against these things that stand in opposition to God's will. Attitudes of rebellion, arrogance, pride, and every high thing that rises up against God must be opposed. Strongholds built to falsely protect, promote, or preserve must also be torn down.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

II CO 10:4–5 NKJV

We cast down thoughts, ideas, philosophies, false images, and reasoning that are in conflict with scripture. We take captive every destructive thought before it becomes an action. We

take those thoughts into captivity and turn our minds toward the obedience and submission to the Word of God. We proactively replace displeasing thoughts and ideas with things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. We are to meditate on things that are virtuous and praiseworthy. We have a promise attached to this directive found in Philippians, chapter four. It is written that if we will do these things, then the peace of God will be with us. What a promise! The formation of strongholds can be broken down into different categories. The seven categories below are not an exhaustive list but they will bring a sense of clarity as we look at the causes of faulty, twisted thinking. The categories are as follows: generational or genetic heredity, inner vows, spoken words from those in authority, curses, traumatic situations, habitual sin, occult involvement, faulty religious mindsets, and social or cultural mores. First in the natural, and then in the supernatural, the pulling down of walls took place with words alone. Joshua was given the assignment of leading the people of Israel into the land of Canaan. After forty years in the desert and four hundred years of bondage, they were to take their inheritance by force. The Promised Land awaited them, but there was a barrier. Jericho was a fortified place, a stronghold, and possibly the most important city of the Jordan Valley at that time, and it was surrounded by a wall. It was in a state of social and political turmoil. There was a delineation between the classes with the upper class ruling firmly over the peasants. The socio-economic structure was being challenged by the onslaught of new immigrants. Israel was about to embark on a new phase in its national history, a newfound freedom and liberty that had been lost in years of captivity in Egypt, but freedom would not come without a fight.

Joshua, whose name means *Jehovah is salvation*, was changed by Moses from his previous name, Hoshea, which signifies “*salvation or deliverance*.” Joshua led the Israelites into

a successful military campaign. He had been commissioned by Moses to take the people into the land of plenty. He had exhibited great courage as he and Caleb were the only ones confident enough in the Lord to trust taking the land successfully. He had been faithful to God in the wilderness and was one of the few who made it to the completion of their journey, at the end of the Great Exodus. Joshua was a great military strategist and leader. He led the people by divine revelation and with great devotion to God. He called for the people to first sanctify themselves, then they were to be circumcised. God told Joshua to set up a memorial as a perpetual remembrance of His mighty hand as He pushed back the waters of the Jordan River. Four days after Crossing over, the Passover was celebrated. Joshua was then confronted by the “*Captain of the host of the Lord*” and God gave him very specific directions concerning the capture of Jericho. He immediately fell prostrate on the ground and began to worship. He was to instruct the warriors and the priests to march around the wall once each day for six days and seven times on the seventh day. Seven priests bearing seven trumpets were to go before the Ark of the Covenant, and at the sound of the trumpet they were to give a loud shout. At that sound the wall of the city would fall down. Armed men went before the trumpets and the rear guard followed behind the Ark. Joshua had given explicit instructions that the men were not to utter a word until the last sound of the ram’s horn was blown. When the time came, the men, after the seventh encircling of the city, gave a loud shout and the walls fell flat. They entered the city and destroyed all that was within the walls. Devastation to the city was necessary in establishing the new Israelite rule and a total breaking away from the Canaanite society and its former government. Israelites marched around the city seven days, with seven priests, blowing seven trumpets carrying the Ark of the Covenant with them. It was without military weapons

of war that the walls came down; it was with the spiritual weapons given them under the direct leading of God, that the victory was indeed accomplished!

What were those weapons that brought the wall down? Successful warfare in the process of tearing down fortified walls, or *strongholds*, starts with falling on your face, prostrate before the Lord, in a position of worship. Seven indicates completion, perfection, and a finished work in the economy of God. Therefore, seven days represents, for all time, that walls can be torn down in the spiritual realm, with spiritual tools, thereby defeating the enemies of God. Seven priests represent the Word of God in its fullness. Therefore, the tearing down of walls requires the Word of God in action. Seven trumpets represent the voice of God and the Ark of the Covenant represents the power and presence of God. Therefore, successfully tearing down strongholds will require the presence and power of God to be implemented, which will invariably cause any stronghold to fall. The shout of man was an act of faith and thus, effective faith will cause the downfall of spiritual blocks or barricades as the violent take it by force, just as Jesus taught us to speak to the mountain. Successful warfare, as one tears down *strongholds*, is accomplished by correctly applying the Word of God, as a spoken word in faith, while being in His presence and under His power.

The name *Jericho* actually means "*place of fragrance*." It is a place where the ungodly was replaced with the godly; a promise was inherited and the Kingdom of God was victorious over the kingdom of darkness. As strongholds are broken down, there is a sweet aroma that is presented before the Lord. What was once foul and distorted, is replaced with fragrant truth. It is a place of truth and light where there had once been darkness and deception. It is a place of spiritual sight where there had once been spiritual blindness. Behind every stronghold of the enemy is ground that is to be taken by the

servants of God who will fight to bring forth the place of fragrance, a sweet smelling aroma of God. The manna which the Israelites had been given in the wilderness for forty years had now been stopped. Although God was still their provider, He now required them to take personal responsibility, work the land, and eat from what He had given them as an inheritance. In the same manner, God has already given us the provisions necessary to pull down ungodly strongholds, and now the time has come to utilize those provisions!

DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS

Our thoughts and attitudes can begin to be developed in us even before birth. Scientifically, babies can sense the emotions of their mother *in utero*. Pediatricians encourage pregnant women to talk to their unborn child, sing to them, and have the father do the same. It is readily accepted within the field of psychology that the mother's state of well-being will, without a doubt, effect the disposition of the child. Psychologists have proven the effects of words spoken over children as they grow, and the extent to which these words can have detrimental, long-term consequences. Psychologists have many proven studies which relate to traumatic situations and the results of such occurrences. Children may not have the intellectual capability to process such traumatic situations appropriately. They can cause individuals to carry unrealistic fears and concerns with them, especially if it occurs at a young age, which form reasoning *or strongholds* that may be harmful.

Habitual sin and the practice of the occult also form formidable strongholds, due to willful persistence in participating with the devil. There are promises written in scripture for those who practice works of darkness: promises of confusion, spiritual blindness, and eternal judgment. Such involvement will quite possibly lead to fear, anxiety, depression and despair. Sin has blurred our vision. Since the fall of man, sin has been

the most destructive force in distorting our image. One who engages in habitual sin mimics their father, the devil. Harsh words, but compellingly true. The Word of God warns against willfully persisting in sin. It promises a “fearful prospect of judgment” and it spurns the Son of God, thus profaning the Blood of the Covenant. Satan is the father of sin. He desires to be served, to be honored, and to be obeyed. Beware of the deadly effects upon the image or reflection of oneself through consistent, habitual sin.

...”Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” He answered, “Every plant that my Heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person leads another, both will fall into a pit”.

MT 15:12–14

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

Spiritual blindness is a state which affects those who are perishing, those who are unsaved. The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving that they may not see the truth of the Gospel. They are held captive under the power of Satan. Only by receiving the truth of the Gospel will the veil be lifted. Spiritual blindness also affects carnal Christians. Diminution of spiritual perception occurs as one continues on a path of yielding oneself to sin and the works of the flesh. Carnal Christians who refuse to fully yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit grow increasingly faint in their faith and in their ability to understand precepts within the Holy Bible. The word used for spiritual blindness in the Greek signifies “a covering with a callus or a hardness” and the verb meaning *to blind* means “to burn or smoke.” Hence, gross sin brings on a hardness which will eventually dull spiritual perceptions. The danger is real and it is wise to understand the potential impli-

cations of spiritual blindness. Jesus taught that if the blind led the blind, they would both fall into a pit!

Hatred, including any malicious feeling or animosity directed toward another individual, will perpetually lead to spiritual blindness. It may seem justified, however, it is never to be a part of the believer’s life. Hatred is a tool Satan uses to lead astray anyone caught in its snare. It will ensure death to the spirit. The Word of God states that one who walks in hatred is a murderer, and does not have eternal life abiding in him. Hatred toward man is hatred toward God. Do not be fooled; scripture was written for our admonition and we must heed the warning.

But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness, walks in the darkness and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness (I Jn 2:11).

Idolatry will also lead to spiritual blindness. It will prevent those who participate in it from being able to comprehend truth. Their minds are darkened to the will of God. They have difficulty seeing the way they are to go. Idolatry is spiritual adultery. It is being unfaithful to God and it occurs when one worships a creation instead of the Creator. Truth is suppressed; God is not glorified. Veneration of anything over a holy God will result in futile thinking, foolish and perverted logic, and idolatrous presumptions. Such practices will lead to sexual immorality and other self-destructive activities. Idolatry ultimately leads to destruction of the soul and spirit, and a promise of spiritual blindness. Many sins of idolatry derive from pleasing self, and meeting the worldly needs of one’s own sinful flesh.

They do not know, nor do they comprehend; for their eyes are shut, so they cannot see, and their minds as well, so that they cannot understand (Isa 44:18).

Idolatry is rooted in three inward desires. The first is the lust of flesh, with its desire to participate in the things of this

world. Flesh opposes God and craves the attentions of man, and self. Second is the lust of the eyes, which results in covetousness, the seeking after what is not one's own possession. Third is the pride of life. The desire for position, admiration and praise become nothing more than seeking after vain glory. There is an inward desire for accolades of man, honor and applause. These desires displease God. They are devilish and they stand against the very character and nature of God. Identify and renounce the pomp and pleasure of worldly things, and seek after heavenly things with their rewards and treasures that will not fade away.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world (I Jn 2:16 NKJV).

The idolatry of self can manifest in many different forms, such as self-absorption, self-reliance, self-pity, stubbornness, arrogance and pride. It can be exhibited through self-exaltation, self-will, and self-protection. Idolatry of self is the premise of New Age and other false religions which focus on the desires of the flesh and say that you are your own god.

Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today, whose heart turns away for the Lord our God to go and worship the gods of those nations, make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison (Dt 29:18 NIV).

Pride, arrogance, and haughtiness stand against God. Make no mistake, attitudes of this kind are evil. God opposes the proud. God punishes the proud. God strips the proud. Can we claim Lordship of Jesus Christ and walk in ways that oppose His very nature? Spiritual blindness emanates from the point at which one chooses a path contrary to the will of God. Pride and arrogance lead in the direction of self-will over God's will, and such attitudes of the heart will habitually block truth and light. Haughtiness is the attempt to show oneself above another and is in direct conflict with humility,

which is the character and nature of Christ. Some form of bitterness is usually underlying these sins, and its toxic effect will destroy the heart and defile the conscience.

All those who are arrogant are an abomination to the Lord; be assured, they will not go unpunished (Pr 16:5).

Envy is the inward desire to have what someone else has obtained. It embraces resentment and an inward seething toward another. Make no mistake, it is of the devil. Attitudes of envy can destroy a family, friendships, and even churches. It is written in the Book of James that where there is envy, there will be disorder and wickedness of every kind. Such behaviors are fueled by the demonic forces. They will invariably lead to spiritual blindness. Avoid such attitudes, cast them down or cast out the spirits that are inspiring them. Refuse to participate with works of darkness, for it is a path to destruction!

But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, and devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind.

JAS 3:14–16

Judgment of others, or allowing the judgment of others to become the measuring rod of how we view ourselves, is sin. Our vision becomes skewed when we see ourselves through the opinion of others. Man will have a tendency to misjudge our intentions, our actions, and even our words. It is a dangerous place to put ourselves when we give that authority to another individual. Once again, God is our judge. He has determined our worthiness through the death of His Son. He has called us His beloved, and the apple of His eye, and accepting any judgment other than that which is written would be

an affront. We must repent of it, both in allowing judgment, and judging others.

But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world (1 Co 11:31–32).

Sin blurs our vision and distorts our thinking. Hatred, idolatry, pride, arrogance, envy, bitterness, and judgmental attitudes are just some ways we can become confused in our thinking. These sins are just a few that bring on spiritual blindness. They give us a distorted image of ourselves because we have become deceived, tricked by the devil into believing a lie. Our hearts and minds become hardened. These sins produce spiritual decay in us! They hinder us from coming into the presence of God. They keep us from making progress in the things of God and they will lead us into ruin. Identify areas in your life where you have chosen to walk in any of these sins for a time. Pause just a moment and spend time with the Lord. Ask Him to reveal to you areas where you have already become deceived. Ask Him to show you what you must do to correct the wrongs, make restitution, or just confess and repent. At the end of this chapter, write down the names and situations you would like for the Lord to restore, listing areas of your own weaknesses: hatred, idolatry, pride, arrogance, envy, bitterness, judgments, etc...Now simply ask Him. He will hear your heart-felt cry today, and He will restore you. Have faith and believe!

PEOPLE PLEASING

Who is your God and who are you trying to please? If God is really your God, then you surely know that obedience is better than sacrifice. Be sure to live a life that is free of the things that will rob you of your relationship with God. Paul taught that you could not please God and man, one would surely win out. It is wise to decide to thwart any attempts to be a man

pleaser. People pleasers choose to exalt man over God. On the surface it seems quite harmless, but a more in-depth look will expose the underlying fear of being rejected. Therein lies the root sin. Often hiding behind weakness and a false desire to be kind, the true issue of fear is exposed. Turn from those things which cause you to walk in blindness and confusion. Resist the plans Satan has for you, plans to cause you to veer off course. God has a good plan for you. He sees you as His chosen and beloved. Now that is a relationship worth preserving. Be free in Jesus's name!

Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ (Gal 1:10).

Placing God on His rightful throne in your life will prepare you for getting through many life disappointments. Once we know God, and accept Him as Lord and Savior, the role men previously played in our lives becomes much less relevant. At times, individuals who do not understand this precept tend to place great emphasis on what someone else will think, if they will accept or approve them, or if they will meet their needs. God wants us to turn our vision toward Him. He wants us to learn to see Him as the one who really counts. You, my friend, are accepted, approved, and loved by the Most High God.

But God proves His love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us (Ro 5:8).

God loves us no matter what our spiritual condition is. We are loved by God, each and every one of us, even if we cannot feel or receive His love. God created man, and it is His desire that no man should perish. The love of God is all inclusive. It has no boundaries. It is all-encompassing, pervasive, and ever-present. Does that mean that everyone will receive His love, regardless of their spiritual condition? No, some will choose to reject it. However, God gives His followers, those obedient to His ways, peace, comfort, and the ability

to get through difficult times. We learn to give God credit for the good and the bad. We accept His rule over us, and learn that only what He allows to happen will happen. We learn to receive His love. We know also that it rains on the just and the unjust, the righteous and the unrighteous. Although we may not understand when troubles come, we believe that God uses all things to work together for good, for those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose. Therefore, it's much more understandable to release people of any obligations we may have purposely or inadvertently placed on them to be our comfort, our sustainer, our protector, or our supporter. God alone has us in the palm of His hand and it is He who we are to learn to trust implicitly. There may be a season of pain, but we still understand in the deepest part of ourselves that God is ultimately in control. Sins that blind and confuse us must be identified and dealt with. Therefore, find the roots: roots of rebellion, rejection, bitterness, unforgiveness, offense, and fear. We cannot see ourselves as God sees us when we participate in darkness. Darkness distorts the image we see. Remember, we are to separate ourselves from all forms of darkness and lawlessness. Below is a list of root sins which will actually bring on spiritual blindness, thus hindering our vision, both of ourselves and of those around us.

The Root of Rebellion

Rebellion can be against parents, a husband or a wife, church leadership, government, teachers, bosses, or leaders. The act itself is one of opposition; it is contentious in nature. It causes one to stand in dispute against another. Rebellion is often motivated by pride and stubbornness. It is a form of disobedience, first against God and His Word, and then against His designated leaders. Stubbornness and rebellion go hand in hand. Where one is found the other is usually present. The verb meaning "to rebel" is translated in the Septuagint and

connotes to "make bitter, angry, provoke, to reject and not to recognize." Therefore, rebellion takes hold as individuals have been rejected in some form. Rebellion will take on an aspect of control and is often manifested in the form of domination, intimidation, and manipulation. It is in direct conflict with the operation of the Holy Spirit, because He is the author of true freedom and liberty. The Holy Spirit recognizes that God has given each man the right of free will, and He will not impose Himself on an individual. He will not force man to follow or be obedient to the proper structure that has been established; whether it is in the home, at work, in the church or community. Man is free to choose to submit or not to submit to the authority God has put in place. Rebellion is often the root of division in the family structure, because it is simply an issue of self-will. It also grieves the Holy Spirit.

For rebellion is like the sin of divination (witchcraft), and arrogance (stubbornness) like the evil of idolatry (I Sa 15:23).

The Root of Rejection

Rejection often starts at a very early age, and sometimes is simply passed down from one generation to another. Rejection is a form of disapproval. It can also involve the act of doing away with or setting aside. Rejection is to make void, to nullify. It is to despise, annul, or bring to nothing. Great pain is associated with rejection when it occurs at the hand of a parent. When experienced, it frequently results in sexual sin. Satan attempts to mimic love; in him there is no love. He is the very opposite of love, therefore he tempts the rejected by offering a false love, falsely fulfilled in the form of fornication, pornography, adultery, or any other types of sex-for-self. Rejection also opens the door to self-rejection, despair, self-hatred, self-destruction; examples of such consequences include cutting, bulimia, anorexia, self-mutilation, or addictions. It is a means of escape by the use of alcohol, drugs, sex,

and other excessive behaviors. Rejection leads to withdrawal by fantasy, pretension, unrealistic dreams, or denial. It leaves its victim in a state of insecurity, inferiority, self-pity, loneliness, timidity, or ineptness. Eventually these things will bring on gloom, heavy burdens, despondency, defeatism, and withdrawal from reality. Rejection can also be a core issue in many mental illnesses. One may reject God and break faith with Him through rejecting His commands, and thereby nullify the very thing that can bring healing, the counsel of God.

The Root of Bitterness

Bitterness affects most greatly the one who holds it. It is an indication of extreme wickedness and gall. It is evil speaking or evil feelings held against another. The root word actually means “to cut or to prick, literally, sharp or pointed.” Bitterness is poison and it does defile. It often stems from being hurt or wounded in some way, and therefore the offended party holds another accountable for a wrong. Bitterness is the result of refusal to forgive, thus emotions turn into hatred, rage, or potentially a violent nature. Frequently the embittered has an inward desire or need to retaliate. It can affect the physical body and it also grieves the Holy Spirit. It is a tool that Satan frequently uses to defile those who will walk in agreement with it. It will destroy the one held captive by it.

The Root of Unforgiveness

Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. It is an act of extending grace and mercy. It is the act of releasing an individual. The word in the Greek language actually means “to send away, to remit, or to cancel.” Forgiveness is a means of releasing oneself from bad circumstances as that individual chooses to release the one who has committed an offence. In the government of God, we can only receive forgiveness if we extend forgiveness.

It is completely analogous to the grace we have been given by God, the Father. The Greek words meaning “to let loose” are synonymous with the word for *forgive*. In other words, they are interchangeable. As individuals forgive, they are released from the pains of that negative or harmful situation, and restored in their soul, as though it never occurred. They may never forget, but the pain and hurt associated with the situation that brought on unforgiveness no longer rules or dominates their thoughts. Individuals are released as they choose to forgive. Forgiveness is a requirement in the life of a believer; it is not an option.

When there is a rehashing of the past, this is often an indication that forgiveness has not taken place. Another sign may be if there is still pain that is present when a name of a person or a situation is mentioned. Also, denial of any emotions where there should be some emotions may be a red flag that true forgiveness has not yet occurred. Indifference or intense anger can both be evidence of a heart that is still holding unforgiveness; indifference being the most dangerous of the two, because it is so subtle. On the other hand, there may be excessive excuses made, for both the accused and the accuser, when discussing an issue. Hence, there may be a need for forgiveness. Ministers of deliverance should look for these signs.

An offended brother is more unyielding than a fortified city, and disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel (Pr 18:19 NIV).

The Root of Offense

Offense is a bait, trap, snare, or stumbling block. It is considered in the New Testament to be anything that hinders an individual and blocks him from moving toward God. It can cause an attitude of prejudice to arise against another. Offense is directed toward another person and becomes an obstacle or a spiritual hindrance because of one’s own selfish desires or from the exercise of one’s own Christian liberty, to the harm

of another. Those who are held captive to offense cannot move forward. They have a barricade in their way. Often when there is a root of offense, there is an unwillingness to forget a past situation, conversation or experience. Offense may result in anger or sarcasm or it may show itself in gloating or haughtiness when the other party is hurt in some way. It is important to remember that when we insult a brother or sister, we insult God. It is often a stumbling block which causes another to fall and our best defense against it is love. It is most often Satan's direct weapon against brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, and comes to destroy the unity of the Body.

For Christ did not please himself; but as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me" (Ro 15:3).

The Root of Fear

The words *fear* and *flight* were somewhat synonymous in their original usages. Eventually the word *fear* became "that which may cause flight." Therefore fear, dread, or terror will cause an individual to run from whatever stirred the emotion. Fear of man, fear of failure, fear of loneliness, fear of rejection, and fear of God are all results of the root of fear and culminate in intimidation of adversaries. Fear often enters in through a negative experience, traumatic situation, or from generational trauma where the emotions associated with it were passed down the generational bloodline. It is sometimes caused by pressure or from dysfunctional family situations. One will often know the exact instance fear became a stronghold. It can be generated from a demonic spirit. Paul reminded Timothy that God did not give us a spirit of fear. Cowardice and timidity have no place in the life of a believer. Fear paralyzes, debilitates, and stunts spiritual growth. It most frequently causes a fight or flight reaction to escape its consequences. It is in direct opposition to faith.

Rebellion, rejection, bitterness, unforgiveness, offense,

and fear can all be roots of distorted thinking. Discovering the root or the underlying reason a person behaves as they do, can often shed light on what appropriate steps need to be taken. Awareness as to when these roots were planted can also help in dispelling the lies that were believed by the individual holding these faulty concepts. Once the roots are exposed and the lie is broken, then the individual will begin to see himself in a new light. Darkness and distortion will no longer govern his thought processes and the image they have of themselves, and inner transformation will begin. Transformation of the mind is a proactive process and it will require careful study of the written Word of God. Jesus used an example of uprooting as He taught that some in His midst, those who were honoring God with their lips, were defiled and unworthy, the blind leading the blind. He taught His disciples here that He was not concerned with ritual and traditions of man, but He was concerned with the conditions of the heart.

He answered, "Every plant that my Heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted (Mt 15:13).

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the roots. Ask Him to identify any distorted thinking or mindsets that have had you bound. Ask the Lord to forgive you for participating in works of the flesh, or works of darkness. Confess it as sin and ask the Lord to uproot any plant that He did not plant in you. Ask Him to loosen you from distorted thinking. Now thank Him in faith, believing you have received and watch the King of Glory keep His word to you!

Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, 'consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow, for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel says: That which is devoted is among you, O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it' (Jos 7:13 NIV).

In an effort to stand against the enemy and take back what was plundered, it is important that we consecrate ourselves,

by removing all idols of the heart. As Christians, we are a holy nation; we are a royal priesthood. Hence, as we enter into warfare prayer, we should ask the Lord to consecrate us for that particular work. We also must prepare our hearts and minds through repentance and the confession of our shortcomings. Prayer is the answer for bringing about change. Prayer is the process by which change is instigated. It brings us into communion with God, the Father. As we spend time in His presence, we desire to become more like Him. We begin to see ourselves as He created us. We apply the knowledge obtained through His written Word, reflecting His divine character and nature, and we become transformed into His glorious image. This process is, without doubt, the fundamental path to healing and restoration of a broken image.

SINCERITY OF HEART

It is important as you enter into prayer on the behalf of others that you start with introspection, thus judging your own heart. As scripture states, "take the log out of your own eye." Pleading the Blood of Jesus over all who are present sets precedent and it begins to cleanse everyone and everything. Moreover, as the sprinkling occurs, it is a means of consecration for the work of the Lord to go forth. Prayer ministers should pray regularly, and have a heart to talk to God. It is important to pray with a humble heart and determine to despise sin. When praying for others, it is recommended that one always start with praise, worship, confession, and repentance. Praying healing and deliverance prayers tends to be ineffective unless the individual who is receiving or leading prayer is truly sorrowful for their sin. People come for deliverance prayer for all kinds of reasons. Sometimes they get involved with deliverance ministry to please another person. Some have stepped over the proverbial line and a loved one has possibly given them an ultimatum. There may be a desire to come, in

an effort to look as if they are sincere about the change they have committed to. Sometimes they come to simply challenge the credibility of the work of a minister. Whatever the reason, if sincerity of heart is not present, the efforts will be in vain. After true confession is made, it is good to have the one receiving prayer proclaim a breaking away from that sin, action, or thought process that was associated with the ungodly belief. Here, proclamations from the mouth of the receiver become the word of their testimony, which overcomes the accuser. The devil can no longer accuse that individual by holding the sinful action before them as they have already taken it to the Lord. Confession and proclamation, a public declaration of change, strips the devil's hold and releases the individual from its binding effects. Powerful!

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

If the individual has been involved in false religion, false doctrine, or worshiped false gods, break any demonic seals and pledge allegiance to God. Once again, the pledge of allegiance is a proclamation and it is witnessed by two or more that the individual has decided to turn from the ungodly sin. Then state emphatically that they have now committed to submit to God as His Word instructs them to. Once this has been done, the prayer minister can pray, cutting any binding effects of darkness with the sword of the Spirit, and sealing the proclamation by the power of the Holy Spirit. Cast out any spirits that may have taken up residence in that place of darkness. A new proclamation is set in the heavenlies and the work is declared *finished* by faith and by the power of the Cross. Declare it so, as Jesus said, "*It is finished!*" Such proclamations ring through the spirit realm and all take notice. Ask Jesus to restore and repair the brokenness of their lives, memories, and hurts; to replace the lies with His truth. Ask Jesus to fill those empty places with love and the characteristics of the Holy

Spirit that are in opposition to the sinful nature they were clinging to. As the session comes to a close, pray protective prayers and prayers of blessings over all who are present and thank the Lord for the great work He has done!

HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR

As one ministers on the behalf of others, look at the surface problem, then look at the reason behind the surface problem. Be careful to listen to the attitude behind the story. Listen to their stories but also have an ear to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Often the attitude projected will shed light on what the real root of the problem is. Remember it is ultimately the root you are looking for and not the symptomatic problem that is on the surface. Find the root! The Holy Spirit and the gifts He has given are crucial in doing so. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are vital in the Ministry of Deliverance, and should be encouraged in the sessions. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you through that time of ministry. He may give you a series of questions to ask as you are praying with someone. Many times His directives will lead you to a place the Lord wants to heal or address. Issues of past sin that have gone unconfessed, or possibly areas of hurt, pain, or bitterness that need to be prayed through will come into focus. The main thing is that the Lord is your guide. Trust Him implicitly!

As previously discussed, finding the root problem will be most beneficial. Symptoms are not the issue, the root of those symptoms are. The roots are identified through the power of the Holy Spirit as He gives revelation to His servants. Roots are discerned through the gift of discernment, the gift of a word of knowledge, or possibly a vision. Roots can be discovered while in prayer and oftentimes they are not quickly identified in the natural. Satan is much smarter than that. He conceals his work. The Holy Spirit, however, is the light that guides us to all truth. Most likely the root will not be seen in the natural

realm, it will be much more concealed than that. Then, once the root is discovered, an exchange must take place.

A HEAVENLY EXCHANGE

There is a laying down of a heaviness or burden, and a picking up of the rest and peace found in Jesus. Confession is the key to healing and restoration, but it also involves an exchange. Jesus Himself has given an invitation for all who are heavy or oppressed. Jesus has invited all who desire to find rest to take His yoke upon them. Those who find themselves in spiritual bankruptcy have an invitation with a promise attached upon which they can rely. Those who laboriously struggle to be good enough to gain the love and acceptance of Jesus need not struggle any more. Jesus acknowledged the yoke of slavery as He taught the Pharisees lessons of being yoked and in slavery to the very sin they had served. They thought that they were too righteous to be in slavery. However, Jesus taught them the truth; that they were in slavery to the sin they had obeyed.

Jesus promises a better way, one free of all the heaviness associated with sin, the disgust that it employs, and the guilt and shame it creates. The yoke of sin is burdensome. It weighs down. Jesus promises a yoke which is light. The steps to peace and restoration are the acceptance of the invitation, then the acknowledgment of the weight and burden that sin has imposed by its nature, and lastly, a heavenly exchange. The promised blessings to those who will come are all indicative of His easy yoke: peace, rest, and lightness. Simply come and accept the invitation. He promises rest from the power of sin, the terror of sin, and the drudgery of sin. He promises rest in the soul, devoid of inner conflict and turmoil. Take off the heavy yoke and put on a yoke which is light. The yoke itself is to guide, to steer in the right direction, and to allow Jesus to lead. He has the reigns and the one yoked is graciously joined together with Him, for Him, and under Him, in His service

and in His care. Moreover, there is an acceptance of His will and His way as one agrees to take on His yoke, and they begin to understand the results of such an exchange, which is freedom from bondage and oppression. Hence, those who receive His yoke are to conduct themselves accordingly as a servant to Christ and in obedience to Him. The benefits are real; they are free! The anointing breaks the yoke. A prayer of deliverance by an anointed servant of God will break any ungodly yoke, as long as the recipient of prayer is truly repentant. In cases of healing and deliverance prayers, the most common response afterward is a report of feeling very *light*. There is a significant and substantial change which occurs that seems to affect the physical body, where individuals who have been freed of spirits testify to feeling noticeably lighter!

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mt 11:28–30).

IT’S NOT YOUR BURDEN TO CARRY

There are some obvious and potentially hazardous pitfalls of deliverance ministry to avoid while praying for others. One such hazard is the retention of their burdens as your own. Often, it is difficult to leave situations in the prayer room, and for many, there is a natural tendency to be a fixer. This temptation must be avoided at all costs. First of all it is impossible in many cases, and secondly, it is a role reserved for God. Another possible danger is carrying a judgmental attitude, or becoming pious, religious, or presumptive. Prayer ministers must carry with them the attitude, “If not for the grace of God that could have been me!” This attitude will keep ministers humble and compassionate toward those with whom they are praying. Confessions given in prayer can cause an array of

different reactions; everything from minuscule to absolutely shocking. It is critical that each confession is received without the fear of being harshly judged or rejected. Prayer ministers should never give directives. For example, recommending a divorce, a job change, or a move. The only directives given are those that come from the written Word of God. They should also be very clear about their own abilities. Prayer ministers should make recipients aware that they are in no way counselors. Recipients may mistakenly categorize them as such, so it is a good practice to state to those receiving prayer that this is not the role of a prayer minister. Also, it is a good safety measure to inform recipients that there will be no directives given that relate to medical or mental health issues. In deliverance ministry it is quite common for people who have been on medication for depression, to ask if they can come off of it after receiving deliverance prayers. Therefore, to avoid such potential dangers, it is wise to have a written statement to give to prayer recipients before the sessions begin, emphatically stating that no such recommendations will be given or implied. One should firmly suggest that all medical and mental health decisions must remain the decision of the recipient and their doctors.

Many times there is a tendency for the receiver of prayer to set the schedule or interfere with your personal time. Avoid this pitfall at the very beginning. Prayer ministers should have an allotted time set aside and dedicated to ministry and refuse to allow that time to overflow into family or personal time. In the Ministry of Deliverance, those in need will lack an understanding of boundaries, thus they will quite often try to impose themselves in some way. Other pitfalls to watch for are allowing the receiver to determine the direction of prayer instead of the Lord. Frequently, those in need of deliverance will have a desire to direct the sessions or they may simply attempt to deceive the prayer minister by insisting on a path

that was not the path the Lord had intended for them. Therefore, it is wise to start off deliverance prayer by seeking the Lord's direction and refuting the lead of man. These are just a few of the potential pitfalls.

DANCING WITH THE DEVIL

Techniques to prohibit the work of deliverance can be exhibited by the most willing recipient. In many instances, the individual being ministered to is unaware of the hindrances. They may want deliverance earnestly but the forces of evil are present to block the work. Awareness of such schemes and tricks will help expedite the process and will eliminate much of the discomfort they may experience. Inner healing and deliverance go hand in hand, however, it is sometimes necessary to pray through hurts of the past before praying deliverance prayers. If not, issues of unforgiveness may cause a hindrance to the deliverance. Spirits rise up to outwit those who are ministering. We must be aware, alert, and sensitive to the reactions that occur while ministering. Below are mentioned some of the *hindrances* one may experience while ministering to hurt, broken individuals. Hindrances may possibly involve those who come in as controllers. They tell you what needs to be done, cast out, or addressed in prayer. They will try very vehemently to drive the direction of the session. They may either come late and leave early or come early and want to leave late. It is a good suggestion for the prayer ministers to establish the time frame and keep it very consistent. The devil would love to interfere with the lives of the ministers in a way that would frustrate them to the point of giving up on the work. Therefore, discuss time issues before sessions begin. Determine how many sessions and the length of each session, the day of the sessions, and the place of the sessions. This eliminates frustration and the consistency will prove to be a measure of sincerity on the part of the receiver. When an individual is caught

up in control issues, it may be due to some time in their life when they had lost control. Loss of control is often accompanied by fear. When an individual has experienced a shaking of their world in some form or fashion, they will often vow never to allow the loss of control to take place again. Those vows need to be addressed and renounced. Prayer ministers should follow the path of the Holy Spirit as He leads to the life experiences where the event took place. Then, have them openly discuss their experience. Many times the Holy Spirit will, by revelation, show the prayer minister what that experience was by a word or a vision. As they pray to God concerning their emotions and experience, prayer minister should also be praying for them. A word of caution: while interceding for others in a prayer session, always keep your eyes opened. As you pray for them, listen both to God and to their story. Another caution: be very careful not to agree with an unholy prayer. Demon spirits will sometimes manifest themselves in this manner in an attempt to join prayer ministers to their sin through agreement! It is also very important to be specific when leading those to pray during the session. Demonic spirits will try to confuse the session by having the receiver go down an irrelevant path, in an effort to draw ministers away from the real issues at hand. Therefore, have the receiver keep it short and pray only about the issues at hand. Most work will be in confessions, proclamations, and renouncements. As the receiver attempts to control the sessions, simply explain that God will determine the course of action. Do not give in to any efforts of control. Demon spirits will notice a weakness here, and attempt to manipulate the work.

There will also be hindrances through techniques of soliciting sympathy. Demons of self-pity will elicit a reaction and want to keep you focused on "the horror of it all", or "the woe is me" mentality. Inexperienced prayer ministers can give in to the shock of the story and potentially miss opportunities to

progress. Quite frequently, the individual will go on and on regarding their story. It is critical to hear their story, however, it is not good to allow them to continue repeating the same issues. This may well be a case of the individual not wanting to be healed. Their identity is found in their victimization. Identity issues fueled by the demonic realm are difficult, but not impossible, to be transformed. Hence, prayer ministers should witness noticeable change in the lives of those for whom they are praying as they commit to change, and allow the process to go forth. Gentleness on the part of the prayer minister is required, but the challenge is to be careful not to feed the spirit of pity. Those who are just learning their way in deliverance ministry will sometimes be tempted to side with the offended receiver, thus fueling the very demonic spirit they are there to combat. It is good not to become overly emotional, or emotionally involved in their story. Compassion must be present, however, wisdom is also required! Demon spirits will play on the emotions of the prayer minister in an effort to thwart the intended purpose of the session. Listen to their story, love them through it, and pray for the Lord's guidance between each time of prayer. Those trapped in the arena of self-pity are often operating in pride, and when it is identified, it frequently comes as a bit of a surprise. However, self-pity is simply an attempt to keep attention on self, thereby indicative of pride. As individuals are going through the process, simply remind them that, "When we are weak, He is strong," thus disallowing the demon of self-pity to keep the focus on the pains of their host.

Talkers will be those individuals who are operating under demonic influences which may tend to want to socialize instead of pray. Such hindrances are tempting to prayer ministers, especially if the individual is a charismatic individual. They may come in with an attitude that there is really no real issue. Often they will minimize even the most atrocious

behaviors. Distracting demons that refuse to allow prayer will often keep the conversation going in the direction they choose. They would much rather go from story to story, always keeping the conversation at a very superficial level. This may be indicative that they are nervous about what might happen, or resistant to receive, and often because the demons are stirred and will play on their fears. It is always good to start deliverance ministry with some explanation of the process, the possibilities, and the actions that an individual is free to make. Prayer ministers should be very careful to explain the expectations that they have concerning the recipient in detail, including the rights of the individual being ministered to. Prayer ministers should routinely ask for permission at the start of a session with a new recipient, for the right to anoint with oil, to lay on hands, and tell where they will place their hands when the time arises. They should ask for permission to pray in their personal prayer language and not assume that liberty. Individuals who are unaware of praying in the spirit may be frightened or upset. Therefore, do not assume, but discuss as much up front, before the sessions begin. This eliminates fear. Individuals understand clearly that they may stop, leave, or refuse anything at any time. Talkers are countered from becoming a distraction by praying more and talking less. Pray for peace in their hearts and bind spirits of fear as the session begins.

Intimidators are spirits which, during a session, will use an element of surprise to throw deliverance ministers off course. They will threaten, curse, hit, or stare you down. They will puff up or move in a forward, aggressive position. They might imply that the minister of deliverance has no power over them. At this point unless physical harm is imminent, do not in any way respond to the intimidation. Most frequently, the Holy Spirit will take over with an alarming amount of visible authority. It may just be present in the eyes of a prayer

minister or it may be exhibited through the words spoken by the prayer minister. God is truly amazing and this is a time for prayer ministers to experience a tangible presence of the authority of God manifested through His precious Holy Spirit in the lives of true believers. Embrace the moment. Those under the influence and who have agreed with this spirit are usually afraid of being exposed. There may be fear of the reactions that they perceive may come, from those who are present. It is important at this time to exhibit the love of Christ. Demonstrating gentleness of spirit toward an individual who is experiencing such fear, is so vitally important. Remember, prayer ministers should exhibit the nature and characteristics of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, thus it is crucial to counter attacks with the very opposite fruit of the Spirit.

Sometimes Satan will send in his spirits of skepticism in an effort to impede the process. Those who fall captive to the tactics of the devil will exhibit an attitude of being doubtful of the process, although they themselves sought after it. There may be a false arrogance present, or an attitude of being extremely distrustful. Hence, they will exhibit an attitude which is more than just simply being inquisitive of the process. It is often a spirit which is almost combative in nature, questioning every move, every prayer, every path a minister feels led of the Lord to take. These spirits are meant to discourage moving ahead. They are attempts of Satan to slow or stop the process of deliverance. They do know their time is short and once exposed, they must leave. Therefore, they work in an attempt to plant doubt over the entire session, thus hindering the work through means of attacking the faith of all who are present. Prayer ministers should be very cautious and not get caught up in the trap. They should confirm the process once and ask if the receiver wishes to continue. If that individual chooses to do so, then simply proceed as originally planned. Firmly remind the receiver that the entire process is by his or

her free will and they can refrain from continuing on. Often these spirits play on past experiences where the receiver has been violated in some way, and distrust has become a stronghold in their life. It is essential that the ministers establish an environment of trust.

One key element of deliverance ministry is trust. If trust is violated, then entire ministries may be destroyed as is the reputation of those they have ministered to. Violation of trust is an egregious offense which should be taken very seriously. It is a crucial to have every team member commit to vows of confidentiality, as well as the pastor of the church where deliverance ministry takes place. This should be a given, however, after many years in the Ministry of Deliverance, it has been evidenced that there are some who have no regard for the welfare of their congregation and will violate confidentiality. Be very careful as you proceed and under whom you are working. These are just a few ways in which the devil will attempt to thwart the Ministry of Deliverance. God's work, however, will proceed. Even as these obstacles arise, they can be used as effective tools in correctly assessing the direction in which ministers are to move. When ministering to others, discern the spirit behind the words; check the spirit behind the conversation as to whether it is coming from an attitude of humility or pride, questioning or concern, timidity or fear. These clues will often help in determining the path that ministers are to take as they walk with others in the process of healing and deliverance and will often lead to the very root of the problem. Remember to listen to their story. It will give you a vivid picture of the soul.

...For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him (Mt 12:34-35 NIV).

Often in conversation, one may discover the stronghold

and root of distorted thinking. It is therefore important to carefully listen to what is being said. Issues will pour forth from the heart and much can be revealed through discussion. Remind those going through deliverance, of fundamental truths of God's Word! As we go through the process of deliverance, we must be sure of our foundation. Once again, let's look at some principles, our covenant promises that we can hold on to.

You have been made complete!

“For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority” (Col 2:9–10 NASB);

Your record has been erased!

And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands, He set this aside, nailing it to the Cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it (Col 2:13).

You are more than a conqueror!

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Ro 8:37 NKJV).

We are more than conquerors. There is a spiritual truth that we can gain from scripture. Truth...the victory has been won, the rights and inheritance are ours to enjoy. The rights must be appropriated, just as salvation must be appropriated, by faith! In other words, Jesus provided salvation free of charge, but each individual must accept it. Such is true of all inherited privileges. They must be appropriated. Believe by faith and receive! The victory has been won and you inherit the privilege of the Kingdom life. This is your inheritance:

that you have been set free. It's time to no longer be a minor or slave waiting to receive benefits and privileges of the Kingdom of God, but sons and daughters of the Most High. Partake now of those privileges! This is your time of coming of age. Rejoice in your inheritance!

THE MEAT GRINDER

Sharon didn't understand her inheritance. She had not yet realized that she was more than a conqueror. She was faced with a decision that could potentially change her life forever. Sharon had visited my office on a regular basis for prayer. She had been living in the back of a van when a local pastor took her and her husband in. They had committed their lives to change, and have sought healing prayer in an effort to escape the residual pain from experiences of their past. Sharon was on her third session. Most of her life she had suffered with extreme depression. Now in her mid-forty's, most of the medications she had tried, did little to relieve the dark cloud that overshadowed her entire life. She had been to psychiatrists most of her adult life, but the depression had been a mainstay. She also suffered with repressed memory and had no recollection of anything before the age of ten. My prayer partner and I had received just one word during the first session. It was *table*. The second session brought little progress, however, we received another word from the Holy Spirit: it was *kitchen*. However, we continued to pray for Sharon. Upon the third visit, the Holy Spirit gave me a vision. It was a vision of a hand drill. My prayer partner chimed in, “Oh, kind of like a meat grinder.” “Yes, that's it, I replied.” Sharon seemed unenthused as we were elated with the unity of spirit the Lord had displayed through the spiritual gifts. The Saturday morning of week three, I received a call. It was Sharon. She asked if I would meet her at my office. I agreed to do so and called my prayer partner to ask if she could join us. “What's going

on, Sharon?” With emotion welling up in her throat, she said that God had brought to her memory an event and she felt compelled to share it with us.

She was the daughter of a severe alcoholic. At age ten, she had been raped by her father. She was laid on the kitchen table, as a stranger came into their house and performed an abortion on her, while she stared over at the meat grinder that was attached to their kitchen sink. Sharon’s memory was restored in an instant. She sat in my office that morning, and with a quiver in her voice and her hands shaking in her lap, she emphatically stated, “I choose to forgive them.” The picture that had been engrained deeply inside of her, as being no more than a piece of useless meat, finally disappeared. In an instant, the victim became the victor, as she took the situation into her own hands and decided to release her parents for the great atrocity they had committed against her. She was free. The depression was gone. The image that she had so often seen in that proverbial mirror had been erased by the hand of God. She had been made complete. Sharon later became a prayer minister and began helping others through difficult situations of their past. God is truly the transformer as we are all being transformed from glory to glory, reflecting His goodness as we move in obedience and become more like Him.

BLESSINGS OR CURSES YOU CHOOSE!

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

DT 30:19–20

The soul of man, disrupted by the death and destruction that sin brings into the world, even before the birthing process, suffers wounds that are in need of restoration. David taught us that we are born into sin. *Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me (Ps 51:5).* There are consequences of the sins of our forefathers, which are forever present in our lives, if they themselves did not ask for forgiveness for those sins.

...you shall not bow down to them or worship them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquities of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to

the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Ex 20:5–6 NKJV

The scriptures emphatically state that the consequence of these sins is passed down to the thousandth generation of those who hate God. The promise of steadfast love has a condition attached to it. It requires faithfulness in keeping covenant with God, through obedience to His laws. Somewhere in the myriad of our ancestry, most of us have in our bloodline those who refused to know the Lord, or those who consistently broke the commandments. It is also not uncommon to find that many church-going Christians have, buried away in their history, ancestors who dedicated themselves to false gods, false religions, and false beliefs, which opened the door to generational curses. It is easy to believe that there is no present day connection to the sins of our forefathers, let alone any need for us to deal with them in any way. But, as society readily accepts the notion of predisposition to behaviors such as alcoholism, child abuse, and divorce, the church too must understand these behaviors are often passed from generation to generation, and should recognize that they may be more than just learned behaviors. Our environment greatly influences the choices we make as individuals; patterns set forth in the family model will inevitably affect our decision-making capabilities. There are, nonetheless, circumstances that an individual or family may go through that are beyond their control, unless the causes are identified and dealt with. Once identified, generational bondage, or curses, can easily be addressed through appropriation of the Blood of Jesus, confession, repentance, and renouncement. Curses can occur in several different ways. Understanding the pathway, or basis upon which a curse has been implemented is fundamental to the Ministry of Deliverance. It is not enough to just see that there is a curse in operation; one must understand its origin. The

origin of a curse will determine the course of action needed to bring restoration into the individual's life. There must also be a solid, foundational understanding that curses are real, they are powerful, and they are very effective in accomplishing the purpose for which they were first employed. Words are powerful and the faith behind them can "move mountains." What Christians sometimes fail to realize is that spiritual law, if practiced with evil intent, will produce the thing it is targeted to accomplish. A Satanist was once asked, "What makes these powers work?" With a look of astonishment, he replied to the one who had asked, "Faith!" The response was a moment of revelation for both involved in the conversation. The notion that a Christian cannot be cursed is endemic throughout, and across, denominational lines. However, one need not look deep into any congregation to find pews filled with defeated, powerless, victims who are debilitated and paralyzed with an array of life-long, insurmountable struggles. The sermons are great, the music is powerful, the atmosphere is charged, but the suffering continues for those who are cursed and bound to works of darkness. But there is a way out!

Before we begin, we must lay down the foundational truth that we have been redeemed from the curse of the law through Jesus Christ. That is to say, that we have been justified in the sight of God through faith in Jesus, and not because of our own works of righteousness. We can never be good enough, or holy enough, to enter heaven. The law simply pointed out our desperate need for a Savior. It is inferior, however, it is complementary to the promise. It directs us to the one who would fulfill the law completely, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. It is through the perfect Blood of our sinless Savior that we can stand before a holy God, as we have been made righteous in Him. Therefore, the beauty of the Gospel offers freedom from the bondage we were under before Christ took our sins upon Himself. He took on the penalty due for our sins and sat-

ified the justice of God's requirement for sin. However, as we discuss curses, please keep in mind that curses were not annihilated when Jesus Christ hung on the Cross. We were given a choice, because of His death, burial and resurrection, to replace those curses, by the promised blessings of Abraham through faith!

The term "curse" (Strong's # 779) in Hebrew means "to execrate, bitterly curse, a pronouncement of judgment on those who break covenant," and in the Greek the word denotes being imprecated, execrable, appalling, disgusting, repulsive, or accursed. To *curse* means to bind with a spell, to hem in with obstacles, to render powerless, to resist, or to make infertile. It is a violent expression of evil. It can be the favor or blessings of God withheld. It can also be a pronouncement of God's judgment. In Deuteronomy, chapter twenty-seven, there are warnings of consequences which come to those who are disobedient. The term meaning *to curse* carries wide connotations and is seen often throughout scripture. It can refer to "making little or contemptible." It is often used as a pronouncement of judgment on those who break covenant. It can also be simply words spoken with evil intent, an imprecation, or a malediction uttered out of malice. Curses can be generated by messengers of the occult, witchcraft, or simply an uncontrolled tongue. Whatever form, the results of curses are not to hinder the life of a believer. Let's understand curses a little better from a biblical standpoint.

When reading the Book of Genesis, a consistent theme runs throughout the pages. It is a book of documented cases of blessings and curses. From Adam and Eve to Jacob and the twelve tribes of Israel, each family was distinctively affected by blessings and curses. In the beginning, God blessed Adam. It was His pleasure to provide for His earthly creation, the first man, and "son of God." He breathed into Adam the breath of life. He walked with Adam in the cool of the day. God gave

him dominion, sustenance, and preservation from death. He gave Adam the companionship of Eve. He was surely blessed of the Lord. However, Eve sinned and blamed Adam, Adam blamed the tempter, and God passed judgment, in the form of a curse, on each of them. All of mankind would forever labor. Woman would now travail in the midst of childbirth and live a life of submission, and the tempter would crawl on its belly and eat the dust of the ground. God's pronouncement of judgment was indeed the first curse. Sins of the fall would produce guilt, shame, and loss of innocence. Death was introduced as an inevitable fate that would forever be the result of the original sin. Out of this union between Adam and Eve, Cain, Abel, and Seth were born. Cain, the first born of the human race would become the first murderer. Cain and Abel had made sacrifices to God. Abel offered God the firstling of his flock and God was well pleased with it. God found Cain's sacrifice, the fruit of the ground, displeasing, and jealousy arose in his heart, so much so that he killed Abel, and the cursing continued. Cain was cursed. He would be a wanderer, a fugitive in the land, and unfruitful in his labor. Later in Genesis we read about Noah who was blessed of the Lord. His son, Ham, was cursed for exposing his father's nakedness in a time of his weakness. Abraham, the patriarch, was blessed by God, and also by King Melchizedek. Isaac was blessed. Isaac blessed his son Jacob and Jacob in turn blessed his children: the twelve tribes of Israel. Jacob had an encounter with an angel and fought for his blessing. He inadvertently cursed Rachel, his wife, when she had taken the household gods from her father's house. Laban passed down blessings to his children and grandchildren as they departed from under his care to continue with Jacob. Looking closely at the account of Jacob's death, one readily agrees that there was a pronouncement of judgment also spoken over several sons. However, there were also blessings spoken! There are numerous examples of curses

that occurred within the first book of the Bible. Why was there such emphasis put on blessings and curses from the very beginning?

Understanding the curses that were brought about by sin is foundational to the Ministry of Deliverance. Curses passed from one generation to another permeate the Book of Genesis. It is certainly noteworthy to study what this means to believers today. The good news of the Gospel is that through Jesus Christ there is a way out! He did not leave us to suffer needlessly, without hope of restoration within our bloodline. It is of utmost importance to understand the actions that would invariably bring about a curse, and breaking covenant is certainly grounds for a curse to land. Spiritual law—*“a curse will not land without a cause.”* In other words, there must be a reason for the curse to be there in the first place. First and foremost, it is important to understand what may cause a curse to land. The Bible gives us many unquestionable reasons that a curse may have a cause to light!

Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight (Pr 26:2 NKJV).

Moses had been directed by God to renew the covenant. He was to remind the people of benefits of divine blessings for obedience, as well as divine judgment for disobedience. Moses and the elders were on Mount Ebal. They had called together the Shechem ceremony. It was to be a time to warn the people and remind them of their covenant to a Holy God and their responsibilities as covenant people. Moses was to encourage them to keep the entire commandment that he had given. It was for their own benefit. He gave them two alternatives to choose: blessings or curses! Their actions would stand as proof to the decision each individual would ultimately have to make.

The Apostle Paul, in the Book of Galatians, reminds us that Christ has indeed removed the curse of the law. There-

fore, we cannot rely on the keeping of the law for our salvation. Once again, it is through faith and faith alone that anyone can receive salvation. That being said, we should not miss the principles of the Old Testament that have been fulfilled in Christ. Jesus said that not one stroke of the letter of the law will pass away until all is accomplished. He was clearly stating that He was in no way altering, abrogating, or replacing any part of the law. He was completing it. In Christ the moral law, the ceremonial law, and the judicial law had been met. Jesus Christ affirmed that *“not one jot or one tittle”* will pass away. In other words, He confirmed the inerrant, infallible Word of God, presented in the Old Testament *as absolute authority!* We too, my friend, must have the same mindset as Jesus. Henceforth, we have revelation of the Holy Spirit and greater responsibility in living the life of a true believer. Jesus explained the moral content of the law could be wrapped up within the first commandment, acknowledging that the love of God and of neighbor would invariably result in the obedience to every other law.

Moses had a job to do on Mount Ebal. He had to stress to a nation which had been indoctrinated in a culture of paganism that had surrounded them, the dangers of participation in their ways. Participating in these things which he warned against, would ultimately bring God's disfavor, or divine curse of judgment. Remember, in the last chapter, we looked at the reason God brings judgment on His people, so that His people would not be condemned with the world. God's judgment for His people is His gracious discipline. We know that He disciplines those whom He loves. We cannot participate in works of darkness without the expectation of His hand of discipline upon us. Therefore, it is wise to renew the covenant. Remember the Blood. Turn from sin and be restored!

CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE

- Idolatry, anyone who makes an idol, casts an image, and sets it up in secret.
- Dishonoring of father and mother.
- Moving a boundary line.
- Making the blind to wander off the road.
- Taking advantage of the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow.
- Incest.
- Bestiality.
- Sexual relations with a mother or father-in-law, illicit or unnatural sex.
- Attacks a neighbor secretly.
- Takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.
- Disobeying God's law.

The Old Testament carefully outlines the reasons for, and results of, a curse. Biblical principles indicate that those who are *cursed* will experience difficulties in some area of their life and most frequently these difficulties are seen passed down from one generation to the next. Those who may be under a curse may experience various consequences. Financial insufficiency, barrenness, miscarriage, problems in female organs, plague, disease, poor health, or sickness may be a recurrent history in families from the same bloodline, as well as from generation to generation. Mental and emotional instability, confusion, oppression or being weighted down with burdens can be the result of bloodline curses. Breakdown in the family structure or infidelity may indicate a curse as it is repeated throughout generations. Being accident prone; groping about unable to find your way, suicides, untimely deaths, abuse,

panic, anxiety, being repeatedly robbed or defeated before your enemies may all be examples of a family which is under some form of a curse. Therefore, it is important to look sincerely at the past history of one's own family to truly understand the course of one's own life. This form of introspection is meant only as a tool for restoration, not condemnation. As introspection takes place, it is important to note several truths to hold onto. One such truth is that all souls are God's and He takes no pleasure in the death of anyone. It is His desire that no man should perish. Also, man's destiny is not reliant on his past; it is reliant on his relationship with God. The failures of an individual, as well as the failures of an individual's forefathers may look rather dismal, but an honest evaluation will present an opportunity for total transformation as one moves toward God and obedience and reverence to His Word, the Holy Bible.

BIRTH OF A CURSE

Let's look at some other reasons curses may be enacted. Curses can occur because of something we say. The words we speak are very important. It is with our words that we will be justified or condemned. The Book of Proverbs gives us rich insight into the importance of the words we choose to use.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit (Pr 18:21).

Curses may occur through the spoken words of another, especially words spoken by an authority figure. Parents, teachers, pastors, husbands, and fathers have a responsibility to build and edify. Words spoken in jest can leave lasting impressions, and words spoken in the heat of an argument can wound, or even break the spirit. How cautious those in authority must be. God will hold each one of us accountable for careless words, words spoken in malice, and words spoken over subordinates that are meant to harm. Words that are self-

imposed curses are also very dangerous. Out of the mouth, the heart speaks and we are what we believe in our hearts we are. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance in deliverance ministry to seek out any self-imposed curses. There is power in the tongue; power for good and power for evil, regardless of who is doing the speaking. A self-imposed curse will often include the words, “I will never” or “I will always,” or “I will just die if...” indicating an internal vow that has been made.

Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not be so (Jas 3: 10 NKJV).

Curses are imposed upon us when we determine to trust in man. Those who perform acts independent of God’s divine instruction, are cursed already. It is the sovereign design of God to have man reliant on Him for his provision, his protection, and his security. It is His will that we seek Him. It is His desire that we inquire of Him and trust in Him. Placing man in such position elevates him to a place reserved for God alone. Therefore, heed this warning. Trusting in man will ultimately lead you down the wrong path. The result of such actions are those who will find themselves in “*parched places,*” barren and dry.

...Cursed is a man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord (Jer 17:5 NKJV).

Legalism will ensure a curse. Paul asked the Church of Galatia, “...*who has bewitched you?*” The term *bewitched* here implies being maligned or fascinated by false representation. The church had been led astray, charmed into believing a lie. Curses that are brought about by legalism are caused by lack of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. It cannot be stressed enough. There is but one way to obtain eternal salvation, and that is through faith in Jesus Christ, His death, His burial, and His resurrection, and the confession of that faith. Attempts to receive righteousness through a set of rules is an impossible feat. We know this because scripture clearly lays down this

foundational principle. Therefore, it is a futile, vain attempt to try to be good enough to obtain salvation. Not only that, but it is an act of unbelief toward the Blood of Jesus Christ as means of cleansing us from our sins. Salvation is a gift, it cannot be earned, and the Blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness, if we will only confess and repent.

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the acknowledgment of sin (Ro 3:20 KJV).

Legalism attempts to go beyond the requirements set forth by God. It is a mindset or *stronghold* that suggests that the Cross is not sufficient in providing salvation. It is a way of thinking that refuses to accept the Blood as the atoning sacrifice for sin. Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness. We too, must believe. The curse of legalism had blinded the eyes of the Pharisees to the living Savior who stood before them. Christ Himself said that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you would never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Legalism is an accursed thing!

Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors (Mt 23:31–32).

FILL UP THE MEASURE OF YOUR ANCESTORS

Here we see one of the clearest New Testament examples of generational curses. Jesus had been teaching the crowds. Among them were Scribes and Pharisees, some of whom he would soon declare as hypocrites, blind guides, and white washed tombs. These men were teachers of the law themselves; they were studied men, men of abundant knowledge of scripture. They had protested against the murdering of the prophets at the hands of their forefathers in days of old, claiming they would not have been partakers with them. However, they were notorious persecutors of the prophets, just as their

fathers before them were. It would be only days before they would join with the crowd, crying, “*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*” Jesus was well aware of their plots and schemes. He had been challenged by them on every hand. He Himself had been accused of working by the power of Beelzebub when He had cast out demons. He had been accused of healing on the Sabbath, as if that was a bad thing. He had been questioned concerning His authority to perform the works of God and to teach. Jesus knew these men had indicted themselves by the words of their mouths. They had stood as witness and had testified against themselves, not only with words, but also through their actions. Therefore, Jesus had pronounced seven “*woes*” against them. He told them of their unwillingness to help those who were heavy burdened. He reminded them of their desire for public notoriety. He challenged their motives claiming that they had ignored weightier matters of the law such as mercy and faith. But most appalling of all accusations was the denouncement that they were no different than their forefathers. Jesus told them “*to fill up then*” their measure of guilt, just as their ancestors before them had! There was a measure of sin to fill up before utter ruin would come. They were white-washed tombs, clean and beautiful on the outside, but filthy on the inside, full of greed and hypocrisy. Jesus said rhetorically, “*fill up then the measure of your ancestors,*” thus, the measure of sin and the measure of guilt, that was sure to affect generations to come, because they refused to change from the spirit and disposition of their forefathers. He knew they had decided to obstinately persist in the ways of their ancestry, so He denounced their ultimate future. He turned them over! “*You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell?*” Jerusalem had been a city that had killed the prophets and stoned those who were sent to it. Jesus declared it was the blind leading the blind and both would

fall into a pit and they were just like their fathers before them! What a pronouncement of the results of generational sin!

Christ has redeemed us from the Law, having become a curse for us (for it is written—, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”) (Gal 3:13 NAS).

There is a foundational principle that is fundamental to the Ministry of Deliverance. Jesus took upon Himself every curse. Moreover, we have been redeemed from the keeping of the law as a means of obtaining our salvation. It is faith in Jesus Christ alone. We are, therefore, no longer obligated to remain under any curse, even a generational curse. It is through His Blood that we are released. Just as in our own life, He expects us to repent and turn from our sins, we are to acknowledge the sins of our forefathers and ask for forgiveness as a means of clearing the result from the iniquity that has caused diabolical consequences in our family lineage. God set the standard. He said, “*Be holy for I am holy.*” God is in opposition to, and in condemnation of, all sin! Therefore, being a just God, He will hold no man accountable for the sins of another. However, sin brings dangerous consequences into our lives and the lives of our children. An alcoholic grandfather passes down traits of alcoholism to his children. Even if they choose not to participate in that particular life style, there are often signs of addiction that are exhibited through other various avenues. God cannot, being a just God, clear the iniquity of the bloodline that has not been adequately addressed through confession. He impenitently declares by His own nature that all sin must be answered for. He requires accountability, and will not clear the guilty without some satisfaction to His justice. Sin is malignity that taints the blood, and the death produced through sin that is unaccounted for flows through the bloodline. Since we have been commanded to be holy, should we not understand what God considers unholy? Should we not investigate the effects of unholiness that stream from our

ancestors and look at the effects it will have on our children and grandchildren for generations to come?

Pursue peace with all men and the sanctification without which no man will see the Lord (Heb 12:14 NASB).

Sanctification is not a suggestion; it is a requirement! White washing the Gospel is saying, “Oh you are saved, so now you have no accountability in your actions. You can sin and you don’t even have to repent!” This dangerous attitude is being perpetuated throughout our culture, and the result has been a lackadaisical attitude toward sin. In many cases we have been fed a soft version of what it means to be a true Christian. Apathy has set in and many of our churches refuse to preach or teach the message of holiness. Paul set forth many distinctive warnings to the Church. Scripture clearly states that those who continue in sin will suffer the wrath and judgment of God, because it spurns the very Blood that washed them clean. We are to discern between what is clean and unclean, holy and unholy, and we are to recognize the dangers of participation in all works of darkness, for our sake and the sake of our children!

The Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation”.

Ex 34:6–7

THE BROKEN CURSE

Katie had been a good student, always on the A honor roll. Katie’s mom, Rachel, was a dedicated prayer minister and stu-

dent of the Word. As she was reading in Genesis, she asked the Lord to teach her something new about the first book of the Pentateuch. She heard the Lord say, “It’s a book of blessings and curses.” Excitedly, she acknowledged the revelation as she traced the record of both blessings and curses throughout the entire book. She had been in her prayer closet and the Lord revealed to her a curse that was on her family bloodline. “Not in my family, that cannot be, God!” she thought. The Lord showed her that the women of her family had never reached their full potential. Although they were intelligent, there seemed to be hindrances that prevented them from becoming all that they could be. Rachel had prayed for Katie often. Katie came home from school one day and informed her mother that her teacher wanted to test her again for the gifted program. Katie had taken the test twice before and had failed both times. As Rachael prayed for her daughter, the Lord said to her, “Trust me.” Rachael told Katie it was up to her if she wanted to take the test again. Prior to her time with the Lord, Rachael would have without question, required Katie to at least try. Katie paused for a moment, and said, “I think I will try again, mom.” The following day in prayer, the Lord had directed Rachael to fast and pray concerning the curse that had been revealed to her. He said, “Thou shall have no other gods before me.” Rachael was perplexed. She proceeded to inquire about her forefathers. Her mother confirmed that Rachael’s grandfather had been involved with an organization that functioned much like a cult.

He had been an abusive man, and refused to darken the church doors. Her grandmother however, was a godly woman. Rachael was given a vision of a blood covenant that had been made in the establishment of the curse. She struggled internally, because her father had been a pastor and church planter. She had never heard the story of the life of her grandfather on her maternal side. Rachael obediently fasted and prayed

for three days. She sought the Lord for forgiveness on behalf of the family for the sins of her forefather and renounced any association with the devil. On the eve of the third day, she heard a voice, God said, "You are forgiven." Rachael was so astounded. She knew it was not her sin and that she would never be held accountable for the sins of another. However, the consequences of that sin permeated the entire family bloodline. That same evening Rachael received a call from the school. The teacher who was over the entire gifted program said, "I just could not wait until Monday. Katie not only passed the test, but she was one of the highest in the entire county. We haven't seen scores like that literally, in years." She was accepted into the program, and later ranked in the top one percent in her high school. Sometime shortly afterward, Rachael received the report that her niece, who had been barely passing, scored the highest on a standardized science test in her high school. She went on to college and earned a B plus average, and is just several classes away from receiving her Bachelor of Science degree. Another niece had been promoted in her job and later became Vice President of Sales at a successful automobile dealership. Rachael had yet another niece who had opened a small business at that same time, and proceeded to open a second business in which she and her husband work side by side. The curse was broken and Rachael's family was forever changed, out of sheer obedience to the Lord, as she followed His guidance which was received during prayer.

DON'T HOLD ME ACCOUNTABLE!

Make no mistake God will never hold anyone accountable for another man's sin. Scripture is very clear on this principle. Here we see, however, the effects of sin on the third and fourth generation. Each individual has personal responsibility for his own actions and the apostate will die in his sins. God

is a just God and the one who sins will bear the punishment of that sin. Effects of disobedience and sin will lead a sinner deeper into sin unless there has been a true act of repentance. A repentant heart is emancipated from the past, and divine forgiveness washes away that sin; it is then forgotten in the mind of God. However, sins that have not been confessed stand in the bloodline and there is a natural cause and effect that occurs. Just as seen in the secular world through numerous psychological studies, there is a very high correlation between immorality and dysfunctional family situations that stream through several generations. Immorality in a family line sets a pattern and that pattern, unless it is interrupted, will continue. That being said, it is very important to acknowledge spiritual principles that are found in the written Word of God, and what actions may indeed involve the passing on of damaging consequences of sins of the forefathers. Let's look at Old and New Testament principles that could potentially result in a generational curse to light. Please keep in mind this is not an attempt to arbitrarily convince individuals to be bound to the keeping of the law as a means of salvation. Rather, it is an attempt to convey the relevance of actions in relationship to natural cause and effect based on biblical precepts. Look in your family line, confess sins that have not yet been repented of and ask God to forgive your family and your ancestors before you for any involvement in which a curse could indeed have had a cause to light!

SINS OF THE FOREFATHERS

Below is a list of actions which may give cause for a curse to light. It is not an exhaustive list, but it is intended to ignite introspection, as well as to act as a guide to assist the reader in that process. These actions have consequences, so it is vitally important to understand where your family has been and where they are headed.

Curses brought about by occult activity: Occult activity will invariably lead to being cursed. Witchcraft and speaking to the dead brings gloom, despair, and depression, but most importantly, divine displeasure and the judgment of God.

If any turn to mediums and wizards prostituting themselves to them, I will set my face against them and will cut them off from the people (Lev 20:6).

Curses brought about by theft and perjury: God had given the prophet Zechariah a series of eight night visions. These visions were apocalyptic in nature and pointed to the coming Messiah as ruler. Within the context of the series of visions is found the pronouncement of judgment for theft and perjury. Be not fooled, God is a God of justice and righteousness, eternally. Heed the warning!

“This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land; for everyone who steals shall be cut off according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears falsely shall be cut off according to the writing on the other side. I have sent it out, says the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of anyone who swears falsely by my name; and it shall abide in that house and consume it, both timber and stones”.

ZEC 5:3–4

Curses brought about by refusing to tithe: Tithing is perhaps one of the most overlooked principles as it relates to curses which are incurred due to failure to appropriately give to God what is due Him. God is the owner of all things. He does not need a tenth of every believer’s income, but every believer needs the promised blessings received through tithing. God said He would “*rebuke the devourer*” and pour out a storehouse of blessings that cannot be contained. What a promise! He also said those who do not tithe are robbing Him, thus, they are “cursed with a curse.” Certainly, we are

to take God at His Word. We are to believe His precepts. We are to heed His warnings. He does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. These warnings are written for our benefit and our blessing.

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings, you are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation” (Mal 3:8–9 NJKV).

Curses brought about by gossip, idle talk, or prayers of a fleshly nature: Witchcraft prayers are prayers prayed with the intention of controlling, domineering, or manipulating others. These prayers sometimes become an attempt at spiritual theft, such as “I claim that House for myself.” or “Break his knees to bring him to them!” thus actually praying a prayer in the form of a curse. Often this type of prayer is prayed by those who have faith in the prayers, however, they are not praying to God. They are submitting themselves to another power. It is quite important as individuals are entering prayer with those who need deliverance, to listen with a cautious ear. The tongue is a fire and it can cause much heat. Words spoken can start a blaze that can do great harm. An uncontrolled tongue is a cursed thing. It will generate curses. It will sling curses. It will harm character, reputation, and futures. Careless use of the tongue does not go unnoticed. There is an account that will be given. Much damage occurs when there are those who feel free to degrade others by the words of their mouth. Opinions are made, based on presumption, and innocent people become marked by the careless words of a gossip. Slanderers work on behalf of their father, the accuser of the brethren. It is by the words of the mouth that one will be justified or condemned, and the one who stirs up strife will fall. Therefore please note: curses are often the result of idle, fleshly, talk. Beware and fight against the careless tongue. Speaking evil against a brother, idle talk, gossip, malice, and slander are

all instruments Satan uses against both the speaker and the one the conversation is against. Repent from a bloodline of slanderous tongues! Satan is the accuser of the brethren. We cannot allow him to use us to carry out his plan of attack! The tongue of the slanderer acts as a deadly arrow and it offers the offender oppression upon oppression. Those who slander speak kindly toward their neighbor, while inwardly planning an ambush. Be wise and avoid the slanderer. The slanderer will suffer bondage. So please refrain, and save yourself from oppression and the heavy yoke of slavery!

Beware of your neighbors, and put no trust in your kin; for all your kin are supplanters, and every neighbor goes around like a slanderer. They all deceive their neighbors, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongues to speak lies; they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent. Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit! They refuse to know me.

JER 9:4–6

When a curse is pronounced, a believer should bless those who persecute them and when reviled, a believer should bless his enemies. The word *bless* means to speak well of, or to invoke a blessing upon a person. It also means to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers, or to ask God's blessing to be upon someone. Therein lies a powerful tool against the forces of evil. As one blesses, he or she is actually disagreeing with the devil. It is Satan's plan for the offended party to carry on the offense through slander and malicious talk as a means of vindication. Therefore, one must decide to fight against powers of darkness and bless and resist all forms of justification. However, a believer can rebuke sinister words. Jesus taught the power of the rebuke. It is a means of stating a verbal disagreement with the statements being made. Rebuking a statement is stripping it of the power of the words spoken, thereby making those

words ineffectual and muzzling the mouth from which it originated. Individuals who have been cursed or labeled should reject ungodly titles or names and refuse all false judgments, thereby disallowing the seed of those words to be planted in their soul and rendering them null and void!

Curses brought about through the shedding of innocent blood: Those who commit murder or shed innocent blood are cursed from the ground. In other words, that innocent bloodshed has a voice and God hears it!

And the Lord said, "What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand (Ge 4:10–11).

Curses issued by agreement or affiliation with ungodly organizations: Clubs, fraternities, sororities, the Masons, or any association which requires you to harm yourself in any way, involves self-imposed cursing. Vows, pledges, and oaths that bind individuals to ungodly organizations, associations, or affiliations bring on curses. In some cases an individual is asked to vow never to leave an organization, and promise that if they do so they will be hurt physically, emotionally or financially. Self-imposed curses are instruments of the devil to bind and blind!

Children born out of wedlock, incest, or rape: Under the law, children who were conceived by a man and a woman who had been ordained by God in marriage were in divine covenant and were recipients of the divine blessings. Those conceived out of wedlock were not. In the ancient Jewish culture, illegitimate children could not receive instruction or training as a legitimate child received; they had no legal inheritance. They were excluded from the congregation, and were despised by their brethren. Under the New Covenant, however, as a believer in Jesus Christ, you are accepted, you are loved, and

you have been adopted into the heavenly family of God, no matter what path brought you into the world.

Curses brought about because of dishonoring your father or mother: Dishonoring a parent will result in things not going well, as well as potentially effecting longevity. The law was given as a protective measure. It was to warn people of the dangers that would ultimately occur for failing to adhere to the commands. Position and authority is God-given. Misalignment interrupts the spiritual covering and protection it offers.

All who curse father or mother shall be put to death; having cursed father or mother, their blood is upon them (Lev 20: 9).

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—this is the first commandment with a promise: So that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth (Eph 6:1–3).

Curses brought about through idolatry: Idols ensure slavery. Make no mistake: bondage will invariably result.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Ex 20:4

Curses brought about by greed: The wrath of God is promised to come to those who are greedy. They are seeking after what is worldly and greed is simply idolatry which leads to poverty. Believers are to seek the Kingdom of God and its righteousness.

Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient (Col 3:5–6).

Curses brought about by Mammon which is the love of money: The love of money has a destined place of ruin. Those who seek after it will bring on many sorrows.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrow.

(1 Ti 6:9–11 KJV)

Curses brought about by dishonoring the Name of God: God has promised to bring judgment to all who misuse His Name. He has exalted His Word and His name above all things. Dishonoring it will result in terrible consequences, here in this life.

"If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor My name," says the Lord Almighty, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them because you have not set your heart to honor me (Mal 2:2 NIV).

Curses brought about by ignoring the poor:

He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses (Pr 28:27 NIV).

Curses brought about by sodomy, homosexuality and sexual perversion, adultery, or incest:

For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men

and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

RO 1:26–27

Nor shall you mate with an animal, to defile yourself with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with. It is perversion. Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled, therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants.

LEV 18:23–25 NKJV

You shall not commit adultery (Ex 20:14).

“None of you shall approach to any that is near kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am Lord” (Lev 18:6).

Curses which bring about national judgment because of innocent bloodshed:

You shall not pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it (Nu 35:33).

Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years, but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you shall go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete”

GE 15:13–16

In the above scripture, we see where God placed divine

judgment on an entire nation. Abraham had been given the covenant; he would be given a son and his children would be as numerous as the stars. God had promised Abraham a child from his own issue. As he fell into a deep sleep, God spoke to Abraham and told him that his children would be oppressed for 400 years in a land that was not their land and that they would return home in the fourth generation, which was the great Exodus from Egyptian rule. History records the downfall of the Amorites, the inhabitants of Canaan, who were involved in sexual corruption which eventually led to their downfall.

Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, therefore, you shall serve your enemies, whom the Lord God shall send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you.

DT 28:47–48 NJKV

The result of God’s judgment over the land promised hunger, nakedness, and lack. It promised oppression would be their future. He promised they would serve their enemies because they refused to serve Him with gladness of heart.

Then those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their ancestors (Ne 9:2).

CLEANSE THE BLOODLINE

The healing process for individuals and families will involve the following elements of confession of your own sins and the sins of your forefathers. There must then be a turning away from those sins. True confession means that an individual is really sorry for the deeds they have committed. Therefore, to

claim confession and not to turn away from that action is futile. Turning away from sin is to be truly remorseful of it. It is also critical to renounce any agreement with ungodly vows, occult activity, and satanic affiliations or ungodly affiliations. The need may exist to pronounce a renunciation over your entire bloodline and reclaim it verbally for the Lord, in the presence of two or more witnesses. The Lord may ask you to fast, therefore, fast if led to do so. Ask the Lord; it is His desire to tell you! Remember, fasting is a form of humbling oneself and should not be used as a means of obtaining self-righteousness; that would be counterproductive. Pray release from the curse and ask God for any further directions, i.e. destruction of certain items, breaking of agreements, renunciation of ungodly affiliations. A prayer of release from a curse should first involve asking God for His divine mercy over the situation and then ask Him for the release from the generational curse. Afterwards, if these things were done with an honest heart before God, a proclamation can be stated and then simply receive by faith that it is done! Below is a list given as a guideline to follow that may assist you as you cleanse the bloodline.

- Revelation: Ask God to reveal a generational curse.
- Direction: Once a curse is revealed, ask the Lord to give you the path to healing.
- Confess: Confess all known and unknown sins of your bloodline. Make a list.
- Repent: Ask for forgiveness for yourself, your ancestors, and future generations to come and turn from your sins.
- Renounce: Break covenant with all ungodly associations.
- Release: Ask God to release your family from those ungodly consequences.
- Recognize and resist: Recognize the battle has already been

won at the Cross and resist the devil as He comes to claim your inheritance.

- Remember: You are a child of the covenant and are free from those chains, therefore do not submit to the forces behind them.
- Exchange the lie for the truth of God's Word and rest in His provisions.
- Rejoice in the restoration promises and have a thankful heart for what the Lord has done.

Prayer ministers who are praying on the behalf of others should listen for repetition in family history. Look for a history of barrenness, divorce, addiction, poverty, untimely death, or suicide through the generations. Listen for words such as *never* and *always*. Look for a history of sexual perversion, sexual confusion, or mental illnesses, some of which most likely have a demonic dimension. Look at cultural history, ancestral heritage and cultural mores which have embraced, customs of a particular group, especially those who have their roots in animism, the worship of false gods, or false religions. Once it has been determined that there is actually a curse in place, then proceed with the same steps that are mentioned in the above list. God offered His people a promise of restoration if only they would return to Him. His cry is the same today!

When all these things have happened to you, the blessings and the curses the I have set before you, if you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, and return to the Lord your God, and you and your children obey him with all your heart and with all your soul, just as I am commanding you today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, gathering you again from all the peoples among whom the Lord your God has scattered you.

Identified in this scripture is a promise of compassion and restoration and it provides a strong foundation to stand upon as one deals with the issue of generational curses. Jesus took upon Himself the ultimate curse of eternal death of our spirit for our sins, and He also took the consequences of those sins. Just like healing, it must be appropriated and received by faith, and it is done. That is the very good news of the Gospel!

Ungodliness has a cost, therefore do not be deceived. There is the wrath of God coming for all ungodliness and all unrighteousness. Therefore it is wise to address these issues. Deliverance ministry is often the uncovering of such things that are hidden in the heart of the soul of man. It is the process of uprooting uncleanness and defilement. God so graciously exposes inward sin so that we may be cleansed of it and if not cleansed from it, then disciplined because of it!

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth” (Ro 1:18).

We operate with limited knowledge, but we learn from the Holy Spirit. Keeping our ears tuned to His voice is critical. The same scripture can be read over and over and then suddenly it is *rhema*, or the revealed Word, to our spirit and understanding. What we choose to do which is in direct conflict with the Word of God will adversely affect our lives. Ignorance is no excuse!

My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children (Hos 4:6).

God gave us all the information we need so it may go well with us! Abundant life is the promise. That means living life to its fullest: provision, health, longevity, fruitful work, and peace. Prosperity or a life of difficulty, which includes lack, sickness, poverty, or barrenness, lays before us. God freely gives

to His children eternal life for those who believe in their heart and confess with their lips that Jesus is Lord. Many promised blessings, however, are conditional. Understanding the conditions set forth in the Word of God gives each and every believer the opportunity to strive for the favor and blessings of the Lord. There are certain principles that teach us what will block the blessings. Breaking covenant with God will certainly block blessings. When God's moral codes, statutes, and precepts are ignored, there are only two options; repentance or judgment. A curse is words spoken over someone with the intent of invoking some harm or evil. Many would say that they do not believe in such things. Just ask the young man who has heard all of his life from a parent that he is useless. Words are very powerful, but the Blood of Jesus is more powerful and, through a simple prayer, the power of those words is broken, and the lie can no longer stand in the light of the Word of God. Also, remember that curses are brought on by breaking covenant; hence, the judgment of God is enacted. A curse cannot land without a cause, therefore, if a curse is suspected, it would be wise to look for a cause. We are saved, healed, and delivered by the Blood of Jesus, all of which must be appropriated and received by faith. They do not always occur simultaneously, and we have an active part to play.

The act of faith is believing something good will happen and the belief becomes the substance of things hoped for. The act of fear is believing something bad will happen, and the belief becomes the substance of what is expected. They are both actions based on belief. Therefore, the question arises, “Where is your trust?” The Bible writes three hundred and sixty five times that believers are not to fear. The very thing you fear will come upon you. Curses can occur because of something we do; they can also occur because of something we believe. If one believes bad things are going to happen, most assuredly they will. Therefore, a self-pronounced curse

finds its way in through a thought process. Words pronounced over a child as he is developing a sense of self can determine a belief system that becomes a *stronghold*.

“Death has come up into our windows, it has entered our palaces, to cut off the children from the streets and the young men from the square.” (Jer 9:21).

Curses are also generated through the acceptance of societal mores. Today our culture is exploding with young people who have fallen prey to the desires of the devil. The spirit of death and the spirit of destruction have targeted our schools. The halls are filled with anorexics, cutters, Goths, gangs, and shooters. One need not look hard to find how Satan has tricked many of today’s youth into believing a lie. Anorexia and gothic dressers mimic in the natural the spirit of death. Anorexics reflect the results of death as their bodies, often frail, bony and skeleton-like, are outward signs of inward decisions. Cutters damage their body as a result of an inward voice they follow in an attempt to release inner pain, but have not recognized the voice as being of a demonic nature. These decisions are of a spiritual nature and are based on a lie from the devil. He has distorted their image. He has told them what they should look like, that they must strive to be smaller and smaller, or cut themselves to release the pain. They believe the lie. While anorexics first desire to be alluring, they become afraid to eat and actually learn to loath food, the source of sustenance and, in reality, their bodies mimic death. Those who are caught in this vicious cycle do have a place to turn. It is to turn to Jesus Christ, who will give them a true picture of what they are to look like, a reflection of Him! Gangs, school shooters, and cutters act out the very spirits of destruction that they have entertained. These spirits have been loosed and schools have no line of defense. There are no clear cut answers in the secular arena for these dangerous behaviors. Seek God first, and the answers will come. Doctors, counselors and psycholo-

gists are an important part of healing in many cases. However, one must not ignore the importance of spiritual awareness in many of these difficulties. As prayer in the school system has been replaced with silence, the protective shield is no longer available.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored (Jer 8:22)?

NATIONAL CURSES

Nations which oppose or fight against Jerusalem will incur a curse. God treasures the Jewish nation. They are His people and He has promised divine protection for them. He has written promises to any nation who stands against them. The Lord, God Himself, will curse a nation who tries to harm Israel. Curses brought on by anti-Semitism will result in judgment by the arm of the Lord.

I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse (Ge 12: 3)...

The result of a curse or judgment on the land is evidenced in scripture. God removes His protection and allows foreign invasion. The land becomes unproductive or barren. There will be a loss of value and production of the land. Rain is withheld and severe drought comes, dangerous fires occur that cannot be stopped by man’s intervention. The nation of Israel repeatedly fought against foreign invasion. Within the Book of Judges, there is a cyclical theme; as the people sinned, oppression and invasion followed. The land will vomit out its inhabitants such as seen in tsunamis, mudslides and various other natural disasters. God forewarns His people of the dire urgency to follow His commands and precepts so it will go well for them. God is a just God, and sin must be answered for. Natural disasters, biblically, are often part of the divine plan of God, resulting from broken covenant, as a means of bringing His people back into right relationship.

Thus the land becomes defiled; and I punished it for its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants (Lev 18:25).

Cities come to ruin and the question often seen in the headlines today is “Why did God allow this to happen?” Whether it is natural disasters, the onslaught of terrorists, or random violent shootings within our schools, the question will undoubtedly surface. The answer is found in the text below. Spiritual law is in place. Gross sin and idolatry will invariably result in cities, nations, and entire civilizations being destroyed. History has proven that as a people fall into immorality, they eventually come to ruin. Today our culture is inundated with pornography, sexual immorality, greed, idolatry, and murder of innocent babies, and yet we carry the banner of “In God We Trust.” These sinful actions, in and of themselves, become the catalyst for disaster.

Who is wise enough to understand this? To whom has the mouth of the Lord spoken, so that they may declare it? Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through? And the Lord says: Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, or walked in accordance with it, but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their ancestors taught them.

JER 9:12–14

But if any nation will not listen, then I will completely uproot it and destroy it, says the Lord (Jer 12:17).

Methods of judgment are war, famine, foreign invasion, plague, drought, and pestilence. It is a spiritual law that if certain things occur, then the judgment of God is allowing the natural cause and effect to take its natural course. Sin throws the earth into confusion and mayhem. Sin lifts the protective hand of God; what was once fruitful becomes barren. Sin causes judgment to come forth, and the earth pays a price.

Africa, Asia, and India are seeing a great move of God including healing which is a tool God uses often to turn hearts of the people to Him. Signs and wonders are for the non-believers as well as confirming the apostolic ministries. Today, headlines are consistently questioning whether occurrences of natural disasters are from God. Many scoff at believers who say that God allowed such events to occur. However, scripture is clear. The results of the sin of a nation will ultimately result in land being ruined and laid waste, and made non-productive. Spiritual laws are unwavering, although we often choose to ignore them. Sin produces death, death even to the fruitfulness of His creation. So, to the question, “Did God do this?” The answer comes...”No, we did!”

Do you have a history of financial issues that seem to plague your family line? Has there been a history of broken marriage covenants? Is there a history of mental illness throughout your family? Do you have unrealistic fears or extreme anxiety? These questions are not meant to imply that you are cursed. They are, however, tools of investigation. If you believe there may be a curse on your family bloodline, simply take it to the Lord in prayer. He will show you. The Blood of Jesus is stronger than any curse the devil has thrown at you or your family. Remember, you are more than a conqueror in Him. Now go and be blessed, from this day on!

TRAINED FOR BATTLE, ARMED FOR WAR!

Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus.

REV 12:17

Do not be deceived. There is a real battle, with a real enemy, leaving real wounds. Satan, as it is written, has an agenda: to destroy the saints of God who are obedient to His Word, and who hold to what is true. Therefore, those who maintain a testimony of Jesus are in a war with the forces of hell to block, bind, or prohibit the advancement of the Kingdom of God. *Hosea 4:6* states that God's people perish for lack of knowledge. Could it be that we have taken the precepts and statutes of the Bible too lightly or figuratively, not adequately understanding our role, nor seeing God's Word as a vital tool for a life of success in the Lord and in this world? May we also acknowledge that success in the sight of God is quite different than in the sight of man? We need to judge success on the basis of what the Lord has commanded us to do and to be. We need to strive for a life of significance. He has commanded us to first become disciples, and then go out and make disciples. God has clearly stated in

His Word that true believers would lay hands on the sick and they would recover, and that they would cast out demon spirits. The Word goes on to command, in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, that His disciples are to share the good news of the Gospel. Therein lies the need for war. Scripture clearly indicates that our battle is not with flesh and blood, that man is not our adversary. Yet, as we deal on a day-to-day basis with those around us, it becomes evident that many of the saints of God have overlooked this foundational principle. Fighting unseen forces seems to many as an unproductive, or worse, a wacky and possibly foolish activity. What do we fight against, then? When do we need to fight? In what kind of fighting do we engage? Understanding the fact that there is a real battle is most critical. Once we have the revelation that we are truly in this battle, the next essential part of fighting it is to comprehend what spiritual warfare is and what it is not.

Spiritual warfare is not a fight for freedom from Satan's control over us. This was accomplished by the work of the Cross. However, one must appropriate the freedom available to all Christians, just as salvation must be appropriated. Spiritual warfare is fighting for the freedom for Jesus to be lifted up and the power of the Holy Spirit to flow, because Jesus said that when He is lifted up, He would draw all men unto Himself. It is also pushing back the forces of darkness to bring truth where there has been deception. It is about freeing those who are held captive to oppression, domination, and possession, that they may be liberated from everything that has distanced them from God, through truth in His Word and the power of the work of the Cross. Although a difficult passage of scripture to grasp, the one below leaves the reader with a visual image that vividly describes spiritual warfare.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force (Mt 11:12).

There is a clash in the heavenlies, a cataclysm waiting to take place when the saints of God decide to stand against the status quo and become the hands and feet of our Lord. Armed and ready to march for the truth of the Gospel, even unto death, these are the warriors Jesus came to equip. So often, warfare is looked at as another item on the church agenda, something to be sure to cover in some form or fashion. However, warfare that is truly effective against the devil and his horde of demons consists of total submission to the will and ways of our Lord and Savior. It is pushing back the forces of hell and praying for truth and the light of the Gospel to prevail in what was once dark, lost or bound. It is taking captivity captive.

Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle (Ps 144:1);

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Satan is a spiritual being. He is not a concept, a force, or an evil presence; he is a being and is the god of this world and is very powerful. Satan is not simply the personification of evil in the heart; he is a created, angelic being of the highest rank. He is the angel of the bottomless pit, and the leader of the host of darkness. The devil has a will and emotions, can strategize, has a plan and knows ways of implementing those plans. He is fierce, deceitful, and proud. He is cowardly and wicked. The devil can transform himself into an angel of light, as can his ministers of darkness. His target is the Church, and he is the great archenemy of God. He is also the adversary of the saints of God. If he is to be rebuked, may the Lord rebuke him. He is our accuser and he desires to tempt us to sin. He wants to sift us and lead us astray. He also desperately seeks to steal worship from God. His job is clear; it is to kill, steal, and destroy. He roams around looking for someone to devour. The author of all that is false, he uses his servants, the demonic host, to

implement his desires and he is the leader of all demons. He is a liar, a thief, and a murderer and he prompts man to follow his ways. He is not to be taunted or challenged. He is not to be threatened or teased. He has tremendous power and can do great harm. Satan is the devil; he is the chief of all fallen spirits. He is not omnipresent, nor is he omnipotent, and therein lies the need for his demonic hosts. There is only one devil, but many demons. His eternal home is the lake of fire. Satan is not to be taunted, teased, or challenged. Precepts gained through the study of God's Word warn against doing such a thing. Jesus, as He was confronted by the devil, chose only the words from scripture, as He stated, *"It is written."*

But when the archangel Michael contended with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you" (Jude 9)!

He has many names: Abaddon, Apollyon, Beelzebub, Belial, devil, serpent, Great Red Dragon, Angel of the bottomless pit, just to name a few, and he has a structured hierarchy. Satan is a great strategist. He is charismatic. When he fell from heaven, he did not fall alone. He has an organized army to fight. He also has a kingdom; it is the kingdom of darkness. It is important to understand the hierarchy of Satan's rule when going into head-to-head combat, which is what the Ministry of Deliverance actually involves. Ministers of deliverance are going head-on with a powerful foe that is capable of much destruction, and even death. Although extremely powerful, he is limited in what he can do. Individuals who are novices in such a ministry will sometimes make dangerous statements or challenges that open themselves up to tremendous heartache or unwanted spiritual battles. It is important that one understand the devil does not play games. He is not in this battle for entertainment, nor should we be!

...Like a roaring Lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour (I Pe 5:8).

Satan rebelled against God before the fall of Adam and Eve. He has been sinning from the beginning and those who continue in sin belong to him. While he has the whole world of unbelievers under his control, he cannot lay hold of a believer to harm him, provided that the believer is free from gross sin. He can, however, take advantage of opportunities given to him when darkness is allowed to operate. Satan has power to affect the physical and spiritual realm. The world is under his control, and believers are aliens of this world who must fight against him and his demonic forces.

For our struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly place (Eph 6:12).

Believers fight principalities, rulers, and authorities, cosmic powers and spiritual forces of evil in high places, all of which are under the rule and domain of Satan. Spiritual forces in high places are entities of the demonic realm. They differ in power and authority. They have characteristics that are exclusive to them. They are used to propagate the plans and schemes of the devil in this world system of which he is the god and ruler. We are to stand against his wiles, which encompass every sin, immoral practice, false religion or theology that has risen against the truth of God's Word.

SHADOWS AMONG US

The devil uses his demons to implement his plans. The term *demon* signifies *"a shade, a shadow, or an idol"*, since the Jewish nation regarded idols as demons that caused themselves to be worshiped by men. Therefore, the terms are interchangeable, as found in Psalms 106:37 and Deuteronomy 32:17. Demons are ministers of Satan and are spiritual beings which oper-

ate in the spirit realm. They are spiritual forces of evil which operate in high places. Demonic forces were worshiped by pagans on high places and mountain shrines; hill tops where sacrifices were given. The service usually involved animal sacrifices, ritualistic meals, and licentious dances. There was sometimes an altar of rock, and beside it were symbols which deified whatever object of worship they chose. Sacred prostitution was part of the ritual; male and female prostitutes joined themselves together with those in attendance as a form of becoming one with the demonic entities that were being worshiped, therefore yoking themselves with false gods. To *yoke* is to bind two things together, as in the form of bondage. Thus, those who took part in these practices actually became enslaved to the thing they worshiped. They became a servant to the demonic entities and entered into the role of bondservant. Israelites consistently faced the temptation to bow down to the elemental forces of paganism, thus binding them to what was false, and to the demonic influence behind it.

The forces of evil, principalities and powers that exist in the spirit realm are there to make war with the saints of God. They are there to entice, enslave, discourage, hinder, trick, and confuse. That's us, church! Satan need not spend his time on those he has already won over. His job is to destroy those who follow Jesus, destroy their testimony, and hinder their worship to God. He uses his well-organized force to influence, torment, and harass Christians, to lead them astray from pure devotion and love of Jesus. He uses schemes, tricks and lies to outwit us, along with the tools of unforgiveness, idolatry, bitterness, envy, and hatred. There was a spiritual battle from the beginning of time and there will be a spiritual battle at the end of the ages as well! That being said, Jesus Christ is the victor. He will lead His faithful army, His unblemished Bride, into that final battle!

Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His

word, heeding the voice of His word. Bless the Lord, you His hosts, you ministers of His who do His pleasure (Ps 103:20–21 NIV).

HOSTS OF HEAVEN

Angels are created, superior, spiritual beings. They are immortal and holy. They are spirits, but not in the incorporeal sense such as being ghostly or disembodied beings. They are powerful and numerous. They are wise and meek. They are invisible; however, they can manifest themselves in human form. They are often described in appearance as being brilliant and dazzling and shine with brightness like that of a lightning bolt. They have emotions in that they rejoice over the saints as they come home. There are different assignments for different types of angels. They have a rank and order. They serve at the throne of God. Angels are to bless the Lord and heed His direction. They are His ministers. They perform His Word as it is sent out. Angels are used to minister to the servants of God. Christ is above the angels, as well as every other created being, because all things were created by Him, through Him, and for Him. He is the object of their worship. They celebrate and rejoice at the salvation of just one sinner who repents. Angels are part of the unseen world, but they are very active in the happenings of the seen world as well, being marvelous in their activity. The Holy Bible documents case after case where angels were imperative to the implementation of God's will as He had given it to man. They are, in the widest sense, agents of God's providence, instrumental in carrying on His great work of redemption. It is rather difficult to actually rank the different offices or responsibilities held by angels. We can only gather from scripture that they are highly organized and are directed by the leading of God.

There are two classes of fallen angels: those who are sent as ministers of the devil to carry out his will, and those who did not maintain original place but abandoned it, and are kept in

eternal chains under darkness, awaiting their final judgment. Evil angelic forces make war with the saints of God. Fallen angels are agents of the devil. They have a place reserved for them in the lake of fire. They were kicked out of heaven when one third fell with Satan due to rebellion against God.

In the Book of Revelation, Michael and his angels war against the Dragon and his angels. Angels hold an important role in warfare. Archangel is an angel of highest order. The word *archangel* means to be first in political order or the most powerful. Michael, the archangel, is the prince of Israel. He guards the nation and people in a time of trouble, and warred against the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece on behalf of Daniel as he prayed for the release of the Israelites from captivity from Babylon. Michael, the archangel, contended with Satan. He argued with the devil over the body of Moses. Moses had died on Mount Nebo and distrust kept him from ever entering the Promised Land. He was secretly buried in a place not known to man. Michael was given the assignment to fight for his body. Perhaps Satan wanted the body of Moses to use as an idol or an object of worship to entice the people of Israel into sin. Nevertheless, the reason is unclear because it is not given in the Holy Scriptures. One may assume, however, that Satan intended to use it for diabolical purposes. Michael was sent by God to contend with Satan, consequently, he chose not to rebuke him, but left this task up to God. As one enters into any kind of spiritual warfare, it is of the utmost importance to follow Michael's example.

UNSEEN FORCES

What is a spiritual battle? It is a battle involving unseen forces of both good and bad. It is fought in the heavenlies, with heavenly assistance through the use of supernatural weapons. A spiritual battle may occur for many different reasons but, most assuredly, every true believer will fight in a spiri-

tual battle. Spiritual insight, which allows one to recognize the schemes of the devil, is essential as one is called into battle. The story of Gideon found in Judges, chapter six, gives invaluable insight into spiritual warfare. Gideon, son of Joash, of the tribe of Manasseh, is often referred to as a great military strategist. His name means "tree feller" or "warrior." It was a time when Israel was being invaded by the Midianites, who were described as being, "as thick as locusts." They had come to destroy the crops, the land, and everything in it. There was no sustenance, no sheep, no oxen, and no donkeys. All provision had been stripped away and nothing was left. The Israelites were forced into the caves of the mountains to hide themselves. Seven years of oppression had been their misfortune and they were in need of a deliverer. Gideon was that man! Gideon had every conceivable reason to doubt the call when God assigned him the duty of delivering His people. His clan was the weakest in Manasseh, and he was the weakest in his father's house. God asked Gideon, "Have I not sent you?" Gideon was unsure of himself. He was unsure of his call. He was a man without proper credentials. He had no family reputation or distinction to secure the position in which God was placing him.

The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; I hereby commission you" (Jdg 6:14).

Who does God use when He wants to display His power and glory? Broken vessels, weak, humble, and fearful people are whom God often uses. People like Gideon. He uses them to do wonderful things. God chooses the "foolish to confound the wise." Gideon had been chosen to do the impossible. He did not have what it takes to be successful in the natural realm. He had no experience. He was, by the acknowledgment of his mouth, a weakling. He was fearful when he was in the presence of the angel. He was fearful when He destroyed the altars

of Baal. However, please acknowledge that the fear he experienced did not stop him.

...*”But sir, if the Lord with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all His wonderful deeds that our ancestors recounted to us” (Jdg 6:13)...*

Have you ever asked yourself these questions? Why am I going through this? Where are you, God? Where are your miracles when I need them? Do these questions sound like the questions of a mighty warrior? Well, they were questions Gideon dealt with. Gideon wrestled with doubt. He needed to know beyond a shadow of doubt that he was truly chosen of God to be the next deliverer of Israel, so he tested God with a fleece. In addition, he had overheard a dream and the interpretation encouraged Gideon to believe he would be successful in battle. He answered yes to the call! In a spiritual battle, it is not uncommon to experience doubt, fear, or insecurity, and to even question God. We have investigated the call of Gideon and the character of Gideon, and now we want to look at the transformation of Gideon. Transformation began when an angel of the Lord appeared to him and gave Gideon a new perspective of himself; he received a new image.

The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor” (Jdg 6:12 NKJV).

God had sent an angel to proclaim Gideon’s call and to encourage him in that call. Gideon took on the new identity God had given. He put away the old image he had of himself. He chose to believe God over what he knew in the natural realm. He chose to reject what his past said about him, what his lineage said about him, and what society itself said about him. He rose to the challenge and decided to be what God said about him. What a tremendous lesson we can learn by studying this weakling who turned into a mighty warrior on the basis of a word of God that radically changed him from the inside out. Often, in warfare, one obtains a name change.

Upon being told that he was mighty, Gideon’s name was changed to Jerubbaal, which meant “Let Baal contend with him” because he tore down the altars of Baal. Name changes are meant to establish a new identity, or to develop a new concept within one’s character which will point them to the purpose and plan for their life. Throughout scripture, servants of God were often given new names. Names are given to point to destiny, purpose, and the divine plan of God for a particular individual. God wants to change our image of ourselves as we wage war in the midst of the battle. He wants us to move in confidence in His Word. He wants us to reflect His image as He, too, is a mighty warrior. We honor God by believing His word, His character and the power of His name as Gideon did.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; He will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in His love; He will exult over you with loud singing (Zep 3:17).

PRINCIPLES OF WARFARE

Have you ever been in a place where it seems as though there was no sustenance? Have you ever been in a place where you have no influence over a particularly bad situation? Have you ever been in a place where there is trouble which is out of your control, yet it seems to be swirling all around you? Perhaps you’ve been put in a place where the enemy is having a field day with your life, distorting the truth, lying, challenging your character, your reputation, or your health. If so, my friend, you may be in a spiritual battle! Gideon built an altar to honor God and acknowledge the place where he had met with the Lord. He placed his offering of a kid and unleavened cakes upon the altar and the angel of the Lord touched it with His staff and it was consumed with fire. We honor God by acknowledging Him as God and serving through our obedi-

ence and sacrifice. The result: God gives us peace in the midst of our spiritual battle.

But the Lord said to him, "Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die." Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it, The Lord is Peace (Jdg 6:23–24)...

The study of Hebraic warfare provides immutable principles for effective strategy in the battle. Before beginning any aggressive warfare it was customary to inquire of the Lord. This was done either by consulting the Urim and Thrummin, a system which was used to show divine guidance, or by accepting the direction of God given through the voice of an acknowledged prophet. Those who were proven military leaders, such as King David, often sought the Lord for themselves. They would also bring the Ark of the Covenant, the tangible presence of God, into battle with them. Spies were frequently deployed and sent onto the enemy's ground as a means of obtaining information concerning the nature of those they were to overthrow. They were to ascertain the conditions for resistance of the opposing army, as well as the actual layout of the land they were to invade.

Warfare was to begin with sacrificial offerings. The commander or priest would bring forth an address. Encouraging words were given, the trumpet would sound, and hand-to-hand combat would then begin. Sword in hand, the Israelites realized they were fighting for more than just the acquisition of land, but also for the name and the honor of their God, Jehovah. They were perpetually in a spiritual battle. Tactical methods of ambush, circumvention, and surprise were frequently utilized. Military effectiveness was implemented during the siege of a city. Siege walls of varying heights were constructed, mound upon mound, until the warriors had reached a sufficient distance from the city that was to be conquered. These walls were foundations upon which towers for slingers and archers were positioned, and from which they could

safely and effectively fight the enemies of God. Strongholds of protection were therefore established. As a warrior entering into a spiritual battle, do not proceed unless directed by the Lord to do so. Also, do not take on a battle that is not yours to fight. God gives the assignments. Individuals who are truly called of God to work in the field of deliverance ministry will never need to look for people to minister to. God will send them.

... "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you" (Jdg 6:14 NASB)?

Be certain that it is the Lord who is speaking to you! Satan would like nothing better than to lead you astray. It is his desire to pull you from the path God has given you to walk on. Therefore, it is wise to be certain who is giving the direction. If you are currently in a spiritual battle, ask the Lord if you are to stay, stand, fight, or retreat. Ask the Lord for direction. King David, one of the great warriors of the Bible, "inquired of the Lord" and so must we!

... "If now I have found favor with you, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me" (Jdg 6:17).

In spiritual warfare, God uses dreams and visions to keep us on our course. Gideon overheard a dream of one of the men in the camp. It was a cake of barley bread overthrowing a tent which indicated divine cooperation. The dream was God's gift, used to build Gideon's confidence and bring him into a new level of faith. In a spiritual battle fear has no place. Fear is diametrically opposed to faith, therefore, before fighting a battle one should decide to refuse fear and walk in faith according to God's Word and plan. Fear paralyzes. It is used to shake you. It is used to distract you. Fear not and trust in the Lord that He will indeed get you through this battle. Scripture tells us that if we do not stand firm, then we will not stand at all. The principle of warfare tells us that we are not to

be moved in a time of battle; do not run, do not hide, and do not entertain the enemy with carnal weapons!

But the Lord said to him, 'Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die.' Stand in faith (Jdg 6:23).

Give thanks to the Lord before, during, and after the battle. We have been commanded to have a thankful heart. This becomes quite a challenge when our world is being turned upside down. However, it is necessary in spiritual warfare. Having a thankful heart allows God the privilege to intervene as He chooses on your behalf. When we are not thankful, we cannot properly enter into the presence of God through prayer, because we are told to enter with praise and thanksgiving on our lips.

It often seems like the odds are stacked against you in the natural sense. You cannot fight in your own strength but in the strength of the Lord. Look at Gideon. He started with too many men, about 35,000 against the 135,000 Midianites and allies. Gideon, under the direction of the Lord, gave those who wanted to turn back the opportunity, those who were "faint-hearted." God had a logical reason for such a reduction in men and it was so that Israel could not boast that they had won in their own strengths. God told Gideon to let those with fear go home and 22,000 did just that! Fear would insure defeat. Now only 13,000 were left to fight. Gideon then put them to the drink test. He separated the men by those who lapped like dogs and those who kneeled to drink. God wanted only those men who were alert and ready for battle. The number dropped once again from 13,000 to 300 as Gideon followed the Lord's instructions and kept only those who lapped like a dog. Numbers do not mean a thing when it comes to the work of the Lord. Remember, no matter how outnumbered you may be, God is all you need to win a spiritual battle! Seek the Lord for the strategy to fight. The Lord gave Gideon wisdom as to how to fight the battle. Strategically, the men were

to advance at night, with torch in one hand, covered with a pitcher, and a trumpet in the other. No weapons were used. He divided the 300 men into 3 sectional companies. A tactical approach of spiritual warfare will include the light of God's Word. This use of the torch symbolically points to light overcoming darkness. Light is used to push back darkness and to light the path on which we are to walk as we fight. Darkness flees in the presence of light. It cannot exist in light; they are diametrically opposed to one another. Therefore, it is the role of every believer to lay aside works of darkness, to come out from works of darkness and be separated from it.

When one enters into spiritual warfare, sound the alarm! That sound is an appeal to heaven. It is a cry for help. It is the act in the natural that stirs the reaction in the supernatural. Call for faithful intercessors. Call for the heavenly assistance. The trumpet, which represents the voice of the Lord, as Exodus teaches, is a notification. Sounding the alarm may entail the actual blowing of the ram's horn or it may involve an intense call for true intercession, which will block and hinder the plans of the adversary.

When you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you, you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, so that you may be remembered before the Lord your God and be saved from your enemies (Nu 10:9).

Pitchers of clay were used in the battle of Gideon. They were to cover the light as they moved through the night to attack the enemy. The pitchers became a distraction as they were smashed to the ground, causing great confusion in the enemy's camp. Their plans were to advance and overtake them by surprise. The enemy warriors, when they heard the crashing of the broken vessels and saw the light, were greatly confused. The sound of glass crashing upon the ground must have sounded like a multitude of swords being drawn from their sheaths. Strategically, the plan was brilliant. Just as in

this battle in the physical, the same applies in the supernatural. Light confuses the enemy. Our own earthly vessels, vessels of clay, house the light of God's Word, and when it is revealed, it overwhelms and confuses the enemy. There must also be a breaking of our earthly vessels in order to allow the light of God to shine through.

In a spiritual battle, most importantly, one must trust the Lord! A true spiritual battle is when all the odds are already stacked up against you. Things are not looking good. There seems to be no way out. The battle may be a physical issue, a financial issue, or an interpersonal issue. It may be in your family, your church, your neighborhood, or at your work. Wherever the battle is, know that God is with you and you must trust Him. As you may have already surmised, Gideon won this battle. He was offered the crown of Israel, but refused it. He gives us great insight for preparation as we enter into spiritual battles. The enemy in this case was the Midians. *Midian* actually means *strife*. They stand as a type or shadow of a spiritual battle. Trouble, trials, and strife are part of the picture represented here for God's people. The Midians also represented total destruction of Israel, but God rose up a deliverer! Just remember:

They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you (Jer 1:19).

PUT YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER!

Gideon, after hearing the direction of the Lord, purified his father's house from idolatry. He sanctified himself. He offered sacrifices to the Lord. He tore down the false idols, built an altar to the Lord, and put his house in proper order. We must also put our houses in proper order. Ephesians, chapter five, gives a vivid description of the proper family structure. The husband is the head of the home, and final decision maker. Wives are subject to their husbands, obeying and respecting

them; they are to willfully submit. Children are to be obedient to their parents. Finances are to be in proper order. Once proper order has been established, remove every defiling thing! Idols are to be removed, in your hearts and in your homes. Remember, an idol is anything that is exalted above your love and devotion to God. Declare the God of Israel as Lord over your home, your family, and your marriage. Sanctify yourself and offer sacrifices to the Lord when in a spiritual battle. Gideon did so by sacrificing a burnt offering to the Lord. The Lord wants our burnt offerings as well. We offer burnt offerings to Him when we go through the process of dying to self and entering the refiner's fire. Believers are to be refined and cleansed from every defiling thing. Jesus is coming for His Bride, and it will be a Bride who has not defiled her gown. We are to allow Him to burn off everything that is displeasing to Him: our pride, our self-exaltation, our self-protection, and our self-will. He desires our total surrender. He wants us to proclaim, "...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (*Jos 24:15*).

Dying to self is a form of a New Testament sacrificial offering. Dying to self is a means of producing fruit for the Kingdom of God. As one dies to the desires of the flesh, he ultimately sows to the Spirit, thus producing the fruit of the Spirit. It is a decision to put God first, even above personal desires, goals, or ambitions. It is to make Him Lord of your life, not in word, but in action and deed. Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. James challenged the status quo, and confirmed that true faith will indeed have evidence of that faith through the works that are accomplished for the glory of God. Faith and works will go hand in hand. Faith without works is counterfeit; it is a false thing and has no truth in it. Therefore fruit-producing is a two-fold directive. We are to reflect the fruit of the Spirit, and to evidence the fruit of the Kingdom through

our actions. Jesus taught a substantial lesson. He taught that in order to produce fruit, there is a death process that must occur. Just as Jesus had to die and be buried, we too must go through a death process allowing the desires of flesh to die so that good fruit may come forth.

Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves Me must follow Me and where I am, there My servant must also be. Whoever serves Me, the Father will honor.

JN 12:24–26

Refiner's fire is another form of New Testament sacrificial offering in that it is the process of burning off all impurities. Figuratively, it is a process of the corrective judgment of God in certain areas of our lives that do not reflect His nature, and it is the portrayal of an inward work in which the sinful nature is purged. Fiery trials are meant to test our faith, to build us up in faith, and to give us confidence in the ability of God to get us through a time of testing. Fiery trials are to produce righteousness in us.

See, I have refined you, but not like silver; I have tested you in the furnace of adversity (Isa 48:10).

Tear down altars. Gideon tore down the altars of Baal and built an altar to the Lord. Idolatry is paying divine honor or homage to any created thing. It is ascribing power to anyone or anything other than God. It is intense admiration and love of anyone or anything above the ultimate love reserved for God alone. Idolatry is the act of choosing to deify, exalt, or worship the creation over the Creator. Gideon removed the idols and we must do the same. Thoughts, time, attention, finances, and dedication are given to the thing loved. It is a

constant on their agenda. It takes precedence over everything. It can be a seemingly good thing, such as children, church work, or religious beliefs. It can be an obviously bad thing such as exalting self, an abusive relationship, or an extreme desire for power or position no matter the cost. Remove the idols. Are there any altars in your life that need to be torn down? Where do you spend your time, attention and focus... to self, an altar to man, an altar to family, an altar to the fear of man, the fear of failure, an altar to shopping, eating, dieting? Before entering the battle, tear down idolatrous altars as Gideon did.

THE BATTLE

The Lord is with you and will not depart from you! One of the first areas of attack is the lie sent from Satan that tells an individual that he or she is in it alone. Satan attempts to isolate people, to make them feel as though they have no support or love. He wants them to feel desperate. In a time of battle, it is essential that one hold tightly to the promise God gave in His Word. Remember, He is no respecter of persons and He will do for you what He has done for others, because it is His nature. Isolation and the feeling of being alone will often cause individuals to give up hope. When you give up hope, you have simply aligned yourself with the devil, giving him authority in your life and dismissing the authority of God. Therefore, resist the temptation and cling to the promise. As the devil brings those messages of isolation, counter his lie with the truth of God's word. Man will forsake you, but God never will!

...No one will be able to stand up against you. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you (Jos 1:5 NIV).

The Lord will protect you. In the midst of a battle the temptation arises to trust in man, doctors, husbands, family

members or friends to protect you from whatever difficulties you are facing. This erroneous assumption places responsibility that belongs to God on someone you can see or touch, an individual to whom you can physically turn. However, in a real spiritual battle, there is only one who can protect you. Almighty God is ultimately the protector. It is He who determines if we are to breathe our next breath or not. God has assigned the length of our days and He is the final authority as to when that last day will come. Hence, only God can preserve our life. Hezekiah prayed to the Lord and He extended his life fifteen years. We can learn a good lesson from Hezekiah. Yes, doctors are used by God to aide in the healing process, but God is the Healer! He is the protector, therefore, resist the temptation to assign this role to another. Who do you trust in today?

The Lord is good, a stronghold in a day of trouble; he protects those who take refuge in him, even in a rushing flood. He will make a full end of his adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness (Na 1:7–8).

The Lord is your strength. He is one to whom to turn when faced with a spiritual battle. It is in His presence that one is filled with the confidence to stand through difficulties. Spiritual battles cannot be fought in the natural realm, therefore, every directive given that will have impact will be received during time in His presence. A stronghold for good is a spiritual fortified place of safety. It is a hiding place, protected and secured from the enemy. It is a place to be in the time of a raging battle. God has provided a secure place, and the only requirement is to trust in Him through the onslaught of the attack.

The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still (Ex 14:14 NIV).

The battle is not yours, it belongs to the Lord. This is one of the most difficult principles to learn but it is, without a

doubt, one of the most important. It is within our nature to protect ourselves when we are being attacked. By nature, we have been wired to fight for survival. However, in the spiritual realm, we are to rely on the Lord and know that it is truly His battle, not our own. Practically, one may ask how this spiritual principle is conveyed in the midst of an attack. One example is when an individual has been slandered and his character defamed. It is natural to take matters in one's own hands and defend. However, if we defend ourselves, we remove the responsibility from God. We have now become our own defender, and we have allowed others to become our judge, which is a great offense to God. If we look at Jesus Christ, when he was being accused, spat on and mocked by the religious crowd of the day, he turned his cheek and kept silent. How difficult it must have been! He knew the consequence of His own peoples' actions as they rejected him. If people rise up against you, remember, the Lord is the vindicator, and He has promised to respond. The Lord will provide every necessary thing you need to get through a spiritual battle. We are given the understanding that it is not our battle to fight, but it is His, and we are simply willing participants. God equips His servants. He gives strength, guidance, and physical and spiritual resources to make it through whatever He requires an individual to go through. Truth is truth, nothing added and nothing taken away. His Word promises His children that they will have all they need, not necessarily all they want. Sometimes, due to improper teaching on prosperity, there is a "pie in the sky" mentality. As much as everyone would like to believe it to be so, God promises to meet our need. It is in the time of a spiritual battle that "need," will suffice. Simply trust the written Word of God during any time of testing. Stand firm on the promises of God.

And My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Php 4:19 NKJV).

There is a real enemy who can, and will, do real harm. We must understand this. Battles cannot be fought if there is a faulty belief system that attributes all struggles in life as simply being issues of the material world. There are, in fact, many spiritual battles that take place. The devil walks about waiting for the opportune time to kill, steal or destroy. Identify the battle and determine to fight it with the supernatural tools of warfare listed in this chapter. Tools of warfare are effective in the battle once you know how to use them, and who you are actually fighting.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pe 5:8 KJV).

Battling in the supernatural must first start with submission to God. It is difficult to ask God to fight on your behalf when you have committed yourself to submit to the devil. Therefore, first and foremost, there should be a declaration of allegiance. Who do you serve? You cannot serve God and the devil at the same time. Do you live your life according to His written Word? Do you call Him Savior, but refuse to honor Him as Lord? Are the words of your testimony aligned with the written Word of God? Do your actions line up with the life of a true believer, or do you simply give it lip service as the Pharisees did? It is of the utmost importance for true introspection during a spiritual battle. Many deceive themselves and then question God as to why He failed them, or did not respond on their behalf. God requires submission. Any way you want to dress it up, your actions will be reflective of your beliefs. When facing a terrific giant in your life, take wise counsel and submit to God, then resist the devil! We have a written guarantee, signed in blood and sealed with the Holy Spirit, that the result will be the fleeing of the devil. He can-

not stay. Those who have been through deliverance ministry and have had no real change in their lives may find the answer here, clearly written in scripture!

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (Jas 4:7 NIV).

We are to resist Satan. Quite possibly, there are too many times we agree with Satan instead of resisting him. Condemning thoughts come and we align ourselves with them by coming into agreement. We acknowledge these dangerously negative thoughts as truth, thus it becomes the word of our testimony. Denounce ungodly thoughts, condemning thoughts, or thoughts that tear you down instead of building you up. It is those thoughts that become your reality unless you stand against the enemy of your soul and denounce them. We are the victors. Satan gains the advantage every time we see ourselves as a victim. Those individuals who have been faced with one tragic situation after another may indeed wear the mentality of a victim. You cannot have it both ways. You will either believe what circumstances may indirectly point to or you can choose to accept scripture as truth. This is not to blindly minimize or discount the tragedies of the past; it is simply to refuse to allow them to define who you are. You must allow the Word of God to define you. When feeling distraught, begin to counter those feelings with truth. When things look bleak, remember that you are more than a conqueror. When all is lost, remember that you are victorious in Christ Jesus!

No, in all things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Ro 8:37).

Stand firm. Do not be moved by circumstance and do not run from the battle. Pernicious directives sent from the demonic realm will most assuredly come. They are meant to entice the servants of God to run, hide, or faint. However, God desires His children to trust Him enough to stand in

the midst of the battle. He desires His servants to be strong, courageous, and firm in knowing that He is in charge, therefore, consequences will result in only what He Himself has allowed. Henceforth, such thought processes strip the devil of his control. It strips him of any power he may have had to inflict more painful consequences and it acknowledges, by faith, the total sovereignty of God in the life of the believer. Hence, refuse to run. And remember, stand in faith or you will not stand at all.

Be on guard; stand firm in faith; be men of courage; be strong (I Co 16:13 NIV).

There is protection in the midst of a spiritual battle and one can take security in that. As the enemy pours forth lies, soldiers of Christ must counter with the truth that provides protection.

No weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication is from me, says the Lord (Isa 54:17).

THE ART OF WARFARE

We have discussed preparation, principles, and precepts upon which we can stand firm. Now, how do we fight? We must first identify the battle. Ask the Lord, “*Is this a spiritual battle?*” You cannot fight a battle when you do not believe one exists. Is something being stolen from you? Is something or someone being stolen, killed or destroyed: family relationships, your health, your future, your children, your ministry? Are you working in the natural to no avail? Are the things that are going on around you out of your control in the natural? Do the things that are taking place seem to have no rhyme or reason behind them? Are things out of the ordinary taking place, things that seem to make no sense? Next, judge your situation by the standards of the scripture: “*Is this situation of my own*

doing, something I could have prevented, or is it a true spiritual battle?” Judge the situation based on the biblical definition of the works of the flesh. Are you suffering because of some issue you have chosen to participate in, or are you walking in the fruit of the Spirit? Works of the Flesh:

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious; sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like, I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

GAL 5:19–21 NIV

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22–23 NIV)...

Use these two scriptures as a guideline to your involvement in any situation. Learn to gauge yourself as warfare begins. Look honestly into the perfect liberty of the law and weigh out the potential of error on your part. Ask yourself, “*Am I walking in love?*” Identify the areas of attack and analyze if the situation is caused by works of the flesh. The Word of God reads that those who belong to Christ have crucified the sinful nature, with its passions and desires. There is a war within! Anticipate, prepare, and recognize spiritual attacks.

Attacks can come from inward, ungodly desires. What do you desire? Why do you have a conflict? Are you walking in obedience to the Word of God? Spiritual attacks can come through emotional and mental scars resulting from sin, trauma, generational issues, inner vows, negative attitudes, or wrong thinking. Satan uses established twisted thought processes to beat you up with tormenting spirits. Attacks can come from the enemy through lies of the devil. Satan will often use the voice of the mouths of other people. He will use

slander and gossip to destroy character and reputation. He will even do it within the walls of the church. Leaders who allow such behavior will invariably be harmed or destroyed by the same actions they have allowed to go unchecked. Attacks can come from poor decision-making. Willfully allowing an area of sin to go unchecked, unrepented, and unconfessed can bring about tremendous warfare. Sin opens the door wide for attacks of the devil. Attacks can be the result of problems of self-making; however, they can also come due to no error at all.

Attacks can also come by a decision of God to test an individual. Remember the story of Job. Job was a righteous man who loved the Lord. Satan was going to and fro upon the earth. God asked him, *“Have you considered my servant, Job?”* Job was then tested to the very core of his being. He would lose family, property, friends, and even his health but, in the midst of it all, he would not lose his faith in God. The question...was Job faithful to God for what he had obtained from God, or was he faithful because of who God is? Job was in for the battle of his life and it was God’s own suggestion. The account of Job is an account of spiritual warfare to bring Job to the end of self and find his all in God! Attacks can come because you are simply doing the work of the Gospel. Paul is a perfect example of how the righteous will be persecuted. Paul not only fought the enemies of the Cross, but he dealt with the forces of nature, sickness and afflictions sent by Satan himself: false apostles, carnal Christians, and demon spirits. Paul tells us in scripture that his affliction was sent by a messenger of Satan. He was in an ongoing spiritual battle, and he encouraged young Stephen, his protégée, to continue and fight the good fight of faith. Christians are to follow his example. Identify where and how Satan is attacking you. Is he attacking your family, marriage, children, or your finances? Is it your career, your ministry, or your reputation? Is he causing upheaval in your life, your relationships, your home life, your

atmosphere at work? Is he using the element of surprise to catch you off guard? Ambush, surprise, and circumvention are just a few techniques he uses to throw you off guard. Beware, and when upheaval begins, ask the Lord to show you if it is truly an attack of the devil.

VICTORY IN THE BATTLE

Strategies of warfare are offensive. You have now become the victor, not the victim, by taking a proactive stance to combat the plan of the enemy. No matter what the battle is, saying *“God, I trust you and I will rest in you”* takes the advantage away from Satan and has him fighting God, not you in your own weak, fleshly attempts. Do not come out to fight; let the Lord do it for you. Stand on the truth. If you are being falsely accused, under false presumptions, wrong opinions, or lies, it does not matter as long as you have the absolute truth on your side. Do not defend your position, justify, or feel you have to prove yourself. This is a trick of Satan to try to solicit a battle of words, where the most intellectual or influential will most likely win. Do not try to vindicate yourself. The Lord said, *“Vengeance is mine, I will repay.”* Wait on the Lord and move when He says move, stay when he says stay. Stand on the promises that are written in scripture and claim them as yours. Get a new vision of yourself. See yourself as God sees you, not as you see yourself. Know who you are in Christ.

“When we cry Abba, Father!” It is that very Spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if in fact we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him (Ro 8:16–17).

Understand your position in Christ. You are seated in heavenly places. The immediate and direct consequence of salvation places you in a position of sharing in the preeminent glory of Jesus Christ. You have been exalted with Him and are not only are dead to sin, but are alive in righteousness.

Therefore, it is imperative that you accept this new position not only in theory but also in deed. To do so is to begin to grasp the fullness of the grace of God as He has so mercifully placed you above all powers and all principalities of this world system. You now belong to a new Kingdom, one far above the earthly realm. Notice that the words used in the text below are in the past tense, therefore rejoice, it has already been done!

“But God, who is rich in mercy, out of great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ”.

EPH 2:4–6

Understand your authority in Christ. It has been given to you, as a believer through Him and His name. Serpents and scorpions mentioned in the Book of Luke are of the demonic nature. Jesus had just been discussing with the disciples who went town to town, concerning their amazement that the demon spirits were subject to them, in His name. He told them not to rejoice in that, but to rejoice that their names had been written in heaven. They were out working on the behalf of the Kingdom of God and Jesus shared in their excitement. If you think that’s exciting, understand that your names are written as well. How incredibly awesome it must have been to have such a wonderful acknowledgment from the King of Glory! Jesus had given these seventy, who were willing to leave home and family, and minister from town to town on His behalf, the power and authority over these spirits. Ministers who are willing have the same power, because it was passed on to them from Jesus Himself.

“Behold I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Lk 10:19 NKJV).

Understand the work of the Cross. Jesus Christ, through His death and resurrection, disarmed rulers and authorities. He stripped them of their power. He nullified their offensive capabilities and placed in the hands of every believer the ability to overpower them in His name. The believer displays the immeasurable superiority of Christ Jesus as he operates under His authority and commands demon spirits to be cast out of those held captive to them. It was He who had made a public spectacle of them by displaying His authority over them. Victoriously, He trained His disciples to do the same.

“And when you were dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the Cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it”.

(COL 2:13–15)

Understand that man is not your enemy. Strategies of warfare involve the understanding of who you are actually fighting. Believers do not war against others. Their battle takes place in the spiritual realm. Men held under captivity assist the demonic realm in propagating evil against the servants of God. Sometimes such people are found operating within the church. Satan can inflict much injury when he has gained access through false teachers, false prophets, false apostles, and false brothers. Satan’s demonic spirits are the target, and therefore must be dealt with accordingly, and all that is false must be renounced. When called to battle, seek direction from the Lord. Follow His directions specifically. Strategies will vary greatly and can only be given by God. Plans in the natural realm for a spiritual battle will always be found to be futile. Joshua was another great warrior. He had a mandate from the

Lord. Joshua had been given specific directions from the Lord that he was to prepare his people for battle. The men were to be circumcised. Circumcision was a sign, an agreement with God that they were his chosen people. When preparing for battle, it is absolutely critical that you hear and obey the Lord. We are to be spiritually circumcised with a new heart. In other words, we need to make sure we are in right standing before the Lord if we intend to enter into spiritual warfare on behalf of others. There is no other option. The battle is won in the supernatural, and it must include prayer as a weapon of defense and strategy. Prayer is the essential ingredient for success. Without prayer, there is no warfare. Warfare requires a plan, a strategy, and a way of proceeding which cannot be obtained simply through natural means. Remember, our warfare is in the supernatural and it requires supernatural weapons. They cannot be carnal or in the flesh. They must be of the Spirit.

Then Elisha prayed: "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see." So the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw; the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (II Ki 6:17).

Jehoshaphat, Elisha, Gideon, Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego fought spiritual battles. They each knew the importance of prayer. Prayer is a crucial weapon in warfare and it is where the victory is obtained. It is through prayer that one can gain revelation. Man's wisdom is ineffectual when fighting a spiritual battle. The wisdom of God is required in spiritual battles, and that wisdom is obtained through faithful, consistent communication with the Lord. It is in prayer that faith is loosed in a given situation. It is in prayer that faith is enacted, and it is in prayer that directives are received. Once those directives are received through prayer, then an action of some kind may be required. Our hearing then becomes our doing. Jesus taught us a beautiful lesson in Mark, chapter

eleven. He had cursed a fig tree and it withered and died. He explained to His disciples that they are to have faith in God. He taught them that if they had faith they would command any obstacle, hindrance or insurmountable problem out of the way. Jesus explained the importance of faith in prayer, that if they did not doubt in their hearts, but believed, they would have the very thing they had asked for. Prayer is a powerful tool in warfare. Taking time in prayer also promotes the development of intimacy with the Lord. It is a time when God gives the direction and revelation necessary to be victorious. It is a time when God will share with you His heart in a given situation so that you know how and when to proceed. Prayer brings about supernatural confidence within, therefore giving the boldness to fight.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds (II Co 10:3-4 NJKV);

WEAPONS OF WARFARE

Prayer is a tool of warfare. Faith is a tool of warfare. The written Word is a tool of warfare. There are other less obvious tools of warfare. Let's look at some of them. Take time to write down the scriptures below so that they will become a part of your arsenal against the wiles of the devil. The love of Christ is in direct conflict with the hatred of Satan, and it is one of the most powerful weapons in a spiritual arsenal. Love counters Satan's every move. It exposes his will, and it disarms his servants. Love is the ultimate weapon in warfare. As the enemy launches his attack, simply clothe yourself in the love of Christ and emulate His very actions.

The blessing is another tremendous weapon of warfare (*Ro 12:14*). Satan desires nothing more than to have individuals be his mouthpiece and curse others. Weapons of warfare are intended to counter the enemy's plans, therefore, reverse

the curse and bless others. Believers are to bless even those who have presented themselves as the opposition. Blessing becomes an invisible shield of protection. God Himself takes notice, and as those allow themselves to be a tool in the hands of Satan, God intervenes. He acknowledges and protects His children as they respond in obedience and bless. The action of blessing strips the plans of the enemy and he cannot get the advantage. He will invariably lose as God positions Himself to fight on behalf of those who do His will in the midst of the battle and bless their enemies.

Praise and worship are great weapons of warfare (*II Ki 3:15*). Satan cannot stand in the midst of true worship and true praise. There is a type of praise and worship in which he can operate, and that is corporate praise and worship where man is exalted instead of God. It is a form of false worship that comes from the pride in one's own abilities. At times, it may be difficult to tell the difference. However, God and God alone, is to be exalted in His house. Fleshly attempts at praise and worship will avail no true healing, deliverance, or salvation. It may look and sound good, but change in the hearts of men is absent. It will be a place where hearts are hard and proud. True praise and worship lifts up Jesus Christ and draws men unto Him. Therefore, the fruit of change is the measure of hearts that are truly worshipful before the Lord. Demons will flee as God is exalted. David played his lyre and the demon spirits left Saul. Such a spiritual principle must not be overlooked as it applies to the Ministry of Deliverance.

Individual and corporate fasting are also weapons of warfare (*Est 4:15*). As we humble ourselves God gives us His ear. He hears the cries of His people when they truly humble themselves. If it is done for show, to impress or to prove some form of false piety, it will be in vain and avail nothing of value. Fasting is a means by which man lays aside the bare essentials of life and pleads his case before a Holy God.

Fasting can change individuals, churches, cities and nations if done with pure motives. God's heart is with those who are broken and contrite and He moves on their behalf. It is an expression of sorrow over sin, the mortification because of sin, and the abasement of the physical body to mourn over sin. It is not enough to put on a sad countenance or to hang our heads with disfigured faces. We are reminded that those who do such things have already received their reward. What is done in secret will be rewarded by the Lord. God desires that hearts be freed and bondages broken. God desires that heavy burdens be lifted off of others, and that His disciples help others to find freedom. He desires the breaking of the yoke of slavery, the rescue of those who are oppressed, and the release of those held captive. God desires the ministry of freedom and liberty. This must be our desire also as servants of the Most High; we align our will and desires with His will and desires. Fasting and prayer are weapons of warfare that assist in that process as Jesus reminded us, "*This kind only comes out with prayer and fasting.*"

Prayer is a mighty weapon of warfare, as previously mentioned (*Eze 22:30*). The prophet Ezekiel was conversing with the Lord and God told him that he was searching the land over to find one who would stand in the breach for him, one who would repair the wall, but he could not find anyone. Believers are to be that intercessor, those who will stand in the gap and intercede on behalf of His will, and become repairers of the breach, for individuals, cities and nations. Where there has been a violation or break, God desires restoration in that place. He desires those who will pray for healing of that broken place. The cities and streets are full of iniquity, injustice, and dishonesty. God is seeking those who will fall on their faces seeking Him, humble themselves, pray, and turn from their wicked ways. He has promised to hear their cries, forgive

their sins, and heal their land. Prayer is a powerful tool in the hands of the redeemed.

The Word of God is a powerful tool to be used against the devil in spiritual battles (*Eph 6:17*). The devil is a liar, it is his very nature. Therefore, truth is one of his greatest oppositions. He operates by and through the use of lies. Truth exposes his tactics in every situation. Truth will always win out. Even if it is sometimes hidden in the midst of a battle, God will show forth in truth and the lies of the enemy will eventually be exposed. Satan hides behind lies and those who concur with those lies have aligned themselves with the devil. The devil uses, most frequently, the twisting of the truth. He will take what is true and spin it, with his own agenda at the forefront, to make it sound like truth. But inevitably the truth will prevail. Those who have cooperated with the devil will reap their own rewards for their service. Therefore, it is imperative to remain faithful to the truth even if you must suffer for awhile for standing up for it. God is faithful and He too will reward, but His rewards are eternal and not temporary like those of the devil.

We overcome our accuser by the Blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (*Rev 12:11*). Our testimony is two-fold. It is what we believe in our heart to be true, and it is what we say with our mouths and acknowledge as truth. Believers are to testify to the written Word of God as infallible truth. It is truth that cannot be shaken or questioned because it is received by faith, through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the words we actually speak out that become our testimony, which we really believe in our heart. It is the words written in the Bible, that we say and believe with our hearts. The accuser is conquered, defeated by divine and human effort combined, and that is the plan of God for battles today.

The name of Jesus is the greatest weapon in warfare when fighting the demonic realm (*Jas 2:19*). It is the name of Jesus

to which demonic spirits must submit. They have no other option. They have been totally disarmed through the work of the Cross, made public spectacles of and stripped of their control over every true believer. In deliverance, it then becomes important to impart this understanding into the individual in need of such ministry. The demons know they can only stay if given the opportunity to stay. However, in the life of the believer, it is finished! Frequently, after times of deliverance ministry, when demonic spirits have been cast out, barred by the Cross and the Blood of the Lamb from reentering, it is good to simply remind the spirit realm the words of our living Savior, "It is finished!"

Forgiveness is a necessary step in all healing: spiritual, emotional, and physical (*Mt 6:14–15*). It is not an option, it is a command. It is a weapon of warfare as it strips away the rights of the devil in tormenting, harassing, or oppressing those who have held onto resentment and bitterness. Hearts that choose to forgive open themselves up to receiving God's merciful hand of restoration. Unforgiveness binds individuals to hurts and pains of the past. It locks them into deep-seated anguish. It blocks the flow and prevents the receipt of the love of God. Forgiveness is a decision and not a feeling. Once the decision is made, restoration will begin.

The angelic hosts are weapons of warfare (*Rev 12:7–9*). The word *angel* actually means "one sent" and it is God who does the sending. However, servants of God can call on the Lord and ask Him to send His holy angels to minister to them, to aid them, and to protect them. These beings are divine and were created to be intermediaries between God and man, often bringing news as God's messengers to mankind. They attend the throne of God and are often divine agents governing specific parts of the world. They have a hierarchical organization which includes warring angels who are sent to assist in the advancement of the plans and purposes of God.

They can sometimes be seen of men, and can manifest themselves into human beings. They are servants of God to do His bidding.

Tears are not frequently acknowledged as a weapon of warfare, however, they certainly are. God hears the voice of the broken hearted. He is near to them. He shares in their sorrow, their compassion, their travail, and their pain. Tears are a display of a heart-felt, deeply moving cry out to God, and He acknowledges those who are passionate in their requests. There is a spiritual planting that is going on and a promise of harvest.

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves (Ps 126:5–6).

The trumpet is another weapon of warfare that is quite often overlooked as being a thing of the past. However, the use of a trumpet in warfare is as relevant today as it was thousands of years ago. Spiritual principles do not change with society. The church must not lose sight of such precepts. The sound of the trumpet was used to confuse the devil. It was believed that the devil could not distinguish between the voice of the Lord and the sound of the trumpet. Therefore, at the sound of the trumpet the devil would be thrown into confusion. It was to be used to sound the alarm as a call into battle. The assembly of the people was also hastened by the sound of the instrument. A trumpet blast was used to mobilize the camp when it was time to move. The devil could not ascertain if the sound was a trumpet or the voice of God, hence he would not know how to counter attack. True, we are not fighting a physical battle and we do not need to mobilize a camp in the natural, but we may have to mobilize a team of prayer warriors when facing challenging battles. Most importantly, trumpets were used to prepare the people for the oncoming attacks. When under attack, sound a clear call!

Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle (I Co 14:8 NIV)?

The spiritual gifts given the Church are weapons of warfare. Christ gave the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers and missionaries, all for equipping the saints of God for the work of ministry. God also gives to His people prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, and mercy. The Holy Spirit gave gifts: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongue, and interpretation of tongues. All these gifts are to be used in building the Body of Christ, evangelizing, healing the physically and spiritually sick, and profiting the Body as a whole. Clearly, one can see God at work to heal the brokenness of mankind through the gifts given to His people. Whatever gift you may have, use it. If it is singing, sing as unto the Lord. If it is dancing, dance as unto the Lord. If it is teaching, teach as unto the Lord. As the gifts are activated, the devil's plans are exposed. They uncover the diabolical efforts of Satan as he attempts to destroy servants of God.

Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people" (Eph 4:8).

DRESSED FOR WAR

Put on your whole armor. Spiritual warfare requires preparation. It requires that those who engage must be properly dressed. Spiritual armor is real and effective. It is provided to the Church so that we, when we do engage, can withstand the wiles of the devil. We know he prowls around looking for those he can destroy, therefore, our dress becomes a vital necessity. Words on a page will not be effective. One must have comprehension and the ability to apply what has been learned, while also making a conscious decision to abide in the truth of God's Word as a protective shield around one's

self. It is advisable to put on this gear daily, in a prophetic sense, but especially during times of intense warfare.

Belt of truth: Put on the understanding that God's Word is true, no matter how you feel, no matter what your situation is, no matter how it looks to all those around you. God's Word is above all and He is the rock you choose to stand on.

Breastplate of righteousness: Put on the understanding that you stand not in your own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Jesus. As the enemy approaches, remind him of your rightful standing in Jesus Christ, and the robe of righteousness He has placed upon you.

Shoes shod to spread the Gospel: Put on a spirit of readiness to defend, proclaim, and impart the Gospel. Have a witness in your heart to share with anyone at anytime, and a willingness to testify to the goodness of God in your own life as well as to testify as to what is written.

Shield of faith: Put on faith over a spirit of fear, doubt, or double-mindedness. Make a decision to believe the promises of God and to act upon them in faith, claiming them as your own. Stand on the promises that are written, refusing to run, hide, or give in to the intimidation of the devil.

Helmet of salvation: Put on the understanding that you belong to the Lord, and no one can snatch you out of His hand. Therefore, agree with the Bible and receive all of your spiritual benefits: salvation, healing, deliverance from evil, wholeness, and well-being.

Sword of the Spirit: Use the Word of God in the spirit realm. Speak out the words of truth against the enemy of your soul. Fight the lies of the devil with the truth that is written. Say, "It is written," whenever you are faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles, and believe the written Word.

These previous directives are offensive, except for the Sword of the Spirit, which is defensive. In other words, use the sword of the Spirit to wield at the devil as he attacks. You

have now become the victor and not the victim by taking a proactive stance to combat the plan of the enemy. No matter what the battle is, saying, "God, I trust you and I will rest in you" takes the advantage away from Satan and now he is fighting God.

The Church is to be militant. Ephesians can be looked at as a book of warfare. Paul, the author, tells us through his writings that true believers will experience warfare, and then he gives instructions on how to win. Ultimately, the victory has already been won. Servants of Christ, warriors in this spiritual battle, are to be careful and avoid worldly entanglements. They are to be ready through prayer and self-control. They are to be willing to deny self, be constantly alert, and endure hardships like a good soldier should. Soldiers are to be earnest and watchful, and are called to fight the good fight of faith. By faith they overcome the world, the flesh, the devil and even death itself. Clothed in white, they stand in opposition to all that is dark and triumphantly reflect the armor of light. Believers have overcome and their victory is found in Jesus. Christ, our captain, has forever conquered the power of sin, death, and the grave. However, there is an ongoing attempt by Satan to pull believers away from pure devotion to God. He fights to obscure the Gospel, to tempt and harass those who claim to be believers, and to thwart the process of sanctification. Believers are therefore charged with the responsibility of wrestling with these powers. The very term *wrestle* implies hand-to-hand combat.

"Who is this that looks forth like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army with banners" (Song 6:10)?

Believers are to be free in the battle! Do not allow the battle to become its own form of bondage. Mountains that are faced can be catalysts to propel you forward in growth and spiritual development, or they can be attempts by Satan to take you off the path God has chosen for you. God allows

these mountains to stretch us, to teach us, to build us up in strength. However, focus on the mountain can become binding. Therefore, one must remain focused on the Lord and not on the situation or circumstance. God gives the victory. The victory may not always look the way we would like for it to look, but be assured, it will always accomplish the purpose for which it was sent for all those who love God and are called according to His purposes. Spiritual battles will reflect the glory of God. Sometimes His glory is not readily seen, but we can trust in it. God is the warrior and He will renew His servants as they come out on the other side! Persecution of the Church is nothing new. It has been a part of history since the beginning of its conception. Often, and unfortunately, it also occurs within its own walls, through those who have not truly committed their lives to Jesus, and those who continue on in carnality. Christians should be advancing the Kingdom of God, not thwarting it. Hence, it should be the duty of every believer to do as Jesus did and push back the forces of darkness and advance the Kingdom of Light, casting out demons, healing the sick and spreading the Good News. Non-believers scoff and ridicule; they may hinder the advancement of the Gospel from becoming part of our everyday existence in a public forum. They, however, are not who we battle. We battle spiritual wickedness in high places, powers and principalities, and demonic forces that are responsible for blinding whomever they can. Those who overcome are promised hidden manna, receive a new name, eat of the tree of life, and wear a garment of white. They shall be pillars in the house of God, and sit with Christ at His throne. They shall have power over nations and the name of God will be written upon them by Jesus Christ. Understanding spiritual warfare is an absolute necessity in deliverance ministry. Those who are determined to fight should be committed to the full scope of understanding of the enemy and his tactics, and be well-equipped with

the weapons available in his arsenal. Christians who are dedicated to their commission will go forth with a holy zeal and advance the Gospel; they will be trained for battle and armed for war!

The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing (Zep 3:17)...

IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Ro 14:7–9

Dying to the flesh is one of those common phrases we hear in church terminology. It is often overemphasized in speech and underutilized in action. It is also a concept that is difficult to grasp unless you have actually been through the process. It is not a one-time activity, but a constant, ongoing progression of cleansing and renewal. Dying to self is the process necessary to move us from glory to glory. The decisions we make through this cleansing will lead us out of our present pain, sins of the flesh, and into our future position, being strong in spirit, as sons and daughters of God. The conflict between spirit and flesh is the war which rages in each one of us in some form or fashion. Allowing the spirit to overcome the flesh is one of the most important aspects of growth and development in the walk of a Christian. This process is not an easy or comfortable one. It can be a very

painful, slow process during which one will likely experience substantial grief. Each and every Christian has a choice before him: whether or not to allow the Lord to change him from the inside out. Hence, many of those in need of deliverance have avoided the process in one or more areas of their life. This “holding out” is often the result of fear of the unknown, or the false sense of protection and comfort their sin has offered them. The resistance can also stem from the desire not to give up the momentary pleasure gained from the sinful nature. Letting go of the root of the problem often seems more painful than the problem itself.

Fundamentally, the Ministry of Deliverance attempts to disclose those areas within an individual where the flesh has ruled so strongly that it has opened the door for the devil to control certain aspects of the body, soul, or spirit. The spirit of a believer is secure in God. It belongs to Him. However, as seen in previous chapters, even Christians can allow demonic access through areas of sin, thus permitting the defilement of body or soul. Once an area is identified, the process of *casting out* will not suffice in and of itself. There must be a renewing of the mind in conjunction with the actual deliverance for it to ultimately be effective long-term. Herein lies the problem. Very often in deliverance ministry, due to lack of training, commanding the demonic spirits to leave a person’s spiritual house is thought of as being the end of the process rather than the beginning. Once deliverance has taken place, there must be ongoing prayer, counseling, training and discipleship to assist the individual in the renewal of his mind. Also, it is most often not a onetime deal. Working with individuals in need of deliverance ministry is a process. Some may not be ready or willing to relinquish certain areas of their life. God asks us for total surrender and it is in that place that we find our true healing! We have looked at cleansing our spirit, through the Blood of Jesus in the New Birth, and accepting

the freedom it offers. Now let’s look at cleansing our flesh: our body, our mind, will and emotions and learn to walk according to the Spirit of God.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Ro 8:5–8

Identify works of the flesh! It is important in the Ministry of Deliverance to identify areas where those in need of healing are walking in the flesh. Sin starts with a desire. Once that desire is conceived it gives birth to sin, and that sin, once it is fully grown, gives birth to death. The Book of James offers this spiritual truth. Therefore, one must heed the caution and run from works of the flesh, because it is ultimately a pathway to death and destruction. As one prays for deliverance for others, or receives deliverance prayers themselves, a good suggestion is to evaluate areas of one’s life that are in error and continuously sow to the flesh. Areas of sin that go unchecked, or persistent lifestyles of a fleshly nature, can lead to demonization. Jesus reminded us that we are a slave to whatever sin we obey. These actions align themselves with the will of the devil instead of the will of God for an individual. It can become a place given over to the devil for his intervention, and what began as choice becomes a compulsion, out of one’s control. Therein lies the pathway to demonic infiltration.

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish

ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

GAL 5:19–21 NJKV

It is one way or the other: you are either led by the Spirit or you are led by the flesh. One offers eternal life, the other, eternal death. The scripture above was written in an effort to clearly point out the differences between works of the flesh as opposed to walking in the Spirit. Similar lists may be found in *Romans* 1:24–32 and *I Corinthians* 6:9–10. James wrote that many of the conflicts and disputes individuals engage in come from the cravings that war within individuals. Flesh attempts to please self. It is self-generated and self-motivated. Adultery and fornication are both examples of works of the flesh, therefore, they must be crucified in order to inherit the Kingdom of God. To make Jesus Christ Lord of your life is to turn from these sinful behaviors. Fornication stems from the Greek word, *porneia*, which is the source of the English word *pornography*. This word includes all illicit sexual activity. Premarital sex, incest, molestation, prostitution, homosexuality, and bestiality are all inclusive in this word. There are many today who refuse to acknowledge the sin of homosexuality; however, the scriptures are clear. It is an abomination before the Lord. One must turn from such a lifestyle to enter into heaven. Believers are under the domain of grace, but in no way can they continue in sin. One is in deception if they call themselves a believer and choose to carry on in the ways of the world. The Holy Spirit in every believer has given each one the ability to overcome works of the flesh. Once the Holy Spirit dwells in an individual, the power to overcome is available. When an individual continues in sin, it is then a choice, a choice that acknowledges God, but refuses to honor Him as God. That choice is a path to eternal damnation. Unbelievers do

not have the capacity to overcome, but believers do! Lewdness is simply excessive behavior, or lack of restraint. The word for *sorcery* stems from the Greek word, *phamakeia* which refers to mind-altering drugs, herbs, or medicines. It also includes works of the occult, witchcraft, and magic.

Desires of the flesh also arise due to dissensions caused by coveting something or someone. Where envy and selfish ambition are found, there will also be every kind of wickedness. It is described by James as being devilish and evil. Desires of the flesh lead people down a path of destruction, and often covetousness is the root. Once it is uprooted, many other issues will be resolved. Therefore, identify the works of the flesh. Many disputes stem from jealousy. Jealousy, if nurtured, will destroy. It is an inward seething, the rage of man, and vanity and vexation of the spirit accompany it according to the writings found in Ecclesiastes. Hence, it brings on bondage. It promises a state of being harassed, troubled, or distressed inwardly. Hatred, another work of the flesh, is the same as being a murderer. That may seem strange, but put in proper context it is easily seen as being opposed to the very nature of God and being perfectly aligned with the very nature of Satan. Those who practice such things do not have eternal life abiding in them. Do not be deceived, the Word of God states this fact. The practice of hatred will rob you of the possibility of heaven, and it will destroy your life on earth, therefore, repent! In the mind of God, it is the same as murder. Jesus laid down His life for us, and we are to follow His pattern. Uncleanliness in the text above, which lists works of the flesh, signifies being impure: physically, spiritually, or morally. It signifies uncleanliness obtained through defilement. Therefore, uncleanliness will also prohibit entering the Kingdom. Those who are unclean will be excluded from God's Kingdom and thus barred from eternal life. One must die to such deeds. Heed the warnings written in Galatians. These are indicative of a lifestyle, not

an isolated incident. The differentiation is important to note. Believers at some time or another may commit one or more of these sins; however, it is not to be a practiced way of life. It is the habitual practice of sin that guarantees spiritual death. The unregenerate will not inherit the Kingdom; therefore, one must crucify the flesh and all of its works!

There are three states of being: the natural man, the carnal man, and the spiritual man. Apostle Paul, in I Corinthians, chapters two and three, outlines the differences between the three states of being. *The natural man* is unregenerate. In other words, he has never dedicated his life to Christ. He is devoid of the Spirit of God. He has no appreciation or understanding of the Gospel. It is nonsense and foolishness to him. He cannot understand it. It is a foreign concept, strange and irrelevant. His attention is given to the things of this world. His loyalty is to his own desires. He is separated from God. The next state of being is that of the *carnal man*. The carnal man is regenerate, saved, but often lives as the unregenerate man. He is childish in his ways. He is considered to be a babe in Christ. He is one who needs milk and cannot handle the meat of God's Word. He ignores many of the warnings of scripture and lives a life given over to envy, strife, and division. He walks in the flesh. He is self-seeking and self-willed. He desires man's approval over the approval of God. He is shallow and unwilling to receive, often learning, but rarely applying practical application of the foundational principles of the Word of God. His focus is on pleasure and self-satisfaction. He has been declared righteous by God in standing, but sometimes chooses to use his body or soul, for unrighteous acts and thoughts. Carnality is to behave in accordance to the nature of the flesh. One who is carnally minded is sensual, controlled by animal appetites, and has potentially rejected the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit as the refiner. The carnal man has given his flesh a governing influence in his life,

and may possibly be in need of a spiritual house cleaning. Finally, there is *the spiritual man*. The spiritual man is regenerate. He has given his life to Christ. He is born again. He has the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit has him. He is a disciple and follower of Christ Jesus. He hears and obeys the direction of the Holy Spirit. He possesses spiritual maturity and it is his nature to respond to the truth, interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men. The spiritual man walks in the Spirit. He is full and overflowing, ready to respond to those around him who are in need. He has reached the fullness of age and can discern spiritual things. His mind is most often set on heavenly things, things of the Spirit, and he readily applies scripture to events or situations that need evaluation. He is still on the road to sanctification, but is fully committed to live a life of holiness.

ONE GREAT ACT

"It was reckoned to him as righteousness" is a phrase frequently associated with Abraham. We hear this statement and think immediately of him. However, there is another man of great faith in the Old Testament whose particular action was "reckoned to him as righteousness." He was a man whose life exemplified one who has set his mind on heavenly things. He has wisdom, understanding, and walks to please God. He manifests fruits of the Spirit. Of the three types listed above, let's look at a man named Phinehas whose actions gained him heavenly accolades and set up blessings and position for his descendants for generations, even into the millennium. He is a perfect example of *the spiritual man* who contended with men of the flesh. Moreover, from Phinehas we can learn a lot about the relevance God places on righteousness. There is a sloppy gospel being pushed today which states that once we are saved, we can do anything, live anyway we want, and the only consequence of that will be that we just simply miss out

on the blessings of God. This is erroneous teaching. Ministers of the Gospel are to teach the difference between clean and unclean, holy and unholy, common and uncommon, and the righteous and the profane. Ministers of the Gospel are to preach the truth in season and out of season, when it is popular, and when it is not. In the Book of Numbers we find the account of Phinehas, a high priest who was willing to draw the line between the acceptable and the unacceptable.

Israel was just about ready to enter into Canaan, the Promised Land, and they were to take possession of it. Israel had spent forty years wandering in the desert. They had been stuck there for a time and a season. It was a time of spiritual cleansing. It was a time when God had gotten them out of the idolatrous nation of Egypt, but now it was time to get the idols of Egypt out of them. It was a time to teach Israel how to once again trust in their God. He was to be their provider. He was to be their protector. He was to be their sustainer. He was to be their only true source. The Israelites were in the land of Moab. They had encamped there and they were about to cross over into Canaan. Balak, king of Moab, feared the Israelites. He knew they had been victorious in battle and they were now on his territory. He knew they had favor from their God. He knew they were powerful and a force to be reckoned with. Because of fear, King Balak, whose name means *“destroyer or emptier”* consulted Balaam, and the two joined forces with the Midianites to destroy the Israelites with a curse. Balaam was a false prophet, a hireling who commercialized his gifts. No more than a mercenary, he served merely for pay. He mixed pagan rituals with the true knowledge of God. Balaam was to curse God’s chosen people, but the nation of Israel was about to be blessed by the Lord; God intervened and prevented the prophet Balaam from cursing His people. This infamous, heathen diviner, a pagan of the worst sort, however, did acknowledge that his gifts were from God. Syncretism, or the mixing

of religious traditions, is just as prevalent today. Balaam chose to use those gifts for evil instead of for good. He referred to the Lord as God, but not as Lord, which indicated he knew God but refused to honor Him as God. Balaam was seized by an angel as his donkey refused to go forward and pressed him against the wall. His foot was squeezed, and there was no way of escape. The donkey spoke to the mad prophet. Balaam was allowed to go forward but was strongly warned to speak only what God told him to speak. Balaam had reservations. He knew God was against this plan.

God’s anger was kindled because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the road as his adversary (Nu 22:22)...

Balaam had tried on four occasions to curse, but God took the curse and turned it into a blessing.

He then came up with a plan to seduce God’s people into sinning against Him, thus bringing about a self-induced curse through disobedience. How utterly typical, if the devil can’t get you one way he’ll come up with another plan. Balaam’s plan was to seduce the Israelites to abandon their wives. He instructed the women of Moab to invite these men to their idolatrous pagan feasts to eat with them. He instructed them to entice the men with their charms. Bewitched by their own lust, they were enticed into whoredom and idolatry.

There is a pattern developed within this story. First, there is an invitation to sin. Beautiful women enticed the Israelite men to come and dine, dine at their tables and eat of the fruit of lust, sexual fornication, and perversion. Second, there is an opportunity to sin. The pagan feasts were off limits to the children of Israel. They knew what was going to take place if they decided to join these alluring temptresses. They were well aware of the idolatrous practices. They knew they would be defiled and their consciences would be debauched. Debauchery is wickedness, corrupt, and decadent. Those who practice it are given over to vile affections.

No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

I CO 10:20–22

Third, there is a path to that sin. Sin is birthed; it grows as it is nourished. It starts with an effortless desire, and as an individual is enticed, that desire soon becomes an action or a way of thinking, and that sinful act then leads to death. Their own desire had seduced them into idolatry, bowing down to pagan idols, joining themselves with Baal-peor. They became unclean and contaminated by sin, and the result was that many of them died because of it. Those who remained faithful to God escaped judgment.

But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when fully grown, gives birth to death. Do not be deceived, my beloved (Jas 1:14 -16).

Fourth, there is a finality to sin. Suffer from sin enough in the flesh and you will be finished with it. Unfortunately, it typically takes some tremendous heartache and disappointment before one is willing to acknowledge his sin and turn from it. There is an invitation to sin, there is an opportunity to sin, there is a path to sin, and there is a finality to sin. Twenty four thousand died in a day! The Apostle Paul tells us that this account was recorded for our own admonition. Beware: walking in the flesh has a cost attached to it!

Then they attached themselves to the Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices offered to the dead; they provoked the Lord to anger with their deeds, and a plague broke out among them. Then Phinehas stood up and interceded, and the

plague was stopped. And that has been reckoned to him as righteousness from generation to generation forever.

Ps 106:28–31

Baal was the Canaanite god of storm and fertility who was worshipped at the cult center of Peor. The Canaanite word for Baal meant “*master lord*” thus Baal–peor meant “*lord of the opening*.” He was one of the chief male deities of the Canaanite pantheon, the son of El who was considered the father of gods and sometimes referred to as the son of Dagon. Dagon was a deity of agriculture and was considered to be the farm god because it was believed that he gave increase to farm, family, field, flocks, and herds. He was identified also with the storm god, Hadad, whose voice was heard in the thunder, thus giving the rain necessary for the success of the crops.

The inhabitants of Canaan were addicted to the worship of Baal. Worship to the false gods would take place on the “high places” or hilltops. They sacrificed animals, joined in ritualistic meals, and participated in licentious dances. They worshiped at a rock altar, and besides that, they had symbols which idolized male fertility. Sacred prostitution involved both male prostitutes and sacred harlots who would join themselves spiritually with demonic spirits masquerading as deity. Israelites who participated in the ritualistic worship had also made an agreement with Baal of Peor, simply through their participation. They ate sacrifices offered to the dead, provoked the Lord to anger with their deeds, and joined in sexual immorality with the women of Moab. They joined their pagan practices, thus yoking themselves with a false god and violating the first commandment.

You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you. You have seen for yourself what the Lord did with regards to

the Baal of Peor—how the Lord your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, while those of you who held fast to the Lord your God are all alive today.

DT 4:2–3

Being yoked means “*to bind two things together*” as in some form of bondage. Individuals who yoked themselves together with these demon deities were actually in bond-service to another master. They committed themselves to a god other than the one true God, Jehovah. Reflective of society today, one can clearly see the detrimental effects of the dangers of pornography, strip clubs, sexually explicit movies or music. Heed the warning. This is in actuality, bowing down to demonic forces and binding oneself to the heavy yoke of bondage. No one can serve two masters! The teachings of Balaam instructed others how to sin: he seduced them to marry Moabite women and commit spiritual adultery, and he perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes as enemy of God (Jas 4:4).

The term *adulterers* in this context, refers to those who “break covenant.” Isaiah and Jeremiah brought forth words of judgment to the people of God because they were in constant spiritual adultery. Phinehas, a servant of the Lord, would defend his God and do the same as these great prophets. He would point out the difference between holy and unholy, clean and unclean. He would preserve the sanctity of the sanctuary. Who was this man Phinehas and what did he do to deserve such recognition from the Lord? Phinehas was the grandson of Aaron, son of Eleazar, and his mother was “one of the daughters of Putiel.” Aaron’s son, Eleazar, had married her, and she bore him a son. Phinehas was an ardent, devoted priest, and a man of great faith, like that of Abraham. Because of Phinehas’s

zeal for the holiness of the Lord, and his devout love for the sanctuary, God made an everlasting covenant with him. His future family line would become high priests, which would extend even into the millennial Kingdom. This promise compromised the basis for the priestly covenant of the tribe of the Levites. We’ve looked at what the Israelites were involved in, now let’s look at what Phinehas did in response to their sinful actions! Phinehas was a man who performed a great act, and it was counted to him as righteousness. He interposed! The word *interposed* means to throw oneself in between, to step in between two parties who are in a disagreement, to intervene or interrupt, and it is a word that denotes mediation between two hostile factions!

Just then one of the Israelites came and brought a Midianite woman into his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the Israelites, while they were weeping at the entrance of the tent of meeting. When Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he got up and left the congregation. Taking a spear in his hand, he went after the Israelite man into the tent, and pierced the two of them, the Israelite and the woman, through the belly. So the plague was stopped among the people of Israel. Nevertheless those that died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.

NU 25:6–9

The people had begun to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. This man, Zimri, had brought into the sanctuary, the temple of his God, a pagan woman with whom he had entered into a defiling relationship. Phinehas pulled out his sword and killed two leaders, one Zimri, who headed the ancestral tribe of the Simeonites, and Cozbi who was the daughter of the head of the Midian household with whom he had been involved. They had entered the Tent of Meetings,

knowing no shame; they came in and paraded their sin in front of the entire congregation. Phinehas would not allow the defilement to be brought into the house of the Lord. He walked past the crowd gathered within the Tent of Meetings, pulled his javelin, and slay them. He became the mediator between an angry God and a disobedient people. He stood on the side of righteousness and exposed sin for the sake of the sanctuary. He defended His God, His God's honor, and His God's name!

Moses had, prior to this incident, ordered the chiefs of the people to be impaled in the sun for allowing the apostasy to occur. Corporate guilt had ensued and God's punishment, then and now, begins with the leadership. Moses imposed punishment where punishment was due, at the very head. Moses heard from the Lord that the very act Phinehas employed had turned His wrath from the Israelite nation. The plague had been stayed. Expiation had taken place, both for the leaders and the congregation. Therefore, God did not consume them in the fire of His wrath. Because of Phinehas and this act which gained him notable recognition before the Lord, the Covenant of Peace was set into motion. His zealous action of love and honor of God and His sanctuary stayed the plague and secured the promise of the priesthood which would remain in his family forever. The Covenant of Peace insured God would supply One Shepherd, His Shepherd from a restored monarchy, who would keep His flock from being destroyed by the wild beasts of the field, hence, deliverance from demonic oppression. He promised blessings from Heaven, along with safety and protection, as part and parcel of the covenant promises. God promised to break the bars of their yoke, and save His people from those who had enslaved them. Spiritually, the Covenant of Peace encompasses a promise of deliverance for His people. The good news is that you can do one thing, just one thing, and it can bring about security and placement for your entire

family line...your children, your grandchildren and your great grandchildren! Choose blessings or curses, life or death. You can perform just one act, by faith, and be given treasures of heaven in this life! One act can bring about favor and blessings for eternity to you and your bloodline to the thousandth generation! Phinehas interposed. He intervened and the Lord took note. As for those who had entered into His sanctuary proudly displaying their own sinful desires, they did not even recognize the error of their ways. Let's look at what the people wanted and loved.

...But they came to Baal-Peor, and consecrated themselves to a thing of shame, and became detestable like the thing they loved (Hos 9:10).

Spiritual adultery promises to the offender that they themselves will become like the false thing they love. The works of the flesh are evident and stand today with the same promised result, death to the body, the soul, and eventually to the spirit itself!

For this you know, that no fornicator, (all sexual immorality) unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God (Eph 5:5 NKJV).

POWER, PASSION, AND PLEASURE

The people participated in the works of the flesh. They wanted power, passion, and pleasure and it cost them their lives. First of all, they wanted power. The people had given in to the direction of Balaam. He had encouraged them to conform. They listened to his teachings by submitting themselves to the pagan practices of the day. "Conform to the world around you, and do your own thing!" It is enticing. It is seductive and alluring. It offers freedom from the authority of God's chosen leadership. It offers freedom from rules and regulations. It gave the Israelites what they had desired within their own hearts. Balaam, in a sense, gave them the okay and encour-

aged them in a path of deception. Secondly, they wanted passion. The rule that they were not to marry foreign women was ignored, as they left the wives of their youth and sought out women who used their charms as a web of destruction. Men were reduced to little more than animals. They were exploiting themselves for pleasure. Sensuality had become their god and they served those demons well. They abandoned all that was right, and sexually joined themselves with devils, parading themselves as deity. They purposefully allowed their physical desires to rule and guide them. Thirdly, they wanted pleasure. The men of Israel, who had just escaped the cursing of Balaam by the sovereign move of God, were now determined to serve another. This decision allowed them to enjoy life as they so desired. They had deified pleasure and, in the process, took on the personalities of their gods. They worshipped and served a false thing, and they themselves became false. This new way of thinking allowed them the opportunity to gain approval for their degraded lives. They wanted praise and popularity and paid for it by acting out the gods who they reflected. They turned from the wives of their youth and sought after those daughters of Moab, thus becoming an abomination in the sight of God.

But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold to the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality (Rev 2:14 NKJV).

This word of the Lord, given to John, the Revelator, was spoken directly to the compromising Church of Pergamos. The call of God: *“Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”* God did not turn His back on the sins of His people then, and He does not turn His back on the sins of the people now. Churches which allow immorality of any kind must heed the warning found written to the Church of Pergamos and repent! The

devil perpetuates the big lie. He tempts individuals and then convinces them that their actions are justified. Do whatever you want, you're saved! Live as you choose, you won't have to answer for it. Apostle Paul used this very situation that the Israelites had put themselves in to teach the Church today. All were baptized into Moses, passing under the same cloud and sea, indicating solidarity with him, or oneness of spirit. All ate the same spiritual food, ate the same spiritual meat, and drank the same spiritual water and that spiritual food and drink was Christ. However, with most of them, God was displeased and many died in the wilderness, having been disqualified from entering the Promised Land. These are examples to the Church today. Just as these Israelites chose to follow the desires of the flesh, they had missed out on the promise. We must be sure to not miss out on the promise by continuing to follow the desires of the flesh. Pay attention to the warnings. The Israelites had every provision. God was with them.

The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night (Ex 13:21).

The Israelites had with them visible manifestations of God's guiding presence. The pillar of a cloud divinely provided them protection from the world. It provided protection from the elements, offering shade and coolness in the heat of the day. God gave them a pillar of fire, and supernaturally provided light and warmth, therefore His guidance and comfort. These people of God had all passed through the sea. They were witnesses to the great dividing of water as they were baptized into the Kingdom. God had given them a safe means of escape from the hand of the enemy. These men of God, who chose to bow down to the pagan culture that had enticed them, were all baptized into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea. Therefore, they had been baptized into the family

of God through the waters of protection. All ate the same spiritual food.

And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as a fine frost on the ground (Ex 16:14 NKJV).

Manna which in Hebrew means “*What is it?*” is a type of Christ, and represented the provision that was part of the covenantal relationship. He would be their food, their sustenance, hence, their daily manna. He would be their water, water from the living rock. He would be their comfort and source of protection in the wilderness. This miraculous provision of God was a food supply that had to be gathered each day, with a double portion given for Sabbath observance, so they would rest from their labor. The Israelites were commanded to keep an omer to show future generations to remember God’s grace in the wilderness. The daily bread was a reminder of the provision of God as well as a sign of the covenant in the wilderness.

...and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me” (I Co 11:24).

These covenant breakers all drank from the Spiritual Rock, and the Spiritual Rock that followed them was Christ Jesus. The people complained; they had been in a dry place. They were ready to stone Moses. Moses himself did not trust in the holiness of God, and struck the rock instead of speaking to it, as he was commanded by God. The Israelites had looked to man as their provider and their source, and God was displeased. Here we see Christ and a record of His redemptive history. He was the source behind manna and water in the wilderness, and offered a supply of water that will never fail. He was, He is, and He shall always be our provider. However, Christian liberty has its limits. Paul taught in I Corinthians, chapter ten, that these examples were given to the Church

as examples; the intent is to remind us what will happen to the disobedient. Paul warns the Church. Do not lust after evil things. Do not become idolaters. Do not commit sexual immorality, as the 23,000 who faced judgment and fell in one day. Do not tempt Christ, as some were also tempted and were destroyed by serpents. Do not complain, as some of them complained and were destroyed by the destroyer. All these things happened and are used as examples so that the Church will learn from past mistakes, and they are used for our own admonition. Idols are non-entities but the demonic powers around them are real. Take heed, as Paul warned the Church: *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (I Co 10:12 NKJV).*

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world (I Jn 2:16).

The sinful nature of flesh must be controlled. You either have control over your flesh, or it has control over you. The eternal consequence of living a carnal life must be understood. The desires of the flesh are hostile toward God. They are displeasing to Him. If you live by the flesh, you will die. The ability to sow to the Spirit must be our focus, as it offers rich rewards. When we sow to the Spirit, we obtain life and peace. Sowing to the Spirit will put to death the deeds of the body. In other words, as we feed our spirit with the Spirit of Truth, we will then grow in power to call our flesh under subjection to the Word of God. Obedience becomes a desire instead of a requirement and our spirit, through the power of the Holy Spirit, overrides the desires of the flesh.

We are to suffer with Him, that we might be glorified with Him, and if we suffer in the flesh then we are done with sin. Feeding on the Word of God will build our spirit. How do we begin to sow to the Spirit? Sowing to the Spirit is accomplished as we first recognize that we are no longer our own.

We belong to Jesus Christ. It is the desires of the flesh that are in direct opposition to the things of the Spirit; therefore one should practice opposing the flesh and consciously strive to follow the Spirit of God. It is the laying down of one's plans, purposes, and wishes that are not in accord with the desires of God. Sowing to the Spirit requires that an individual submit to authority, even if they do not want to. Rules are made and the rebellious spirit refuses to submit. This is totally against God, the author of order. God Himself established proper order and, although at times it may be just a small thing, breaking the rules or refusing to submit is rebellion. Often, in our day to day living, we are tempted to judge one another. Justification, another carnal act, seeps in and before we are fully aware of it, judgmental attitudes have formed a stronghold. Sow to the Spirit and reject the desire to judge another. If we judge, we have elevated ourselves to a place reserved for God alone.

Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before the Lord that they will stand or fall (Ro 14:4)...

Slander is an act of the flesh. Slander and gossip are dangerous works that will invariably lead to ruin. Do not slander or speak against one another; resist the temptation. Satan is the accuser of the brethren, and his seed works on his behalf. Remove these things so that the flesh will be crucified. Move by faith instead of by feelings. They are in direct opposition to one another. Faith stands on the Word, believes the best, thinks of things that are true. Feelings are misleading and can be based on erroneous thoughts, or stem from perceived contention planted by the devil. Faith, however, is God-given and a more trustworthy way. As one moves in faith, the spirit is fed and becomes stronger and stronger. Feed the spirit and believe by faith! Understand that it is not all about you as you practice sowing to the Spirit. Self-centeredness is the root of most dissatisfaction in life. It will keep you from doing the

very things you were created to do. It will cause you to keep your focus on your personal needs and not the needs of others. Satan is very crafty in his plans against you. As you sow to the Spirit, keep your mind focused on truth and goodness and your spirit becomes stronger. A mind focused on earthly things is unspiritual. It is a mind that has already invited danger. The battlefield is in the mind, and it is in that place where the victory is obtained. Therefore, it is a good practice to capture any ungodly thoughts and replace those negative thoughts with truth.

SOWING TO THE SPIRIT

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

PHP 4:8

Love with a genuine love and hate that which is evil. Sowing to the Spirit is practiced as one learns to hate all that is evil and pursue and love all that is good. Also, one grows spiritually as they love their enemies; therefore, the spirit grows as the flesh learns to submit to God's Word.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer (Ro 12:9–12).

Take a position of true humility. As one grows spiritually, there is a position which becomes very apparent in the life of a believer and that is the position of humility. It is, without a doubt, a requisite for those who choose the life

of service in Jesus Christ. Humility is a means of becoming Christ-like. Jesus showed us, through His willingness to take on humanity, the relevance God has placed on this characteristic. It becomes a choice each and every believer has to make in interaction with the Church and with the world. The laying aside of one's own wants, and even needs, for another is a task of a divine nature. Man's flesh is in drastic opposition to doing such a thing. Therefore, as one makes such a choice to be humble, then the spirit man grows and the soulish part of man becomes much weaker, no longer controlling or suppressing the things of the Spirit.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus (Php 2:3–5).

Suffer as Christ suffered for us. No one desires to suffer, however, as we grow spiritually and sow to the Spirit, our spirit becomes stronger, our flesh weaker, thus conforming to the new creature we have gained through Christ Jesus. First, we are to live our lives as unto God, laying aside our own desires and seeking the will and direction that God has for our lives. Then we are to recognize that the call of a believer will invariably involve suffering. Lastly, we are to rejoice in the midst of our suffering. Rejoice that we are finished with sin, rejoice that we are being persecuted for righteousness's sake, and rejoice that we are bearing the marks of Jesus Christ as His bondservants. Suffering is also a test of one's faith, and that faith shows itself more and more genuine, glorifying God in the process. Suffering is truly a part of the believer's life and it is to be embraced and understood, not under the guise of "woe is me" but rather, under the banner of victory. False piety and false humility are tools of the devil used in the Body of Christ. However, a disciple willing to sacrifice for the good of the Gospel is a servant who can truly be used of the Lord to

advance the Good News. The Word of God implicitly tells us that we are to intend to suffer. What a concept! If we truly suffer in the flesh then we are finished with sin. Henceforth, we can live our lives not by our own selfish desires but, instead, by doing the will of the Lord. We are encouraged to take satisfaction in the suffering when we are suffering for doing good and become like Him. Just as Christ was put to death in the flesh, He was made alive in the Spirit, and so the same is true for believers. Suffering is also a means by which our faith is tested and refined. That which is not burned will be usable for the glory of the Lord. Willingly submit to the discipline of the Lord. Submission will lead to spiritual growth and will be a means of sowing to the Spirit. Flesh will always contend with the desire to obey. Flesh will oppose the very nature of God in man to persuade him to be self-serving.

Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline (Heb 12:7)?

Sow to the Spirit and forgive. Begrudging another through unforgiveness will only lead to being outwitted by the devil. It is a tool of Satan that holds individuals back from advancing in the Spirit. It causes them to be inwardly focused instead of heavenly focused. It is a hindrance to spiritual growth and feeds the flesh of a man. Practice forgiveness as a means of growing spiritually. Choose to die to the flesh and forgive! The flesh is perishable, corruptible, useless, and fading away. The spirit is everlasting, eternal, and imperishable.

If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit (Gal 6:8).

MY BODY BROKEN FOR YOU

The Lord's Supper is a spiritual communion. In Revelation, chapter three, Jesus said He was standing at the door knock-

ing, and if one hears His voice and opens the door, He would come in and dine with him. The invitation is available to all who will hear. Communion is a commemoration of liberty. It is a memorial to spiritual Israel being released from the bondage of sin and death, as it reflects the freedom gained through the sacrificial Blood of the Lamb. It is a celebration of taking possession of the land of promise. "This is my body broken for you..." represents His Body, spiritually and sacramentally. Believers are to partake of His flesh, drink of His Blood, and be washed by the living water. The breaking of the bread is a celebration of the sacrifice Jesus made during His crucifixion. It is in that breaking that the efficacy of Christ's death, along with all the benefits of restoration to our souls, is implemented and enjoyed. The broken bread becomes food for our soul. It nourishes and satisfies our hunger. It feeds the inward longing for connection to the risen Savior. Broken and given for our sins, as we eat the bread we become partakers in the process. We join ourselves spiritually through the eating of the feast; eating the paschal lamb, and drinking the Passover wine, or cup of blessings as it is sometimes referred to by the Jewish people. All who participate are, in essence, pledging themselves to the Master of the feast, in all recognition and subjection to Him. Jesus took the cup and gave thanks. He was reminding those within His fellowship to be thankful for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and the preservation of the firstborn. He was also confirming the New Testament which was inaugurated in His Blood. He told those with Him to continue the practice of the Lord's Supper, perpetually acknowledging Him as Master of the feast. Remember the sacrifice. Remember the cost. Remember the Blood. Remember that the Passover and deliverance from Egypt were prophetic signs of Christ and all He was to do for mankind. Each resulted in freedom and liberty from death, sin, and the tyranny of evil.

The command to exercise dominion is qualified by permission to eat animal flesh, but not with the animal's blood. The blood was to be revered because the Bible instructs that there is life in the blood. To eat the spiritual flesh of Jesus is to exercise dominion as a child of God, with all of the authority and inheritance offered through adoption into His heavenly family. To drink His Blood is to partake in His life-giving nature. It is a reminder to consume Him, His Word, the Bread of Life. Believers are to know the Word of God. They are to immerse themselves in it and be washed, refreshed, and rejuvenated by it. Those individuals who seek deliverance should agree to partake of His flesh and eat the Word. Doing so will build, encourage, and transform them. It will direct and lead them away from evil and the destruction it offers. It is the way of healing and restoration.

Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them (Jn 6:54–56).

Communion is, in a sense, a proclamation. It is a time of fellowship with God and is an expression of friendship as one sits down to dine at the table of the King of Glory. But it is also a statement of faith. Partaking in communion is an action by which a profession of faith is made, that His Body has been broken and His Blood has been shed for the remission of our sins. It is an act of agreement. Drinking the cup is participation in the Blood of Christ, and to eat the bread is participation in His Body. It is a spiritual proclamation to the spirit realm that one has an allegiance to Jesus Christ of Nazareth. In this spiritual process, one is acting in relationship to Christ, being joined together in the Body and in the Blood, therefore becoming one with Him. This joining together with Him is also a joining together with His earthly Body, the Church. We are, in essence, being joined one to another as we are being

joined to Him. Although we are many, there is only one Bread and one Body: our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Feasting on the sacrificial Body and Blood of Jesus is a means by which we profess that we are truly His covenant people, invited to partake in all of His covenant promises, and to operate in the authority He has given us. We, as covenant people, have been offered, through the Body and Blood of Jesus, healing, deliverance, wholeness, security, favor, and rescue from dangers and destruction as His Blood flows throughout His Body.

In partaking of the covenant meal, we are also accepting and acknowledging obligations we have as covenant people, therefore we are to be very careful not to take it in an unworthy manner! Covenant, communion, and blood become to us more than word or ritual, they become the power of God manifested in the natural realm as the supernatural realm takes notice. They become the means by which Jesus Christ conducts the work He was sent to do through His servants who carry His name and purposes. They represent a statement in the spirit realm that believers are yoked together with Him, and through which He has given them His power and authority to work on His behalf. Hence, this agreement and association becomes the firm foundation on which we stand as we make any plea to our heavenly Father. They become the confidence we move in as we pray for healing and deliverance on behalf of others. We are in covenant, a binding, solemn agreement that was written in Blood and sealed with a promise, with a Holy God, the only one and true Almighty God. Eating in an unworthy manner is to partake without acknowledging Jesus Christ and the sacrifice He made. It is eating with a sinful heart, rebellious and proud, thus refusing

to turn and repent. Such actions have dire consequences that will manifest in the natural realm.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord...For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died (I Co II: 27–30).

UNHOLY COMMUNION

Ashley had been a faithful member of the church we both attended. She was a nurse by trade. She had also been attending weekly home fellowship Bible studies. However, over time, she became less and less involved. She lost a great deal of weight, her skin became ashen, and her eyes had very dark circles under them. I had been approached by her husband. He was concerned for her life. “I just want my wife back,” he stated. Ashley was severely depressed and had great difficulty accomplishing even menial tasks. She called and confirmed that she was ready for prayer ministry, because all else had failed. My prayer partner and I began meeting with Ashley. She had experienced a very traumatic childhood, and had found her mother dead in the garage. Suicidal thoughts had plagued her much of her life. Ashley was having difficulty as an adult with everyday chores such as preparing dinner. She struggled to please her family and often felt as though she had failed them in some way. She took on the responsibilities of a mother at a very young age and did not have the opportunity to experience simply being a child. Ashley’s uncle covertly practiced Satanism. She spent a good bit of time in his home and He would, at times, have a mock communion during dinner; a connection was starting to emerge as Ashley’s past met with her present. The children pretended it was just a harmless game. Ashley recounted the stories of her past and became overwhelmed with emotion. I asked Ashley if she had ever specifically repented of participating in communion with

Satan. She had not. I discussed with her the importance of communion and the consequences of taking it in an unworthy manner. She suddenly realized that, as she had practiced Catholicism as an adult, she took communion without really ever accepting Jesus into her heart. She was going through the ritual without the relationship. Ashley asked the Lord to forgive her. She desired to be free from the consequences of those actions. The time of deliverance began. Spirits began to manifest and I addressed each one, commanding them out in the name of Jesus. Suddenly, I discerned the spirit of self-pity. It was the last to go. It was also the most difficult and required more wrestling than the others. Ashley had taken this spirit on as her identity. "In the name of Jesus, I command you to go." It was resistant, but I kept on reminding it that it no longer had any authority to stay. Ashley had broken agreement with it and had proclaimed that she was a loved and accepted child of God. For the first time in my ministry, I witnessed a spirit speaking in a false tongue. It was though the spirit of self-pity was saying, "I'll go, but I really don't want to." It marched out, whining as it was on its way. Immediately, she fell to the ground, as though she was dead. When she arose, she began praising God. Joy had returned to her spirit. She was elated. She was free. Ashley knew the voice coming from her mouth was not of God. She was amazed! She testified that whatever was speaking through her was not her own voice, and the voice was not the voice of the Holy Spirit. "It was evil," she readily admitted. Previously, she had struggled with performance-based love and acceptance, and did not feel worthy of the love of Christ. I explained to her that God loved her in her unworthiness, even while she was still a sinner. She made a decision to proclaim the love God had for her, even though she could not feel it, and made the proclamation based on truth written in scripture. After the deliverance, she could feel the love Christ had for her. Twenty-one years of pain, which

had been diagnosed as Fibromyalgia, was gone. Below is an excerpt from her written testimony.

Having been raised Catholic, I had taken communion in the church many times...but had never received salvation. We talked about this at one of our prayer times and Robin referred me to I Cor II:23-30. With this new understanding of God's Word I then prayed for forgiveness, accordingly. In addition, God had given Robin a word of knowledge that as much as I wanted to be out of pain, I was holding on to this "state of existence" as a friend with whom I was familiar. When she spoke this to me I witnessed the truth of what she said in my spirit. To the glory of God, and the surprise of my physician, I am today pain free!!! I praise God for His truth and for His servants who are faithful and obedient to speak it in love!

"Take, eat, drink" is the invitation to dine at the feast with the Master of the house, Jesus Christ. Jesus and His death are foreshadowed in the Old Testament during the Great Exodus. The lamb was set aside for four days. Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth day and was crucified on the fourteenth day. The sacrifice required for the night of Passover was a firstborn lamb. Jesus is the firstborn of all creation, the Creator Himself, and was recognized by John as the Lamb of God. It was to be a male without spot or blemish, as Jesus was without sin and knew no sin. The lamb was required for the household. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The lamb was to be killed in the evening or, best translated, "between two evenings." It was the third hour when they crucified him. The whole assembly was required to kill the lamb. When the crowd was inquired of, they shouted out, "Crucify Him!" The blood was then applied to the door posts and the lentils so the death angel would see and pass over. The Blood of Jesus Christ applied to our lives causes the death angel to also pass over us, allowing entry into life eternal. Communion is a celebration of liberty. It is a proclamation

of faith. It is a memorial to God's sacrifice and an important aspect in understanding the victory accomplished through the work of the Cross, first in the natural, then in the supernatural. Drink the Blood and eat the Body and rejoice in all the freedom already obtained in the sacrificial Lamb of God.

Take time to make a list of your weaknesses. Commit them to the Lord. Ask Him to cleanse you of all unrighteousness. Ask Him to remove from you even the slightest desire to participate in those things that displease Him. Remember, you are in covenant. You are a child of the covenant and you are promised covenant privileges as long as you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is Lord and that He has been raised from the dead. Do not miss your covenant blessings! You are well on your way to the freedom in Christ you have already been given. We are taught in scripture that whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin. If finished with sin, then they will no longer live their lives by human desires, but by the will of God. Are you currently living your life by the will of God or are you still living your life to suit your own desires: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life? As Christians, we have been admonished not to love the world or the things of this world because, in part, they offer only what is sure to pass away and are of no eternal value. We are also to resist anything that would draw us away from our pure devotion to Christ. Have you suffered enough in the flesh to put away those sinful passions once and for all? We must consider ourselves dead to sin. We choose to put away the old nature and no longer present our bodies as servants to sin and unrighteousness, but as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it (Ro 6:1)?

Die to sin! Die to self! Die to idolatry! Drink from the

fountain of living water! Sow to the Spirit and live! Sowing to the Spirit through death of the flesh is a path on which believers must walk. The spirit man grows as one relinquishes his desires to please self. It grows by learning to put the flesh under subjection to the Spirit. Spiritual growth will start with crucifying the flesh. To carry the anointing of God there is a breaking, and it must begin with the things in us that hold us back from receiving the power of God. There are two spiritual forces at work: the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, and the spirit of disobedience, sin and death. Our flesh is perishable, let it go! The works of the flesh lead to disassociation from God and to death. Living according to the flesh alienates one from God, their understanding becomes darkened, and they give themselves over to the sinful nature that leads them away from God. Those who refuse to repent and turn away from their former way of life have a promise of judgment written in the Word of God. Heed the warning, crucify the flesh and live!

THE FINGER OF GOD

But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come to you.

LK 11:20

The age old controversy that faces the Church today is the question, “Can a Christian have a demon?” First of all, can we all acknowledge that only God, and the one claiming to be, knows for sure? Secondly, have you ever know someone with head knowledge of the faith, but not a heart change? Have you ever known a “Christian” who has shopped their way into bankruptcy, or one who is addicted to pornography, or one who has had numerous affairs? Have you ever heard the statement, “I just can’t stop” or “I just cannot help myself.” Yes, some of these issues may stem from works of the flesh, but once it becomes an issue of the inability to choose, there could be an influence other than simply the result of bad decision-making. It could be demonic intervention that needs to be dealt with. Throughout the Gospels we see times when Jesus dealt with the demonic while addressing children of Abraham who, according to scripture, are children of faith. They were in covenant. We also see in scripture that the work of deliverance was first to the Jews, God’s chosen, and then the Gentiles. As Jesus sent the disciples out among

the people, the Word of God indicates that many were healed and delivered. The Apostle Paul readily admits in his letters to the Church in II Corinthians chapter twelve, that the thorn in his flesh was a messenger of Satan sent to torment him. This spirit, which may have been the cause of an infirmity, was used as means by which Paul would be reminded of his total sufficiency in Christ alone, despite the fact that he was chosen by God as one who would bring forth the greatest revelations ever recorded. The Church, therefore, is not impermeable to the hosts of demonic spirits but, instead, is their target. Jesus also reminded us that not everyone who said Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom; therefore, it is safe to assume that there are those who claim to be of the family of God, but are not. Therefore, the Ministry of Deliverance is crucial to the Church, as those who are in deception, may be freed from the error of their ways and loosed from the demonic hosts that have held them hostage.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evil-doer’.

MT 7:21–23

The spirit of man, once he truly accepts Jesus into his heart, is saved. However, the soul of man is in much need of repair from the sin he has encountered along the way. Sin defiles. Scripture is very clear on this issue. Sin opens the way for Satan to gain a “*foothold*” into our lives. We are strongly admonished to give no place to the devil, thus the converse is realistic, that we could possibly, even as Christians, give place to the devil. We are to resist him.

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods. Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits (Gal 4:8–9)?

In his questioning of the saints of God, Paul warns them of the possibility of this very thing. He warns them not to turn back and submit themselves, or enslave themselves again, to spirit beings that are not gods, but simply weak demon spirits. The Word of God states that it is the truth that sets us free. Defeated or oppressed Christians have bought into a lie of the enemy, or have never allowed the truth of God’s Word to take up residency in a certain area of their life, thus giving place to the spirits whose assignment is to destroy the testimony of Jesus in every Christian. What better way to destroy the testimony of Jesus in the life of a Christian than to portray a believer as one who gives honor to the enemy through a lifestyle that displeases the Lord. In II Corinthians, Paul speaks to the Church as a father speaking to his children, warning them again with a question: *what agreement does Christ have with Beliar?* Beliar is an evil spirit, found also in the intertestamental literature, which is identified with Satan. Paul cautions the Church to come out and be separate. This text speaks to setting ourselves apart from evil, just as Jesus cried out as He taught the disciples to pray “*deliver us from evil.*” It also speaks to separating ourselves from idols. It is a given in most churches today that Christians can become involved in idolatry. This alone will open our souls to come under demonic oppression.

Let the oppressed see it and be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive. For the Lord hears the needy, and does not despise His own that are in bonds (Ps 69:32–33)?

In Matthew, chapter twelve, Jesus Christ was accused by the Pharisees that He had cast out demons by power of the devil, and again the same account is recorded in Mark, chapter

three. There is a foundational principle in this record of events for the Ministry of Deliverance. Jesus was being accused of using demonic powers to cast out demons. He used this incident to teach a very important lesson. He taught us that *the devil will not divide his own kingdom*. Jesus asked, “How can Satan cast out Satan?” He goes on to teach us that if Satan rises against himself he cannot stand and his end has come. Therefore, one may conclude that Satan will not be involved in the process of driving out demons from an individual. Casting out demons, however, is for the body of believers as a whole; it is the commission of the Church, a mandate given by Jesus. It is not just for an individual denomination or a directive which was halted after the days of Jesus’ earthly ministry. It is an on-going commission.

We must remember that those who do cast out demons are not doing so under the direction of the devil. It seems strange to even address such an issue. However, Jesus was accused of operating under the direction of Satan, and so will those who are involved in such a ministry. But beware! Jesus also warned His accusers of blasphemy, reminding us today that the process of “*casting out*,” is actually a work of the Holy Spirit! These Pharisees had slandered the Holy Spirit. They had attributed the work of Jesus to the work of the devil. Today, the same warning applies. There are many in the Body of Christ who have slandered the work of the Holy Spirit. There has been an erroneous teaching that says the unpardonable sin is rejection of Jesus. Rejection of Jesus is a decision which will ensure eternal damnation, but also slandering the work of the Holy Spirit will inevitably ensure the same fate. Do not be misled. Blaspheming, which is sin against the Holy Spirit, is the only unpardonable sin. John Wesley held the view that such sin was “the ascribing those miracles to the power of the devil which Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Take heed! Some proponents of this view argue that the unpardon-

able sin is stubborn hatred against God where the state of the soul is in such utter rebellion against God that there is no dispensation for repentance or faith in Jesus Christ. Although there is much debate over this issue, Jesus warned these men that blaspheming the Holy Spirit is the unpardonable sin.

Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him: but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

MT 12:31–32 NKJV).

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

God is supreme and His Spirit rules and reigns above all, and in this we find comfort and peace. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, or Holy Trinity. He has a personality. He is deity as part of the fullness of God. Relationally, He is connected to God the Father, and Jesus, the Son. It is through the work of the Holy Spirit that man manifests the presence of God. However, He is not just the personification or expression of divine power. He precedes from God the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son, and He is sent to perform the works in and through the life of the believer. His responsibilities include regenerating, baptizing, sealing, indwelling and infilling the believer, distributing gifts, and empowering individuals to evangelize the world. The Holy Spirit has divine attributes which are ascribed to Him; attributes such as supreme knowledge, sovereignty, and eternal existence. He too, is all-knowing, ever-present, and all-powerful.

The Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to as the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of God. He has an intellect. He has the role of a comforter and guide. He

instructs, sanctifies, and renews the spirit of man. Attributed to Him are such divine works as creation, and the process of being born again, or the New Birth. He is the revealer of divine truth. He convicts individuals of sin and prompts their heart to change. He is the source of all life. He is responsible for endowing individuals with certain gifts and qualifications to work within the institution of the Church. The Holy Spirit unifies the Body through baptism of His Spirit, with each other and with Christ Jesus. His role is paramount to the existence of the Church itself, as He empowers believers to do the work of the Lord, through the spiritual gifts He distributes. He was ultimately responsible for the birth of the New Testament Church as every believer was baptized into the Body, through the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit at the day of Pentecost. We are carefully warned that we are not to grieve the Spirit of God. We are not to quench the Spirit, and we are not to resist Him. We are, however, to resist the devil and all his ministers who do his bidding.

With the spread of many false beliefs and false religions, the operation of the Holy Spirit becomes quite relevant in the life of a believer. Gifts of the Spirit are a means by which one can detect errors or false doctrines. One such gift is the gift of discerning of spirits. The word, *discern* signifies “to distinguish or separate out, so as to investigate by looking throughout objects or particulars.” It means to have the ability to examine, scrutinize, or to hold to a preliminary judicial examination and question. It is the ability to adequately judge, contend, or decide. Most importantly, it is a gift of divine nature, not of one’s own abilities, but given through the power of the Holy Spirit when He so chooses. Discerning of spirits is the ability to rightly judge the origin from which a voice is proceeding.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom, through the Spirit, to another the word of knowl-

edge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

I CO 12:7–11 NKJV

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

Discerning of spirits is a gift given by the Holy Spirit. The term actually indicates that there is an ability to distinguish between spirits. It is the ability to judge from what utterances one may hear and from whom it may have preceded. Those who possess such a gift can distinguish whether what an individual has heard was of the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, or from a demonic spirit. This gift, therefore, becomes essential in the protection of the Church as a whole and in the life of individuals. It is an essential gift to be in operation during a deliverance session. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God reveals spirits that are often well hidden from the natural, reasoning mind of those who are ministering. Thus, we must be totally dependent upon the Lord. The gift of discernment is the ability, through supernatural power, to detect the realm of the spirits and their activities. Those operating in the gift tend to have the power of spiritual insight. They can discern supernatural revelation of plans and purposes of the enemy and his forces. Often they can see, in the supernatural, a planned attack before it begins. This gift, if nurtured and encouraged, can be extremely vital to the success or failure of operations within a church. It is a gift to be used for the protection of the Body of Christ in identifying evil against the Church. Individuals who operate in the gift of discerning of spirits can identify deceptive and erroneous doctrine. They

can detect an oncoming attack from the enemy. They act as guardians, watchmen who guard the church from demonic lies, and identify the wolves in sheep's clothing who are sent to destroy its foundation. They can identify a false word, a false prophet, or a false doctrine. There are, conversely, some pitfalls to be aware of as one operates within the structure of the local church.

First of all, dangers arise when those with spiritual gifts are not properly trained to function in the gifts for building and edifying the body. Ultimately, every gift of the Holy Spirit is to be used to strengthen and encourage. Training should begin from leadership of the local church, and they themselves must be grounded scripturally in the gifts, as well as having solid knowledge as to how they are to operate within the context of the church. One who has never been trained in the knowledge of the gifts may misunderstand or misuse information provided to the church through spiritual gifts. Frequently when there is misunderstanding as it relates to the practice of gifts, it stems from a lack of knowledge on the part of leadership, or from a congregational member who has not received training based on biblical principles. Also, those who operate in the gifts may have a lifestyle that has not yet been sanctified. The Apostle Paul dealt with the Church of Corinth, which was rich in spiritual gifts, but also full of immature, fleshy Christians who had not been cleansed from some of their sinful ways. Cross-pollination from pagan society had crept into the church. Divisions, factions, sexual immorality, and lawsuits were commonplace, and Paul brought reprimand. He gave them guidelines as to the proper use of the gifts. He explained the unity of the gifts, the diversity of the gifts, and the necessity for the gifts. Rules governing public worship are to be based on the instructions given by Paul throughout New Testament scripture.

Second, abuse of the gifts occurs due to lack of bibli-

cal knowledge and how to accurately apply that knowledge. Application is critical. Hence, anyone who operates in the gifts should be dedicated to constant Bible study and have a devoted prayer life. One who flows in the area of prophecy, but does not have the understanding that all prophecy must be aligned with scripture and will never contradict, could hear a voice other than that of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, be deceived themselves. Those with the gift of discernment must understand it is never a gift used to criticize or bring condemnation, but is to be used to point out distortion and erroneous thought processes, to identify spirits, and to warn or protect. Uses of the gifts should not be quenched, however, proper training is an absolute and it must be rooted and grounded in biblical principles and applied with the proper motives of agape love.

Third, there is a timing issue. Those who operate in the gifts of the Spirit should follow His timing and direction on how to react to the revelation they have received from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God may clearly show an individual a spirit or an area of distortion in another individual; however, there is a proper time when God will have the one moving in the gift of discerning of spirits to act on the knowledge God has given him through His Spirit. Invariably, God will give the opportunity and it will most likely be pursued by the one it is intended to reach. It may be that God is only requiring you to pray for that individual. It may be that God has an appropriate time to work with that individual. However, it is most critical that a person with the gift of discernment does not take it upon himself to share revelation without first being asked by the individual involved, or under the clear leading of the Holy Spirit. God is a God of love and mercy, and the Holy Spirit does not push healing, change, or restoration on anyone.

Fourth, one must remember that it is only through the

power of the Holy Spirit that any gifts can be in operation. God chooses when to share revelation, not man. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that one can discern, and it is only when God chooses to reveal to an individual, that they receive revelation. There are those who flow more readily in some particular area of gifting than another. This is due, in part, to the increase of faith as they choose to be obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit and move on an unction given them. As one chooses to move out in faith and trusts that it is truly the leading of the Lord, there often tends to be more opportunity provided by the Lord. He who is faithful with little is faithful with much. Therefore, it stands to reason that if you choose to yield yourself to the leading of the Spirit, God will open more doors of opportunity. If you refuse to use what the Lord has given you, you may lose it, and more. Just remember, all gifts are given by the Lord, they are His gifts flowing through you, and Paul taught that we are to desire them! Biblical knowledge, training, proper timing, and the leading of the Holy Spirit are essential in appropriately using the gifts, and are an essential part of deliverance ministry as well.

But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil (Heb 5:14).

There is a discernment that is not a gift of the Spirit. It is the knowledge that comes through study of the Word of God. There are different stages of spiritual maturity. In scripture, these stages are sometimes compared to infancy, childhood, and adulthood. As an individual matures in the faith, God gives greater understanding and wisdom as how to appropriately use the knowledge given in a certain situation. Therefore, much discernment can be gleaned from understanding the Holy Bible and practicing the directives given. Those who minister on behalf of others have the responsibility to thoroughly study the Word of God. It is imperative that there is a good foundation of scriptural understanding, due to the

complexity and diversity of situations that prayer ministers may come in contact with. Within the New Testament there are many examples of the usage of the actual gift of discernment. Jesus recognized the voice of Satan as Peter tried to dissuade Him from going to Jerusalem where he would suffer and be killed. Jesus spoke directly to the voice of Satan and commanded him to get behind Him. Paul discerned the python spirit in the girl who had followed them, and in casting out the spirit he and Silas, who was traveling with him, were ultimately thrown into prison for their actions. Zechariah discerned the angel Gabriel and heard the announcement of his firstborn child, John the Baptist. Peter discerned that Ananias, along with Sapphira, his wife, had been filled in their hearts with Satan, and thus chose to lie to the Holy Spirit. Many would argue that these gifts are not for today, however, the Holy Spirit does not change. He, being part of the Trinity, has the same nature and characteristics as God, the Father. Therefore, He is forever the same.

THE GIFT

Those individuals who have the gift of discerning of spirits can see the demon in the eyes of an individual who is under the influence of a demonic spirit. This occurs most frequently within the deliverance session, but is not exclusive to it. They can see the demon on an individual's face, facial expression, or in a body movement. They may sometimes receive a word of knowledge to call forth a demon and can determine the demon's name, function, and characteristic. Those who operate with the gift of discerning of spirits can see or feel an evil presence, a cloud, darkness, or heaviness over a person, place, or group of people. They can sense evil in animals, buildings, areas, cities and even over nations. They can sense good, goodness of spirit, see light in a person, place, or group of people. They can see or detect angels, both good and evil, as well as

sense evil attached to objects. They cannot stay in a place of false worship, like a shrine, or a sight where there has been satanic worship, or worship to false gods (i.e. Masonic Lodges and Shrines, temples of false religions). It will be intensely uncomfortable to them. Also, they can see a hidden sin on the heart on a person (lust, bitterness, envy, hatred). Many times it is not uncommon for them to be given a vision in the supernatural realm to discern a hidden issue in the natural realm.

Characteristics of those who move in the gift of discerning of spirits should start with the premise that they cannot move with a judgmental, critical, or condemning attitude. It is important that those who operate in this gift have a desire to build and edify, and not to tear down or ridicule. They should be led of the Holy Spirit to act upon any discernment they have received, and their actions will vary from individual to individual. They may be led to pray, to cast out at the request of the person involved, or to simply discuss the issue with that individual, by invitation of that particular person. Whatever the direction laid out by the Holy Spirit, the one acting on the discernment must choose to act with the greatest of love and gentleness of spirit. Any disclosure should be done with respect and in privacy. If there has been a revelation of the Holy Spirit regarding an unclean spirit while in the corporate church setting, it would be appropriate to whisper the revelation into the ear of the receiver, but a personal demonic spirit should never be called out from the pulpit unless it is disrupting the entire service (*Lk 4: 34*)

EVIL SPIRITS

Goat-demons	Spirit of a Deep Sleep	Spirit of Whoredom
Familiar Spirits and Ghosts	Spirit of Bondage	Spirit of Slumber
Spirit of Confusion	Spirit of Error	Spirit of Prostitution
Spirit of Fear	Evil Spirits	Spirit of Anti-Christ
Elemental Spirits of the Earth	Spirit of Disobedience	Deaf and Dumb Spirits
Unclean Spirits	Doctrines of Demons	Deceitful Spirits
Spirit of Divination	Seducing Spirits	Spirit of Infirmity
Legion	Tormenting Spirits	Spirit of Heaviness
Python Spirit	Lilith	Azazel
Lying Spirits		

Demons are ministers of Satan, inferior spirit beings who “did not keep their place.” The list above is certainly not exhaustive, but it does give insight as to the vastness of this subject matter. *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary* reads, “Demons are the spiritual agents acting in all idolatry. The idol itself is nothing, but every idol has a demon associated with it which induces idolatry, with its worship and sacrifice...They disseminate errors among men, and seek to seduce believers.” The word *demon* is used in the Book of Acts to signify foreign gods of deities (*Ac 17:18*) but are most commonly referred to as ministers of the devil. They are inferior beings who were generally accepted as gods of the Gentiles and the authors of idolatry. Nevertheless, Paul reminds us that these beings are no gods at all. Rather, they are weak, beggarly spirits that believers should not submit to. They defile, contaminate, and pollute their hosts. Demons are responsible for some diseases and are also referred to throughout the New Testament as unclean spirits. Demons are responsible for directing the words and actions of false prophets. Satan empowers his ministers of darkness to get into the congregation of believers and attempts to lead them astray. It is noteworthy to mention that the mission of a false prophet is to lead believers away

from God, away from worshipping Him, honoring Him, and acknowledging Him. These false prophets, armed with distortion of truth, will even deny the Lord, and they are inspired by the demons which are the force behind them.

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves (Ac 20: 29–30 NKJV).

Demons will not only lead people astray through false prophets, but also through the attack of a slanderous tongue. Deceitful lies are attributed to the work of demons. Just like their leader, the father of lies, they spread lies to destroy one's credibility. They fuel gossip, slander, and malicious talk. They persuade anyone who will listen to their direction, to follow their lead. Demons can be very influential, as the Word of God reads that even the elect will pay attention to deceitful spirits and will actually renounce their faith. What a commentary! However influential, demons are subject to the name of Jesus and are under His authority. Some sicknesses are caused by demonic spirits and are discerned by the power of the Holy Spirit, many are not. Therefore, one must be clearly informed by the Holy Spirit and never presume that a particular sickness is demonic. If the sickness is of a demonic nature, then once the spirit is dealt with, physical healing will follow. It is of utmost importance to refrain from any temptation toward guesswork. Demons can attack individuals who are under covenant. We have looked at two case studies of possession, the case of Legion and the case of the girl with the spirit of divination. Now let's look at a person in the Bible who was considered to be part of the family, a daughter of Abraham, a child of the promise.

Now He was teaching in the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way

raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

LK 13:10–13

He loosed her from the spirit of infirmity! Please take note: this woman was in the synagogue, listening to the teachings of Jesus. She was in covenant. She was *bound* and Jesus *loosed* her. Jesus Himself described her as a daughter of Abraham, thus a child of the promise. She was *bound* and Jesus *loosed* her from the *spirit*. He laid on hands, used His voice and *proclaimed her free* from the spirit which had tormented her for eighteen years. Please do not miss this foundational precept. Jesus passed on His authority, through the use of His name, so the manifest wisdom of God may be made known to the powers and principalities. Did He not say that we would do the very things He did, and even more?

"So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath" (Lk 13:16)?

Demons search for empty, dry places, void of water. Their favorite abodes include deserts, abandoned places, and dry, arid places. Demons prefer being housed in humans because they can project their nature through a willing servant, and thus gain worship through obedience. Their second choice, as we see in the possession of Legion, would be animals. Then lastly, to find rest, they will seek waterless regions. Demons find rest in dry, arid places that are devoid of water. Demons are clearly reminded by the name of Jesus, the Living Water, of their eternal destiny. They may not stay when confronted by His name, but they must leave a spiritual house. Spiritual washing occurs as the Living Water is poured forth, therefore the Word of God, as it is spoken, is also head-to-head combat, and Jesus wins! The truth confronts the lies and the hosts

of darkness can no longer hide, as they have been exposed to the light. Consequently, when the demon spirits leave, that house must not remain empty; it must be filled with the Word of God.

“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but it finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there and the last state is worse than the first.

MT 12:43

Water is used both in the natural sense as well as in a spiritual sense. Spiritual water is used for cleansing one from filthy defilement. Jesus came to perform His mission by the water and the Blood. Both at His baptism and at His crucifixion, the water testified to His humanity and divinity, as He was declared to be Son of God, by the witness of God Himself, during His baptism. It is out of the waters of baptism that we are identified with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Living Water. It is through this identification that we can do what Jesus did. It is only in His Name that demons will submit, if deliverance is to occur. As a demon is cast out, it wanders through waterless regions, seeking a place of rest. Notice, demon spirits look for dry places, devoid of water. Can they return? Demons will return if the spiritual house is *found empty*. A critical principle of deliverance ministry is that the spiritual house must be filled with the truth of God’s Word. It must not be found empty. Remember, it is the truth that will set you free, so fill up to overflowing with the living water of the Word and be washed today!

ELEMENTAL SPIRITS

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods? Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather be known by God, how can you turn back to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits?

GAL 4:8–9

The term *elemental spirits* is two-fold. It refers to basic elements of the universe, whether physical or spiritual. It is first in reference to rudimentary principles, literally, “*things placed in a line or in a row*.” Second, the term refers to the cosmic powers controlling the universe or rudiments of the world: earth, air, fire, and water, as well as rudimentary rules and religious observances. Therefore, when Paul asked the above question, he was referring either to people in some form of bondage to the basic elements of religion, or he was speaking of spirits of the universe. Quite possibly, he was speaking of both, as he alludes to this in the following verses of chapter four. The word *elemental* in Greek, *syoicheion* means “*something orderly in arrangement, a serial, constituent, element, principle, or a rudiment*.” Elements or rudiments are earth, air, fire, and water. Spirits of animism or of the demonic dimension align themselves with ritual, philosophies of human religion and tradition. Hence, elements of the world are actually evil spirits that use the ritual of the law to enslave and condemn. Elementary beginnings, rudiments of Jewish and Gentile religions, material or spiritual elements of the universe are all inclusive in the term *elemental spirits*. (*Religious spirits, spirits of tradition, and spirits of the universe—earth, air, fire and water*).

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world (Col 2:20)?

Paul goes on to list excessive ritualism, asceticism, and angel worship. Angel worship is to worship through love and

obedience to the angelic forces, good or evil. Both are thereby forbidden. Heavenly angels will refute the worship of man. However, in the demonic realm, they require the worship and obedience of man. Remember, Paul said you would be a slave to whatever you obey. Consequently, it is important to look at the truth of the Gospel as it relates to unclean spirits. You were freed from them in Christ Jesus. You can turn back to them. You can enslave yourself to them through submission and obedience. They are the force behind all idolatry. They require your submission through sinful activity. Obedience to them results in a lifestyle that is in fellowship with the world, participation in darkness, and coincides with the desires of the flesh. Elemental spirits are the basis for many cults today. Such cults are rooted in the same principle Paul sternly warned the Church to avoid. Therefore, it is essential to understand the completeness of the term *elemental spirits*. Just as during the life and times of the Apostle Paul, false beliefs have filtered into the church and the truth has become obscure in many sectors of Christianity. Cult participation is prevalent in our culture today. A cult is any religion which denies the deity of Jesus Christ. Christ is victorious and accomplished the work of redemption at Calvary. Now we stand firm and enforce that work through love, which binds it all together. Many cults base their religious ceremonies upon the belief that power comes from the elements of the earth, hence the term elemental spirits originated. This concept stems from a faulty belief system which is rooted in animism.

who say to the tree, 'you are my father,' and to the stone, 'you gave me birth' (Jer 2:26–27).

Animism is the personification of natural forces. The practice of animism attributes conscious life to nature, objects found in nature, or inanimate objects. It is a principle belief system that is found in many religions other than Christianity. It is important to note because this erroneous belief sys-

tem is found permeating within our culture under the guise of innocent participation, and therefore, taking many captive through deception. The unsuspecting may be encouraged to engage in certain activities that are rooted and grounded in the basis of animism. Often, it is presented in such a disguise that one would not be fully aware that they have become involved with an ungodly association, such as those who offer healing through powers other than that of the Holy Spirit. Religions such as Eckancar, Feng Shui, Wicca, New Age, and American Indian are just a few examples of belief systems based on animism.

KING OF KINGS!

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.

COL 1:15–16

The word *firstborn* here refers to rank and not to a created being. This is most often misunderstood and frequently used as a point of contention by those who are members of various cults. Greek language sometimes used the word in reference to chronological order, but most often it was used to refer to preeminence in rank. *Prototokos*, the Greek word used in this text, literally means “*first in time or first in place.*” Here, the actual meaning is clearly in reference to the supremacy of Christ over all created beings. The Church of Corinth suffered with an onslaught of pagan heresies that constantly tried to undermine the deity of Jesus. Paul had taken authority over the false doctrines that were being brought in and pointed out the errors of those beliefs. He taught that in order of rank, there is none higher than Jesus Christ. Also, in Him, through

Him, and by Him, all things were created. All thrones, all dominions, all principalities, and all powers are under His rule. Jesus created the material and spiritual universe for His pleasure and for His glory. Therefore, all spiritual beings must recognize Jesus as Lord, submit to His name, and worship Him as the one true Messiah, even those who have fallen. He is the heir of all things, the Creator of all, manifested of God's very being. He is the perfect representation of God. All authorities, powers and angels have been made subject to Him. Henceforth, they have no choice but to obey Him! Herein lies the authority to cast out demonic spirits. The lesson should ring loud and clear. Demon spirits must obey the commands given in the name of Jesus!

And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

I PE 3:21–22

Since Jesus Christ is ruler over all spirits, powers, principalities, and rulers and we are in Christ, as believers we operate in His name and in His authority. Are we then to submit to spirits that by nature are not really gods at all? Hence, believers have the right and authority to resist the spirits and their leader, the devil, as well as to command and cast them out of others.

FALL FROM HEAVEN

He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning".

LK 10:18

Foundational to the study of deliverance is the spiritual law that *Satan has already been defeated*. His doom was sealed at the Cross and all demons are under his domain, thus are also defeated. It is a travesty to overlook such a weapon in our arsenal of warfare. Jesus so beautifully explained the demise of Satan. Jesus saw the big picture. The seventy disciples had been sent out to surrounding towns to heal the sick, to bring the message of the Kingdom of God, and to do deeds of power in the name of Jesus. When they returned, they returned with great joy. The demons that they had encountered along the way were submissive to the name of Jesus. Jesus saw the downfall of the kingdom of darkness being implemented through His servants and in His name. He confirmed the work that had been accomplished. The keys of the Kingdom had been employed. Through His servants the manifest wisdom of God has been made known to the powers and principalities in the heavenly places. God's will was being accomplished on earth, as it is in heaven. He wanted them to see the bigger picture also. Jesus did not want His servants to rejoice only in the fact that the demons were subject to them, in His name, but also that their name was written. Their names, the names of the followers of Jesus Christ, were written in the record in heaven. What a reason to rejoice!

Foundationally, one must recognize that Satan has at his command many demons sent to accomplish his will. But also know that the Church is a militant force, a mighty foe, with soldiers armed, ready, and able to cast down the forces of darkness. Have you ever cast out a demon? Are you willing to do so if the Holy Spirit asks you to? Stop and tell the Lord you are willing to do so if He so chooses. Ask the Lord to use you in the Ministry of Deliverance. Ask him to teach you to war on behalf of the Kingdom of Light against the kingdom of darkness. Ask the Lord to help you to understand your authority in Him, in His Blood, and in His name. You are

well on your way to becoming a great warrior in this heavenly army! Important elements of deliverance ministry include the requirement that workers in this area have an intimate relationship with Jesus. They should be willing to surrender themselves for the sake of others and they should move in faith, believing the teachings of the Holy Bible. Jesus Christ is the creator of all things, the first of all things, and above all things. Moving in His authority should begin with, and be based upon, the understanding of His position.

When some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preached" (Ac 19:13 NKJV).

There are some fundamentals to the process of deliverance ministry which can be gleaned from scripture. *Do not take it upon yourself to exorcise a demon unless led of the Holy Spirit.* Notice within this particular scripture it says that these Jews had taken it upon themselves. Herein lies one of the most important tenets of the Ministry of Deliverance. Everyone who is a born again believer has the authority to cast out demons, however, not everyone is prepared spiritually, thus opening themselves up to battles they may not be ready to fight. Also, these Jewish exorcists were moving out on the assumption that the demonic forces would yield to them, although they did not personally know Jesus. This erroneous belief got them into trouble. A deliverance minister must *have an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus* before ministering to others. A casual knowledge will not suffice! Fundamentally, before attempting any battle with the forces of darkness on the behalf of yourself or others, you should be sure that you know the name of Jesus and, importantly, believe in the power of His name.

Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I

know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, over powered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Ac 16:14-16

Another critical principle of deliverance ministry is *understanding the power and authority in the use of the name of Jesus* when fighting the forces of evil. The use of the name is an absolute necessity, as is a solid relationship with Jesus. If you truly know Him and the power of His name, the demons will not ask, "and who are you?" One must grasp the fact that demons know who Jesus is and what His life, death and resurrection accomplished: their ultimate demise. Deliverance ministers must also determine to *live a clean life, a life of repentance and prayer.* When entering into spiritual warfare, one should practice repentance and live a life with the goal of holiness in mind. Demons will take advantage of any area of weakness. Deliverance ministers must also be filled and overflowing with the Spirit of God, free of sexual immorality, greed, and idolatry of any form. The devil is the accuser of the brethren and he looks for the opportunity to destroy. The Ministry of Deliverance is a very powerful ministry and it must never be taken lightly. One should evaluate their motives for being involved in such a ministry. Anything less than the pure motive of advancing the Kingdom of God can wreak havoc on the unsuspecting or naive. Satan is the father of demons, and a Minister of Deliverance is essentially kicking his children out of their home. The devil does not turn the other cheek. He is committed to the battle and his plans are to kill, steal, and destroy.

DEMONIZATION

There are two different connotations of the word *demoniac*. The first implies ownership. In other words, it means to be

possessed by the devil. Often, these individuals have willingly submitted their lives to Satan. They have rejected the Gospel and have joined themselves through agreement to the works and ways of the devil. They have turned over their own will and have lost the ability to choose their own course. The second usage of the word implies “*to be under the influence of a demon*” and is used frequently in scripture. The adjective of this word *daimoniodes* signifies “proceeding from, or resembling a demon, demonical, or as seen in the New Testament in this context, specifically in *James 3:15*, as devilish.” It is important to understand the difference: ownership versus influence. One who is under the influence of a demon or unclean spirit will express the characteristic, the mind, and the consciousness of that unclean spirit in some area of their life. For example, one who is under a spirit of self-pity will often be a person who will use self-pity to gain attention, or have a “woe is me” attitude. It is a pervasive thought process, or stronghold in their mind and it is being fueled by the demon of self-pity. They may, however, go to church regularly and live a seemingly normal life. While this form of demonic involvement involves a person being persuaded, manipulated, influenced, oppressed, tormented, or enticed by a demon spirit, possession indicates complete ownership of the individual. In either instance, deliverance must occur for healing, using the truth to replace the lies, the *strongman bound and kicked out, and the stronghold broken*.

Demonization will result in the inability to separate one’s own consciousness, thoughts or actions from the influence of a devil. The identity of oneself begins to emerge with the nature of that particular spirit. There is a compulsion to act out in ways that are inappropriate and, most frequently, feel helpless in controlling certain thoughts or actions. It will result in the inability to resist the following of the influential spirit. If there is a demon present, it will sometimes dissuade

its host from being in the presence of God. There may be an inability to hear or understand the Word of God and, quite frequently, there is a desire to run from the anointing. A person who is demonized will often say they know there is a spirit present. There will sometimes be a disconnect between the moral right or wrong of a particular action. In other words, they may know a particular act is wrong in their head, but see no wrong in their own behavior. They may not sense the very real danger in their participation, or they minimize the detrimental effects they are experiencing as they engage in certain dangerous thoughts or actions. The one demonized will often attempt to justify or blame actions on someone or something other than the sin they have chosen to serve. There can possibly be the loss of purpose, loss of identity, or loss of direction in the life of one who is demonized, although this is not always the case. Deception will be prevalent. They may attempt to conceal thoughts or actions that others deem unacceptable. They will, for a time, be masterful in hiding their destructive mannerisms, thoughts, or actions. They may be quite convincing as they explain away caustic patterns and attitudes. Lies abound!

A person who is demonized may not be capable of understanding a certain fundamental precept of Christianity. They may have *head knowledge* of the principle, but not a *heart knowledge*. They may seem to be blinded to its meaning or feel it does not apply to their situation. They may be able to explain it theologically, but there is something missing within their explanation. There may also be a false sense of security. The demonized may know there are real consequences for others who participate in similar thoughts or behaviors, and not have any fear of the possibility of consequences in their own life. They may exhibit a lack of fear in a given scenario in which it might be quite normal to experience fear, and the reverse may also be true. They may experience great

fear in particular situations where it would not be normal to experience fear. One who is demonized may experience great torment, anxiety, or inner trouble. We see that in the life of King Saul. They may experience bizarre thinking or strange behavior. Frequently, there is excessive guilt over past sin. The demonized person may be unable to know that they are forgiven when they have confessed previous sins and they are determined to carry burdens of shame and remorse. Also, demons will tempt one who is being tormented with unclean thoughts, or unclean words in their mind or on their lips. One who cannot control impure thoughts or foul speech may very well have a demon.

Harming oneself is most assuredly a sign of demonization. Cutters, anorexics, those who purposely try to starve themselves or those who deal with ongoing thoughts of suicide are all *possible examples* of the presence of an unclean spirit. Often, a demonized person will hear voices in their head over which they feel they have no control. They may experience voices telling them to commit suicide, or to harm themselves or family members. Potential suicide victims often report hearing a voice telling them to do it. Those who are severely depressed have sometimes given in to spirits of hopelessness and despair. Chronic lying may be a sign of demonization. Satan is the father of lies and his children mimic his behavior. A demonized individual may admit that they lie even when there is no benefit to doing so. In other words, they lie not only to protect themselves, but also just for the sake of doing it, and they truly feel they cannot help themselves. Slanders may also be demonized for the same reason. Spirits often generate addictive or obsessive behaviors in those who are demonized. Spirits of perversion fuel many sexual dysfunctions. Those who suffer with eating disorders have a very low cure rate in the secular arena because they are, for the most part, a spiritual problem. They cannot see themselves as God

sees them. In some cases, those who are demonized have made a covenant with death.

For he shatters the doors of bronze, and cuts in two the bars of iron. Some were sick through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities endured affliction; they loathed any kind of food, and they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress; he sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction.

Ps 107:17–20

Please be aware, the above are just some possibilities of demonization and the observations cannot be applied to everyone who has experienced the issues listed. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that one can discern demonization. If you are currently under the care of a medical professional, or currently taking prescribed medication, you should in no way be influenced to change from that course of action. The attempt of this writing is to provide a biblical approach to dealing with spiritual issues, and it is highly recommended that one continue with whatever medical or psychological treatment is currently being prescribed. Submission to a devil is a deadly thing! Choose this day whom you will serve! Lay down everything that you put before God. Ask the Lord to show you any idolatry in your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to tear down those altars, and sanctify those places with the fire of His Spirit. Be free! Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom!

TEST THE SPIRITS

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

I JN 4:1

We all hear, at some time or another, an inner voice, a faint whisper, or an inner leading. We must be able to clearly discern where such voices originate. Soulless or carnal individuals may follow a voice which is heard outwardly from another individual, or inwardly, which may be of an ungodly nature. Even the most ardent, mature believer must be cautious to distinguish between the voice of God, a voice spoken out of the soul of man, or a demonic voice. Following a voice other than God's voice can wreak havoc on an individual's life, marriage, career, or family. It can destroy relationships, homes, and churches. Therefore, we must be able to test the spirits, know their origin, and respond accordingly.

The Word of God promises that we, God's sheep, will hear and follow His voice. This is the right and privilege of every true believer. It should be an expected part of fellowship with our Lord and Savior. Satan's objective is to disrupt our communion with God. Therefore, believers are to be strong in

the Word and keenly aware of the schemes and tricks of the enemy. We must be ever-growing in discernment in order to avoid traps and pitfalls that have been set before us which are intended to pull us from the plans and purposes God has for our lives. An important aspect of the Ministry of Deliverance is the use of the gift of discerning of spirits. This gift is fundamental in the proper operation of deliverance. However, discerning between good and evil, which the Bible states is obtained through practical application of the Word of God in given situations, is equally important. The best scenario is a deliverance ministry where both the gift of discerning of spirits and the ability to apply God's Word accurately are present. Knowledge without application is futile. Understanding the origin of a voice and discerning it properly is fundamental to the success of a deliverance session. Where do these voices come from? Voices can have three origins: God, the inner man, or the voice of a demonic nature. The Holy Spirit, the human spirit, or the demonic spirit may sound the same in our hearing. However, the intentions will not be the same.

We are influenced by the voices we hear. God gives us direction. He speaks to us. We fellowship with the Lord spirit-to-spirit. God is spirit and we must commune with Him in spirit and in truth. Believers are to hear. There can be an outward hearing such as an audible voice, inward hearing of words spoken, or just an inward impression. God does speak and believers do hear! Spending time quietly with God and allowing Him to commune with us is quite necessary. It is very difficult to hear when you are always doing the talking. True communication is two-sided therefore, sitting before Him with a heart to simply listen will increase the capacity to hear. We also are influenced by those individuals around us as we hear their voices. Influences of man which are of a fleshly, soulish origin can stem from the voice of another. These voices can flow from personal desire or ambition within

others: family, friends, pastors, advisors, mentors. Soulsh influences can come from the mouth of a carnal or immature prophet. They can come from the pulpit if there is a pastor with a personal agenda working there. They can come from one's own inward desires, and through the voice of a friendly "suggestion." Fleshly or soulsh voices can be as dangerous to the Body of Christ as the demonic, Satan-serving spirits. Words spoken over an individual have power to build up or tear down, to encourage, discourage, or even to destroy. Make no mistake: any leading other than the leading of the Holy Spirit can be a means of bringing destruction, therefore it is of the utmost importance to discern the voices accurately.

There are voices of a demonic dimension. These voices flow from demon spirits who are sent to do Satan's bidding. These voices can appear to have originated within one's own mind. However, they may be sent as a message from Satan and be destructive in nature. They may be directive in nature, intended to pull an individual off course. They may be suggestive with evil intent, foul, unclean, and laced with unholy opinions or suggestions. They may be in direct conflict with the Word of God, with a tempting, alluring, or seducing overtone. They may have a nuance of degradation, condemnation, or defilement. Often, an individual will be fooled into believing that the destructive voices are of his own making. In actuality, Satan sends a demonic voice and the hearer chooses to agree or disagree with that voice. Herein lies the concern. The hearer chooses to believe the condemnation or destructive words sent, therefore giving power to the devil to operate. In opposition, the voice of the Holy Spirit will only convict, never condemn. Suggestions of condemnation will always be rooted in the demonic. There is a voice in our inner man which is comprised of our own thoughts, however, Satan can, and does, attempt to send thoughts or voices to us that are not our own. Hence, there is a battle in the mind which often

comes when we are weak or troubled, and then we are tormented or influenced in some way by the enemy. Satan is not a creator, but the created. Therefore, he is neither omnipresent, omniscient, nor omnipotent, only God has all of these attributes. Therefore, Satan must use his servants to do his bidding; hence, demonic voices are carried forth by demon spirits at the direction of their leader. Consequently, we must test the spirits.

Voices can also stem from the mouth of a false prophet, a servant of Satan. Behind the false prophet is the spirit of the antichrist, which the Bible indicates is among us even now. Both the false prophet and demon spirit have the same objective: to pull one away from God and to steal the worship He so deserves. The voice of the false prophet is subtle and deceptive. Their objective is to lead individuals into covetousness, idolatry, or rebellion. The false prophet is jealous, self-seeking, and ambitious for notoriety. Just as the Pharisees who were reprimanded by Jesus, these men and women are righteous in appearance on the outside, but full of hypocrisy and deceit on the inside. They seek personal gain, promotion, and reward. They elevate themselves through manipulative tactics. They are not God-appointed, but are self-appointed. They exploit those who are willing to listen. They abuse, profit from, and take advantage of anyone who is in their realm of influence. We are instructed clearly in scripture to test the spirits. There are four distinct areas to which one may look in order to identify whether the voice they are hearing is from the Holy Spirit, the flesh of man, or of a demonic nature. Spoken words that are given from another individual can be weighed, and should be weighed, especially if they are those of one claiming the office of a prophet. Evaluation of motive, character, attitude, and spiritual fruit in the life of the speaker will be good assessment tools as each is carefully scrutinized. The motive of a person who claims to have “a word” should

be totally free of manipulation, intimidation, or control of any kind. It should not be given in a threatening or scolding manner. The character of the speaker should be assessed. Are they trustworthy, reliable, and devout? Are they honest to their word, not a gossip or a slanderer? They should have a reputation for being godly and prayerful. One claiming to have “a word from the Lord” should not be haughty, boastful, or arrogant. Their attitude, when giving a particular word, should not be angry, spiteful, or have an underlying tone of revenge. The true prophet of God would not give a word in an attempt to gain or maintain position, to appease, or appeal to the flesh. The speaker of a “true word of God” does not give it for show or out of fear, but under the unction of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the fruit of the Spirit should be seen in the speaker as “the prophetic word” comes forth. There will also be evidence of fruit in the life of the speaker. They will have a witness from the mouths of others as to the operation of their gifts. Prayers are answered with some evidence of such. They will have had a positive impact on those to whom they have ministered. Prophetic words are given to edify, exhort, and comfort. They are meant to build the body, both individually and corporately. They will in no way ever refute scripture but, rather, be reinforced by it. Therefore, all prophetic words must line up with the written Word. They will not violate scriptural guidelines or precepts. They may, however, bring correction, direction, reproof, and admonition. Reproof must also line up with biblical principles and should be dismissed if not. Prophetic words will point to Jesus, His work, and His Word. It will be aligned with the life and the teachings of Jesus, which requires obedience to His commands and faithfulness to His precepts.

...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:10).

True prophetic word will glorify God by revealing His will. The voice of the true prophet, his inspiration and his author-

ity are all from God. His words are not self-generated, but come under the influence of, and are directed by, the power of the Holy Spirit. A true prophet of God is sent by God, called, and commissioned. First, in recognizing their insignificance before God, they have a clear understanding of the importance of their call, and they are completely dependent on Him. The prophet of God will speak only the words that God has given him. He will give *the word* whether those who are to receive it choose to hear and accept it, or choose to ignore and reject it. The prophet of God does not fear man or what man might do to him in response to *the word*. God will hold the prophet accountable. If a word is to be given and he should decide not to give it, the messenger of God would then wear that responsibility. It is the role of the prophet to proclaim, to warn, and to bless. A sentinel, a term sometimes used in scripture for the messenger of God, will often call people to repentance within their message. He will announce the plans of God, the purposes of God, and the judgment of God. He will encourage and lead by biblical standards. He is to also be a watchman over the sanctuary and intercede for individuals, churches, cities, and nations.

Functions of a prophet may also include the impartation or activation of spiritual gifts, confirmation of ministries, or the announcement of anointing. A prophet may be foretelling by means of giving predictions of things that are to come, or they may be forth telling, such as preaching and communicating the mind of God for the present time. God sets the prophet in a particular church with the intent of “equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.” There may be several who hold the office of a prophet and they are to be responsible for the weighing and judging of prophetic word as it comes forth within the church environment. Above all, the general message of all prophets is always repentance. A true prophet of God will lovingly point out trespasses of the people and

encourage them to act in accordance with the Word of God, thus building the Body through truth!

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teaching of demons through the hypocrisy of liars whose conscience are seared with a hot iron (I Ti 4:1).

TRUTH OR LIE

False doctrine is ever-present. Guidelines for what constitutes false doctrine can be found as one looks at the churches in Colossae at the time of Apostle Paul's ministry. They had been influenced by teachings that had forbidden marriage, demanded abstinence from certain foods, and followed profane myths and old wives' tales. They were led by these false doctrines to instill a form of self-righteousness that included self-abasement and excessive ritualism, and gave an inordinate amount of attention to angels, thereby encouraging the worship of heavenly entities. These teachings were inspired by the devil. They were meant to lead believers away. They were teachings that encouraged false spirituality by means of obtaining wisdom through self-effort, such as false asceticism. They were teachings that veered away from the truth, although the teachers of such apostasy would claim divine inspiration. They encouraged the observance of certain festivals, new moons, and the forbiddance of certain food and drink. These regulations were of human origin and had no eternal value associated with them for the control of self-indulgence, which is what they were intended to do. As individuals are working in prayer ministry, it is extremely important to be able to discern faulty belief systems which have been mixed with Christianity.

Heresy in the Greek, signifies “a choice” according to the *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, and is defined as a chosen course of thought and action, hence, one's chosen opinion or tenet.

It is defined as a sect, or party, "...whereas dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims, doctrinal departures from revealed truth, or erroneous views" took root. At the root of a heresy are the stubborn opinions which ignore truth and submit solidly to the prescribed theology instigated by man, overriding the written precepts within the only real source of complete truth, the Holy Bible. Study truth and the false will become very evident.

The same day some Sadducees came to Him, saying there is no resurrection (Mt 22:23)...

SADDUCEES AND PHARISEES

The priests and scribes were students of the Holy Scriptures. They had become divisive in their opinions and two groups ultimately formed: the Sadducees, who were of the priestly order, and the Pharisees, who were from the scribes. The Sadducees were a religious sect which was aristocratic in nature and included high ranking individuals who were named by Zadok, the priest. The high-priestly families adhered only to the written law, thus accepting only the first five books of the Old Testament, and refused the traditions of their fathers. They ferociously opposed the notion of resurrection, emphatically stating that it was not a teaching of Moses, therefore it was to be rejected. Such cultic mindsets would say that the resurrection was a great hoax or they may say that it was merely mythology. Some proclaimed that Jesus returned only in spirit and not in body. Others proposed that He did not die at all. There were accusations that the disciples had simply hallucinated His return or, worse yet, that they had stolen His body from the tomb leaving behind an empty grave. They claimed that the event had been fabricated to obtain profit. There were claims that the disciples went to the wrong tomb and had erroneously concluded that Jesus had risen. Fundamentally, Christian faith has only one acceptable stand, and that is a lit-

eral bodily resurrection from the dead which transpired, Jesus Christ of Nazareth was raised from the dead, historically, both bodily and spiritually, by the supernatural power of God!

The Pharisees were legalists, and sometimes referred to as *separatists*. They had been so-called by their opponents or adversaries due to their desire to come out from the uncleanness of the pagan society that had been so influential in the degradation of the Israelite nation. They were scholarly, well-versed in scripture, and therefore the basic foundation of their desires to be separated from the unclean was a legitimate goal. They realized the dangers of mixing with the society of the day and the things of the world. However, there were other issues in which they did not place appropriate importance. One such issue was that they would cross land and sea to make a convert, only to make him twice as much a son of the devil because of their flagrant exclusion of important matters within the faith. In other words, they could preach it, but had no real power to back up their claims. Healing was low on their list of priorities. They refused the Ministry of Deliverance Jesus had performed, claiming it was of the devil. They encouraged tithing, but did not lift a finger to help those burdened and heavy laden by demonic forces. They looked good, sounded good, and carried the adulation of men; however, Jesus Christ of Nazareth was not impressed. Being separated from uncleanness was not their wrong, but being filled with it was! Jesus said they were filthy inside. They were empty. They were dried up. They had no power and no real authority. Out of jealousy and fear they questioned others who moved under real power of the Holy Spirit. Those under their care surely did not see change come to their helpless situations. Jesus took it upon Himself to declare, "*Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.*" They were bound to numerous rules

and regulations. They were more concerned with tithing than with faith, justice, or mercy.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others (Mt 23:23).

They were full of hypocrisy, greed, self-indulgence, and all kinds of filth. Therefore, it was easier for them to condemn Jesus for the good He was doing than to deal with their own ineffectiveness. Not so hard to imagine, even in some churches today, where healing and deliverance are rebuked for being performed in the sanctuary, on the Sabbath. Remember, Jesus did this very thing, Church! Beware of churches that look good on the outside, but have no real power to bring healing or deliverance to those members in need. They might just be leading you down a very dangerous path!

Judaizers claimed that in addition to having faith in Jesus Christ, one must also keep the Mosaic Law in order to be part of the body of believers. The *Judaizers* were demanding that Titus, a Greek, should be circumcised, therefore circumventing the grace provided through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the purifying effect of His Blood. Mixing the legal demands of the law with the precious gift of grace is just as prevalent today in some arenas. Therefore, one may be faced with the possibility of confronting such faulty mindsets during a deliverance session.

Gnosticism is a belief system that is based on the presumption of a superior capacity for knowledge. Gnosticism had found its way into the churches of the Colossians. Their belief system deified the angelic intermediaries. They gave inordinate attention to powers of the spirit realm. Ascetic practices were represented as being proof of self-discipline instead of a means of obtaining self-discipline, therefore the whole notion of humbling oneself in fasting had been lost on attempts of

displaying false righteousness. Gnostics chose to deny the humanity of Jesus even to the extent of denying the reality of His physical body. Some thought He was possibly an aeon-sort of a spirit. They believed the world was created evil matter and in opposition to the spirit world, which is good. They regarded all spiritual experiences as good, without limitation. In other words, spiritual experiences took on overriding precedence over any other authority. This erroneous belief system had a strong influence over the Colossian Church. Rooted in Gnosticism, the deification of angelic forces and spiritualism permeates our culture today. Speaking to the dead through mediums has become a form of pop culture entertainment as it is leading the unsuspecting down a path of destruction. Psychics, palm reading and Tarot card reading is a fashionable activity for Hollywood elitists and has therefore become a hot topic on the big screen, highly influencing and intriguing our youth. Addressing such distorted thinking is paramount to the success of deliverance ministry. It is not uncommon to find those who are in need of deliverance ministry to over-spiritualize things or place undue emphasis on a particular spiritual experience often giving it greater precedence than the written Word of God.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ (Col 2:8).

Syncretistic thinking, mixing of the religious traditions of the Greek and the Oriental culture, was a function of their erroneous belief system. Pluralism abounded in which many acknowledged that there were more than one or two kinds of ultimate reality. Judaism and Christianity were threatened with the ongoing challenge of avoiding the temptation of mixing their beliefs with the Greek-Persian occult rituals. Heretics denied Jesus, as the Pharisees denied His work. Legalism, rituals, and intellect motivated them. They followed tradition to

the point of opposing the true work of the Holy Spirit. They chose to believe that spiritual experiences were dangerous, and demanded credentials over a demonstration of God's power. In Acts, chapter four, Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin to be persecuted after a lame man was healed. They asked, "*By what power or by what Name did you do this?*" Heretics and Pharisees constantly questioned Jesus's authority His credentials, and His background. They chose to ignore the power of God flowing in and through His life. The heretics refused to acknowledge Jesus and did not take into account His spiritual authority, as He moved in healing, deliverance, and even raising the dead! Most assuredly, deliverance ministers will be attacked from within the church, and it will be from those individuals who are fearful of being exposed as being false. It is therefore imperative for those who are called to be watchful, alert, and informed as to what to look out for. All teaching, preaching, and ministering must proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, that He died, was buried, rose on the third day and sits at the right hand of the Father. Those who go beyond it are those who fail to acknowledge Jesus as the Word of Life, the source of life, and that He came in the flesh, as God incarnate.

Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son (II Jn 9).

BLESSED ASSURANCE

We have the truth in us. God has so graciously provided His Spirit to lead, guide, and direct us into all truth. It is His desire that we be well-informed; however, it is also our responsibility to know the scriptures.

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know Him, because he abides with you, and he will be with you, and he will be in you (Jn 14:16–17).

False teachings will invariably cause a question to rise up in our spirit. The Holy Spirit will prompt us to line up what we are hearing with the written scripture. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that each and every believer be grounded in the Word of God. It is the knowledge of the real that will expose the twisting of the truth and thus, identify what is false, and that revelation will come by the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence, we are to judge all teaching biblically. To do so one must know for himself what the scriptures actually say. Intelligent individuals with eloquent speech may lead the unsuspecting down the wrong path. Moreover, false teachings cater to the intellectual mind because they are generated by what is devilish. Therefore it is imperative to know the truth. We are to reject teaching that does not have a biblical foundation. We are also to move in wise council, but weigh all things with the truth of God's Word. The gifts of the Spirit are also given to assist in the discerning of false teachings, especially the spiritual gift, discerning of spirits, which offers protection to the hearer and enables them to judge from what spirits are speaking, whether they are from the Holy Spirit, a human spirit, or demonic voices. This is a critical gift in the Body of Christ and may be used to prevent misleading influences. The gift can be effective in exposing false teachers, false apostles, and false prophets. Knowledge and revelation gained from scripture will guide us when faced with the potential of hearing false teaching. Scripture will not contradict scripture; therefore a principle found in the Bible will have that same principle exhibited in another portion of scripture. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, the gift of discernment, and the written word of God is our protection from all that is false.

WHO IS WITH US?

There is a tendency to belittle itinerant ministries who work outside of the structure of the local church or those from another background, but Jesus advised His disciples to allow those who were doing the work to continue in it. This is a lesson for the local church today. Jesus clearly encouraged those who were under His teaching not to forbid the work, but to understand that they were all on the same team, working to accomplish the same goals. Remember, those who were working apart from the disciples were using the name of Jesus to accomplish the deliverance. Issued here is another caveat. Individuals, as they minister deliverance, must remember it is of the utmost importance to avoid being burdened unnecessarily by human traditions. These traditions may often be opposed to the work, therefore, it is highly recommended to simply follow the lead of Jesus as He went from town to town, meeting the needs of the people. He gave much credence to the importance of liberty; moreover, His disciples should do the same. Churches oftentimes have become exclusive, thus prohibiting laymen within the congregation the freedom to minister. However, one of the church's main objectives is to train the congregation for the work of the ministry, according to Paul as he wrote to the Church of Ephesians. They should learn this lesson by looking at the teachings of Jesus as He spoke to His disciples concerning the Ministry of Deliverance.

John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us. But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him; for he who is not against us is on our side" (Lk 9:49–50).

Why is this precept an important issue in the Body of Christ? The Church needs more workers in the field, not only sitting on the pews. Many churches have become a breeding ground for dissention and disunity. It is the most frequently used tactic the devil uses to destroy servants of God. Many

times this dissention is no more than a power struggle. It often begins in the leadership and spreads throughout the congregation. There also may be a grass roots effort to remove current leadership, or prohibit some who are not "part of the team" from working. Whatever the surface issues may be, the color of the carpet, the way to collect tithes, or who is going to be this month's greeters, the underlying problem is most frequently a struggle for power. Power struggles leave Jesus out of the picture altogether. They are an attempt to achieve the very things we are to put down, our carnal desires. They are mere flesh-pleasers, gratifying the need to be somebody. Churches which have experienced a repetitive stream of splitting have nestled, somewhere within the head, a power-craving individual or group whose main objective is to rule. Frequently, individuals who leave are blamed for the strife and inner turmoil, however, the splitting goes on and on. Hence, the ones who are the very cause of the split hold tightly to the reins of power. Beware of a church in constant turmoil. Deliverance ministers quite frequently come under attack in this type of environment. Jesus taught that the heart of those who are His will desire to gather in and seek for those who are lost. They will have a heart for sinners and a desire to see them come to the true knowledge of a living Savior. There will also be those whose desire is to scatter. Those who desire to scatter will be the attacker. Watch out keenly for the attacker, therein lies the source of conflict!

Satan's goal against the Church is division. He knows spiritual law. He knows that if a house is divided, it will eventually fall. He plants within the congregation the dividing spirit which operates through constant slander, power struggles, and dissention. This dividing spirit, or spirits, works through willing individuals to cause continuous distrust, discord, and disunity. Such individuals have a kind of charisma working in their favor. They are able to convince others of reasons for

their discontentment. Often, these voices will be influential in having key leaders pushed out of their position. They will divert those who are actually called to be uprooted, and try to substantiate their own personal agendas. They will most likely be well-embraced by the congregation and possibly be in some form of leadership themselves. They will display attitudes of concern for the church, but only in the context of furthering their own desires and agenda. They will often use “words of the Lord” that are not weighed by other prophetic voices, but have been allowed free access to voice their opinions as so-called prophecy. Deliverance ministers must be aware of the environment in which they intend to work. Environments such as these are set up to attack the true servants of God. Heed these warnings as a precautionary measure to avoid undue stress and strain. Environments that nurture the voice of the false prophet will wreak havoc on the ministers of deliverance, and they will become the target for all the problems within that particular church. Know those with whom you labor and know them well! How will one recognize a false prophet? They will have no fruit. They may have all the right words, but no demonstration of power. They may say they are a Christian, but are void of the fruits of the Spirit. They will be the attackers, the slanderers, and the ones who set themselves up to be admired and honored.

THE VOICE OF THE FALSE PROPHET

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves by their fruit you will recognize them (Mt 7:15).

The antichrist spirit is behind the work of a false prophet and the characteristics of a false prophet are carefully outlined in scripture. False prophets reject authority, slander what they don't understand, and cause division. They are grumblers and malcontents. They indulge in their own ungodly

lusts and abandon themselves to Balaam's error for the sake of gain. They are bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage. Often, they will deny the truth of the written scripture and bring in destructive opinions, dissensions, and disunity. Most importantly, they deny Jesus as part of the Godhead.

For certain intruders have stolen in among you, people who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4).

There may indeed be a false word given and the speaker of that word may not necessarily be a false prophet. In such a case, it is important to understand that prophecy is not infallible, and neither is the prophet. A prophet who has had little or no training, or who may be very young in their gifting can potentially give an inaccurate word. A word given may be resonating from the flesh or it may be given at the wrong time, but it is not given maliciously. Conversely, the false prophet operates with malicious intent, and sometimes within the context of the church government.

In the church environment, there are to be two or three prophets who speak, one at a time, and let the others weigh the word. Weighing the word is foundational in scripture and should be followed as a clear directive given by the Apostle Paul. There will be a witness of the Holy Spirit, the word will line up with scripture, and there will be agreement that the word is indeed of the Lord. False words will sometimes be given in a mumbled, confused or incoherent voice, and often come because there is no accountability set in place. They may be words of promise, offering the receiver fortune, fame, or great notoriety. They may be words that encourage the flesh instead of the spirit. There may be directives attached that encourage personal decisions such as marriage or becoming pregnant. When an individual receives such words, they must be care-

fully weighted. Many times such words are merely the flesh of man, and it is wise to have them assessed by those who are proven in their gifting. The spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets, hence, the spiritually mature and discerning should be given the responsibility, and prayerfully placed in the role of judging the word. False words can destroy. They can severely interfere with the flow of the service. They can be disruptive to the message the Lord is conveying through the pastor or teacher. They can change the environment so that the intended tone of the service is changed. A false word will bring confusion and disorder. It will leave those in its hearing feeling somewhat tainted. Consequently, the purpose for which it was sent would be fulfilled.

The fruit of a ministry of the Gospel will always point you toward Jesus! Words without demonstration of power are just words, and the works of our faith will follow us. There will be evidence of the beliefs that one holds. Just as the Scribes and Pharisees had all the right words, their message did not convey evidence of their teachings or fruitfulness. They were proud and oppressive, false in their professions. They knew the scriptures, but ignored the spirit in which they were given. Those who are false will often encourage others to continue in a way that is ungodly. They will encourage wrongdoing and show no signs of remorse. They will refute truth under the guise of “Christian liberty” and therefore promote a continuation in a path of deception. True servants of God, however, will display and promote godliness and humility. They will move on behalf of others, not out of recognition, but out of the needs of others. They will be self-sacrificing and will encourage those around them to walk closely in accordance with scripture, instead of manipulating theology into a loose form of carnal liberty. Those who operate in Kingdom authority will have fruit which represents the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Moreover, they will have a proven track record

of supernatural events that spread the Gospel, and exalt the name of Jesus...good fruit!

For false christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect if that were possible (Mt 24:24).

A prophet who only prophesies good, prosperity, or no fear of judgment is indicative of a false prophet. Prophets are seers. They see what is to come. Therefore, it would be remiss to expect a prophet to give only the good or positive side of things. The role of warning which a prophet plays can help in thwart oncoming attacks and hardships. It is through their prophetic insight that preparations are made, decisions are considered, and efforts to deal with impending situations are implemented.

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. They keep saying to those who despise me, ‘The Lord says: You will have peace. You will have peace.’ And to all who follow the peace, and to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, ‘No harm will come to you’”.

JER 23:16–17

Prophets who use their gift as a means of obtaining power, position, or benefits of any kind are most likely false prophets. Manipulation, domination or intimidation under the guise of prophetic insight is detestable in the eyes of God. It does not go unnoticed. Those who are caught in that trap most likely are aware of their intentions. Therefore, any prophetic word received that has an undertone of control should be completely discarded, as well as those given in an attempt to gain place or position. It is mixing what is precious with the

profane; hence, the unjust use of such a treasured gift in the Body of Christ will bring swift judgment.

...The prophets follow an evil course and use their power unjustly. Both prophet and priest are godless even in my temple I find their wickedness (Jer 23:10–11).

True prophets of the Lord will serve willingly without regard to cost, personal desire, or ambitions, as opposed to false prophets, who serve for personal reward, financial gain, and self-satisfaction. Those who intend to profit from their gifting will invariably suffer harm for doing so.

Its rulers give judgment for a bribe, its priest teach for a price, its prophets give oracles for money; yet they lean upon the Lord and say, "Surely the Lord is with us! No harm shall come upon us" (Mic 3:11).

False prophets will lead individuals away from the Lord. Possibly the most clear-cut indication of a false prophet will be those who attempt to sway people away from worshipping the Lord. It is a dangerous thing to assume someone is false, when they are truly working on behalf of God. Conversely, it is also dangerous to submit to prophets or pastors who encourage wrongdoing by failing to bring correction to sin within the congregation or, worse yet, actually joining in the sin of others. False prophets will present a gospel other than the Gospel Jesus preached. They will stand in opposition to the works He performed. They will intellectualize their own kind of gospel and lead followers away from their devotion to Christ.

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough.

II Co 11:3–4

They encourage wrongdoing. Prophets that are not of God will most assuredly not be encouragers of godly living. Prophets and pastors who put their stamp of approval on sin will answer to a just God. They will not be bringing the truth of the scripture to encourage change in those to whom they minister, but will most likely encourage them to continue in their wrongdoing, dismissing sin or repentance as being irrelevant through their actions.

...They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness (Jer 24:14).

False prophets send themselves. Clearly, the mission of a prophet is a hard road. Scripture indicates the difficulties that come along with the office. One who chooses their own path most likely will not have experienced difficulty or pain. The true prophet of God will encounter great opposition and ridicule. Their directives come from God and they go forth out of love for the Lord and not of their own accord. False prophets go forth out of a desire for power, control, acclaim, attention, and other selfish motives.

I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their messages; I did not speak to them yet they have prophesied (Jer 23:21).

Just as in the days of Jesus, the false prophets attack the true prophets of God. A good indication of who is real and who is false is to simply identify the attacker. False prophets are found within the church setting. They are planted there because Satan attempts to thwart churches' efforts and make them ineffective. Hence, a tool to use in identifying a false prophet in your midst is to simply look at the history of those prophets who were there before. Is there a history of those with a prophetic voice being pushed out or driven out of the church? Has there been a repeated cycle of individuals who gave prophetic word in the past but are now ostracized from the church? False prophets dishearten the righteous falsely. Pastors who allow true prophets of God to be openly attacked

or slandered will bear the weight on their shoulders for the prophetic words that were shut off due to such attacks. Pastors, heed this warning and quickly identify the attacker. Those who are false prophets are often readily accepted because they have learned to say just what people want to hear. They gain advantage through words that sound soothing to the ear. They promise good. They give words which feed the flesh of an individual. They smear whitewash by speaking peace when there is no peace. A false word will have no weight to it, no anointing and, most importantly, it will have no effect. These words are meant to benefit the speaker instead of the hearer, and with the true prophet of God, the reverse is true. A true prophet of God will bring forth words that will benefit the hearer in some way, even in the case of a rebuke given in love. That being said, prophecy is in part and the fullness of the meaning of the spoken word is oftentimes unclear. Quite frequently it is only after an occurrence or happening is looked at in hindsight that one gains insight as to what that word actually meant. Also, it is common to find that a prophetic word may have a deeper meaning associated with it. However, the spirit of the prophet of God will always have the best intentions for the hearer in mind. The words given will not be given to their detriment.

Individuals who try to turn people from the truth are false prophets. They may do so by lack of understanding, but most likely it will be an obvious attempt to encourage those around them to continue in falsehood and sin. True prophets of the Lord cry out “Repent!” It is their theme, their constant message, and that will never change. Prophets of God should have a deep understanding of the written Word of God. Those who claim to be prophets, but do not study or meditate on the word of God, are not ready for their position even if they have truly been called. Prophets who have a shallow or twisted understanding will be unable to point out scriptural truth as

it is written. False prophets will dissuade individuals from seeking truth on their own, but instead encourage them to accept their word on spiritual issues. True prophets, however, will encourage individuals to seek out truth independently, through prayer and study, and allow the prophetic utterances given to be weighed by other prophets. New Testament examples of false prophets are Bar-Jesus and Elymus. Paul, a true apostle of God, responds...

“You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord” (Ac 13:10).

False prophets promote immorality. Those who claim to be a prophet, yet encourage infidelity, fornication, adultery, or have a history of divorces without biblical ground behind them, are to be heavily scrutinized. Those who promote divorce in prayer counseling or pastoral counseling between two believing Christians should also be scrutinized. This should be a red flag. Clearly, those who counsel should do so based solely on biblical precepts and those who stray from those biblical precepts may not be of God!

“Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery and walk in falsehoods” (Jer 23:14).

Those who prophesy lies are doing so because they are false. False prophets mimic their father, who is the father of lies. Therefore, they are to be deemed as false. A true prophet can prophesy an accurate word that does not come into being. There is evidence in scripture that backs up this scenario. True words can be thwarted due to fear, doubt, unbelief, pride, and an array of different blocks and barricades sent to hinder the word from coming forth. Here, however, is the case of prophets who make up lies for their own gain and tenaciously deceives.

“How long? Will this be in the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophecy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart” (Jer 23:26)?

False prophets destroy and scatter the servants of God. Once again those who have a history of destroying reputations through slander and malicious words are simply false prophets. They will run out of the church those with the capability of exposing them as false. They will deceptively stand behind those who are supposed to be the decision makers and lead them into blatantly destroying God's servants. Those who do such things stand on the sidelines and look unaffected by the fallout. However, God knows the intentions of every heart. God is absolutely just and He does not allow sin to go unchecked. He will also start in His house as He brings forth judgment. Often, the deliberate slaughter of God's servants seems to have no consequences, but it does, and will. God reminds us through the words of His true prophets that judgment will come. Therefore, look at the reputations of members of the congregation who are no longer present, those who have been scattered. Have they been defamed or have their reputations been tarnished in some way? Have they been publically discredited? Did it come from the pulpit? Caution, there may be a false prophet in your midst.

Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds that feed my people: You have scattered my flock, driven them away, and not tended to them (Jer 23:2).

The defining characteristic of a false prophet is that they use their power to lead people away from the one and only true God and entice them to follow false gods. They are scatterers. Therefore, if the scattering continues, then one can safely presume that there is a wolf in the house! False prophets serve a false god. They may or may not be part of a local congregation, but their desires are all the same. They seek for themselves power and position, and often obtain it through flattering words of exhortation. They are concerned for their own well-being over the concerns for the congregation. They are most dangerous when they stand behind another who

holds a visible office. They inflict their influence on the pastor or leaders, thereby setting policies of the church which are of an ungodly nature. The plans of God are usurped because leaders have chosen to be persuaded by man instead of by God. The pastor or leader who submits himself to follow the false prophet will have difficulty hearing from the Lord for himself. False prophets in the church setting quite often convince those around them that their opinions have proven true by discrediting others. Therefore, they convince others that they are vital for the growth and vitality of the church. This deception is embraced and the scattering continues! Moreover, the false prophet attempts to destroy the very direction God desires for that particular church. Important ministries are squashed out, prayer ministry cannot get off the ground, enthusiasm wanes, and healings and deliverances are kept under cover in an effort to undermine such ministries, as well as to discredit those with true gifting. Discussions concerning the true prophets of God may come up frequently in council or board meetings in an effort to openly disqualify the true prophet from working in that environment. A good test and measurement is to ask these questions: Are there biblically based directives for weighing the words of a prophet? Are you being encouraged to follow God through those prophetic words? Do they line up with scripture? Are you given information that is to be taken as final authority, without question, or is it implied that you are being rebellious if you do not agree? Are you encouraged to respond in a godly, biblical fashion when issues do arise?

“If there rises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let’s go after other gods’—which you have not known—and let us serve them’, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God

is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul”.

DT 13: 1-3

There are great consequences to walking in error as a priest or prophet. The consequences are real. Some take it upon themselves and claim offices they were not specifically called by God to have and, therefore, they open themselves up to many dangers. They become an adversary to God. They walk in deceit and attempt to deceive those around them. They will suffer great consequences, and the end result may even affect their children. Prophets and priests have a great responsibility and will wear the burden of those they are given to watch over and guard. It is critical that those in ministry understand the importance of handling the things of God with great care, and one must not lose sight of those responsibilities.

Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O Priest. You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night, and I will destroy your mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; I reject you from being a priest to Me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

Hos 4:4-6

Be very careful and do not presume a worker in the harvest field is a false prophet. It is a very dangerous thing to call unholy what God calls holy. However, it is absolutely critical that one understands who is responsible for their souls. Whatever is in the head is also in the Body. Therefore, if there is sin in the leadership, it will permeate throughout the congregation and everyone will be adversely affected. It is a spiritual law or principle that sin within the group will have dire consequences on everyone who is under that leadership. It is also important that a true prophet of God is not labeled

false. If those in church leadership positions have a habit of calling those around them false, they should be forced to step down from that position. If the pastor discredits, slanders, or lies about those who leave his congregation, he too, should be forced to step down. Churches who do not require their leaders to be godly assume the same penalty due those who are actually the offenders. Know the character of those in leadership.

Jesus was presumed to be false. Paul was presumed to be false and so were other sincere servants of God. However, it is important to resist the leading of those whose goal it is to turn you away from the truth written in scripture. Therefore, one need not study what is false, but more importantly, one should study what is real and true and know for themselves what is actually written. Truth will eventually expose the false, even if it is taking place within the confines of disguise, within the walls of the sanctuary.

And I saw three foul spirits like frogs coming from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet. These are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.

REV 16:13-14

THE SPIRIT OF JEZEBEL

The spirit of Jezebel is a good example of the false prophet or prophetess. Is it possible for a spirit to operate within the walls of the sanctuary of God? Current popular theology says no, however, according to John, the Revelator, it is! There is a dispute within the structure of organized Christianity as to whether evil can have an effect on the Christian community or invade a Christian church. Many servants of God believe

wholeheartedly that Christians are completely untouchable by the effects of the devil or his ministers of evil. However, this belief system is proven erroneous throughout scripture as it is clearly written that false teachers and prophets will lead even the elect astray if possible, and that these false teachers are influenced by demonic spirits. Therefore, it is wise to know the means by which the devil will attack. One such way is by the spirit of Jezebel. The Jezebel of the Old Testament and the Jezebel of the New Testament offer insight into the dangers of this spirit. One may assume a connection with the two, although there are no real clear-cut proof of such a correlation, except in having many of the same characteristics. It is most probable that Jezebel of the Old Testament is simply a type used to forewarn the Church of what was to come and therefore confirmed in the New Testament through revelation to the churches in the form of a warning.

As one studies the revelation given to John by God, as he wrote the forth letter sent to the church in Thyatira, he included a commendation for their good works. Good works in their charity, their service, their faith, their patience, and their faithfulness. But there was one thing held against them, tolerating that so-called prophetess, Jezebel. It was a stern admonition. The reprimand was written rebuking the church for allowing "that woman Jezebel" to be endured. The phrase, "that woman" rings with distain; there is a tone of disgust and anger which infers that the situation is absolutely detestable. Certainly, it is of great value for churches and church leaders to acknowledge such a harsh reprimand. The church, while allowing the errors of her ways, would indeed take part in her destruction. It was aiding the defilement and pollution as it took root in a holy place. It was bringing to the table licentiousness, fornication, and the idolatrous nature in which those under her spell were required to bow to her ways, and acknowledge her as superior. It was to eat at the table of spiri-

tual prostitution, thus following the ways of error, and rejecting the true doctrine of God's Word. The Church of Thyatira was known as the church which tolerated sin, and the result led to its ultimate demise.

The characteristics of the "Jezebel" found in Revelation include the fact that she called herself a prophetess. Take note, God did not call her a prophetess. She called herself a prophetess and exalted herself to a position which she was not given by the Lord. She was not presenting herself as worldly but, instead, worked within the religious context of the church. Seducing others into her trap, she encouraged immorality, was tolerated and exalted by leadership, and was actually allowed to teach false doctrine. She claimed superior authority within the governmental structure of the church and had no real opposition. She went uncontested in her position. She also led those under her control into idolatry and sensuality. The cost of tolerating such behavior is great. The letter goes on to state that God will throw her and her captors onto the sick bed. Death and distress will be prevalent, especially to those who have believed the "deep things of Satan." The wicked seducer was accepted as part of the "beloved" while leading them into utter ruin. Jezebel of the Old Testament was infamous in the establishment of the Phoenician worship of false gods. King Ahab, Jezebel's husband, allowed her to usurp his own authority as she took matters into her own hands. This usurping of authority is a characteristic that can be identified within the structure of a church as Jezebel is exposed. However, such usurping of authority is often quite concealed. The Jezebel spirit moves into position through manipulation and seduction, therefore, the false prophetess usually becomes established quite easily.

Jezebel was a persecutor of the real prophets of God. She was the attacker. She was the destroyer. She had four hundred and fifty servants of Baal and four hundred false prophets of

Astarte within her domain. It was her goal to wipe out the voice of the real prophet for fear that she would be exposed as false. Fierce in her attack, she meant to annihilate the true servants of God. The Jezebel spirit will typically be in opposition to those who have some proven gifting in prophecy. She will attack their character and their reputation through slander, false supposition, and lies. She will accuse them of being pretentious in their efforts. She will tear them down through the formal structure under the pretense of caring for the flock. She will use her charm to lure those around her to side with her opinions. Those who do not follow her lead, then become her adversary and next target of elimination.

The spirit of Jezebel often parades herself as the final authority. She will require a bowing “to her will and her ways” or face the consequences. Often she will operate with a weak-minded leader who refuses to acknowledge the wrongs, even when there are blatant errors, using the written Word of God. Malachi warns pastors and shepherds of the importance of carefully guarding scripture and the resultant consequences if those Levitical responsibilities are ignored. One of the most notable attributes of the Jezebel spirit is the ambition for pre-eminence. Jezebel seeks to control. Her name actually means “refuses to cohabit or without cohabitation.” Therefore, anyone who she feels challenges or threatens her position, or her supposed power, will eventually come under scrutiny. She is a formidable foe unless, of course, she is allowed to control or manipulate. If she does not have your support, then she becomes an arch-enemy. Often she will get someone else to do the “dirty work” while she stands back and looks rather innocent. Consequently, there will most likely be a history of church splits or a noticeable turnover in membership. She has the appearance of conformity to the proper structure, while in actuality she is the puppet master behind the controls, and her weak counterpart, one under the influence of an Ahab spirit,

takes on the responsibility of approving her actions, even if the Word of God is compromised in some way. The spirit of Jezebel is rooted in pride and self-exaltation. She will be found in operation among those churches that refuse to deal with issues of pride and control within leadership.

Jezebel takes great pleasure in discrediting others and defames the character of real servants and prophets of God, most frequently through slander, lies, and false accusations. Her desires are solely for personal gain, and will sometimes undermine the system for her financial benefit as well. She operates with an element of surprise and frequently has some foreseeing capability, quite possibly a clairvoyant. However, there is a noteworthy absence of true spiritual authority. There will be no anointing, no weight, and no power on the prophetic word. Often the given word is used to intimidate or threaten the receiver. It is most often given for show, to obtain power, to mimic the real, or to confuse the congregation. This kind of spirit will wreak havoc in a church. Hence, we are to rid the influence of Jezebel from our midst to prevent one man’s sin from affecting the entire congregation. Remember, her followers and their children will suffer great repercussions as warned in Revelation.

There is hope and healing, however, for those held captive to the Jezebel spirit. Those who operate under the spirit are using the name of God to actually oppose the truth of His doctrine. Therefore, the offense is no small thing in the mind of God. Since He has exalted His name and His Word above everything, it is to be treasured and protected within His Church. God gave those who were held captive a chance to repent, but they rejected His offer. There is repentance available for those who move under the Jezebel spirit, as well as for those who have allowed the seductress a place in the household of God as teacher and prophet. When an individual repents, there should be fruit of the change evidenced in

their life, and to those who refuse the gracious offer of God, the time for repentance may expire. Remember, Judas also sought the Lord with tears, his deed had been done, the Savior of the world was on His way to the crucifixion, and death was the fruit of his work. Therefore, time for repentance is in the hands of God and He knows those who will turn from their path of destruction. Those bound by such a spirit must first be willing to acknowledge their sins. They will know if they were truly called of God. They will know if they have decided their own path, thus usurping the plan of God. Those who allow false teachers and false prophets to be in position also know whether they were told by God to promote a certain individual to a position of authority within the church. Many times those in need of deliverance will assign acknowledgment to God for an event in their life, but upon closer investigation, the happening or occurrence which took place was birthed in the midst of sin. The result is hurt and harm to the Body of Christ and defamation to His good name. Henceforth, the seducing, so-called prophetess demands position as teacher or prophet and the congregation simply follows along, falling head first into danger, sickness, and even death. Do not be deceived and refuse to submit to the Jezebel spirit!

Walking in the ways of the Lord and His directly given will, written in scripture, will allow us to hear the leading of the Lord when we need to. Our relationship with God is one of a child in much need of a father's guidance. This is truly His plan for us, therefore, one may safely assume that as we walk, He will lead us into all truth. Turn and run from even the hint of all that is false. We are commanded to test the spirits. Voices can be from the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, or a demonic spirit. False voices, false words, false prophets and false doctrine can create havoc in an individual, a family, or a church. Listen carefully to the words, line them up with scripture, and be prepared with truth on your side.

BOWING TO THE BEAST

...In amazement the whole world followed the beast. They worshipped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it"?

REV 13:3-4

The Ministry of Deliverance is a ministry of discovery. Often, those being ministered to are at a loss as to how and why they act and think the way they do. Quite often, in an effort to bring healing and restoration to the broken, ministers of deliverance encounter a core, fundamental issue that is invariably involved. This is the sin of idolatry. Idolatry can be a sin so protected within the depths of the soul that the prayer recipient might not realize, at least on the surface, that there is a problem of allegiance. They will sometimes choose to focus on the symptoms instead of the cause. Discovery of the cause will unveil deceptions and errors in thinking, thus allowing truth and light to replace that area of darkness, and therefore freeing the individual from the yoke of bondage. When we think of idolatry, we envision bowing down to a golden statue of a fat, little man, an image of a golden calf, or a god or goddess. We tend to think of false religious systems, thus discounting the possibil-

ity of it being present in churchgoers in need of deliverance. We often ignore looking at idolatry as the love of money or food—either of which can actually be our god. Nonetheless, the Bible clearly states that these things—greed, which is the love of money, and gluttony, which is the love of food—are forms of idolatry. The ideals and attitudes that we stubbornly hold onto can also be forms of idolatry.

Idolatry, in the clearest sense of the word, is paying honor or homage to any created thing. It is ascribing power to anyone or anything other than God. It is the intense admiration of, and love of, anyone or anything above the ultimate love reserved for God alone. Those who fall into this trap have chosen to deify, exalt, or worship the creation over the Creator. Proper worship and honor in the heart of a Christian is to give God Almighty the reverence, time, devotion, and sincerity He so deservedly desires from each of us. Pure worship, the giving of our body, soul, spirit, strengths, weaknesses, finances, and total dependence, is how we exalt God. We exalt Him with our praise and thanksgiving. There is a preoccupation in our thoughts and ongoing conversations with the Lord as we dedicate ourselves completely to Him.

The same is true of an individual who is trapped in the sin of idolatry. Thoughts, time, attention, finances, and dedication are given to the thing loved. It is a constant on their agenda. It takes precedence over almost everything. It can be a seemingly good thing, such as children, church work, or religious beliefs. It can be a bad thing, such as exalting self, being abusive, or having an extreme desire for power or position no matter the cost. Idolatry, however dressed, is deadly. It produces death to the body, soul, and spirit. It is an abomination. It defiles and it welcomes, as well as guarantees, imminent bondage. The Ministry of Deliverance must uncover the hidden things, look below the surface, and delve into the issues

which block pure worship of the one and only true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Therefore, watch yourselves, very carefully, so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape whether formed like a man or a woman, or like any animal on the earth or any bird that flies in the air, or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the waters below. And when you look up to the sky and see the sky, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshipping things the Lord your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven.

DT 4:15–19 NIV

What is an idol? An idol is a representation or a symbol of an object of worship. It can be described as “a phantom or likeness.” It is an image that represents a false god. It is a pretender or an imposter. It is without substance and is lifeless. The Apostle Paul called it a vain thing and it was referred to by the Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah, as just a scarecrow. Although idols are nothing at all, there are forces of evil in operation behind them. These forces are demons which are sent to pull you away from the faith, enticing you into sin and blinding you from the truth of the Gospel. Demons generate the power drawing anyone whom they can entice away from wholeheartedly following Jesus Christ. Therefore, idolatry is, in a sense, demon worship. Throughout the Bible it is important to note that in each case that a warning is given to stand against idolatry, it is the people of God who are being addressed, not the pagans. What is idolatry? It is bowing or paying homage to anyone or anything that is not God. Man can bow to man. Man is made in the image of God and an idol is made in the image of a man. There is an innate desire to worship God. Those who refuse must then find a substitute.

All men will worship, even those who claim to be atheists. The question is what will they worship? Frequently, men give adulation to other men. It is not uncommon to find men who have in some way idolized other men due to their stature, their position in life, their financial capability, or their mental qualities.

Men can legitimately hold those for whom they have great respect in high esteem. Established positions of authority, such as the position of the President of the United States of America, are frequently honored, and individuals may desire to pay homage in the form of respect, reverence, or deference for that particular position. Men of war are often venerated as heroes worthy of honor. Some may actually pay special homage to individuals due to a certain duty or victory in which they had engaged. Biblically, we see this approach in the scriptures as David bowed to Saul out of respect for his anointed position as King. Difficulty arises when individuals choose to bow to man, as in deifying them by putting them on a pedestal or idolizing them. We also see where homage was withheld out of an individual's respect for God. Mordecai refused to bow to Haman. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow to King Nebuchadnezzar, and Jesus refused to bow to Satan.

Man will sometimes idolize the living, such as superheroes, rock stars, or sports figures. Elvis Presley was considered "the king of rock and roll." Magic Johnson and Princess Diana were well known figures that were idolized. The world mourned at the death of the princess and her life and legacy became a focal point of many who dedicated themselves to her memory. Paying homage to the dead is a form of idolatry, such as seen in ancestral worship, which may entail speaking to the deceased through mediums. This egregious act of speaking to the dead will invariably lead to death. It is written in I Samuel, chapter 28, that King Saul visited the witch of Endor. He had her call Samuel up from the grave and then bowed prostrate on the ground when she explained what he

looked like. "What does he look like?" he asked. An old man wearing a robe is coming up," she said. Then Saul knew it was Samuel. His request was fatal; the result of such a grievous act was his own physical death. Man can bow to others, and they can also bow to false gods. False gods, such as Buddha, Mohammad, the Queen of Heaven, and Greek gods and goddesses are all examples of false gods that require worship. Demons behind these objects are the forces that give them their characteristics.

It is man's fuel for burning (wood); some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it (Isa 44:15).

Men can bow to the desires of sin or the elements of the cosmos, but the force behind those objects of worship is demonic. Physical objects which are deified in the hearts of men become objects of worship and often have powers ascribed to them that are demonically empowered. However, these powers have an appearance of being real because of the demonic influences behind them. Objects of worship may be objects such as trees, stones, rivers, animals, the sun, moon, stars, or constellations. The magi of the days of Jesus worshiped these *elemental spirits* of the universe. Man can bow to the forces of nature such as the earth, air, fire or water, thus ascribing to them the status of deity which is common in witchcraft, New Age religions, and people of certain cultures. Idolatry, or attributing love through devotion and exaltation, can take place as man chooses to bow to ideals or mental qualities, such as humanism. These thought processes become exalted above the written Word of God. They take on precedence and are given more relevance than the Bible and the truth found within it. Often, these types of idols are difficult to deal with in prayer ministry because they have been accepted as the highest forms of intellectual capacity. Intellectualism, humanism, philosophy, and religion

practiced in a syncretistic fashion, can all become idolatrous mindsets fueled by demonic spirits that presume to be most ideologically exalted above truth. Man can also bow to, worship, or ascribe devotion to abstractions such as legalism, justice, religiosity, and good deeds. These idolatrous concepts are sometimes difficult to identify or accept as demonic, therefore it may be extremely easy to dismiss this chapter. However, one need not look far into any family, church, or organization to find the idols of greed, covetousness, gluttony, or religiosity. Greed or covetousness is the desire to have more, or to lust after something. It can be greediness for material possessions, or it may be a desire to have what is not rightfully belonging to that individual, such as gifting, attributes, or position. Whatever the object of desire, greediness is idolatry. It is often the root of envy, jealousy and dissention, characteristics which believers are instructed to put to death.

The love of money is another form of idolatry. That is not to say that one should not fully respect the uses and benefits of financial prosperity, but it is to acknowledge that the love of it will bring one to ruin. Rapacious individuals will sacrifice anything for the sake of gain, thus it is the love of it that rises to challenge devotion to God. Money becomes the master to those who love it, and it takes on a life of its own as an individual gives up time with family, time with God, and time with friends to run after it. It is a poison to love it. The avaricious will seek it with a passion, and it is that passion that stands in the path of pure devotion to God. Its treasures will come to naught, and the eternal impact will be devastation. You will love one master and hate the other; therefore you cannot serve God and Mammon.

TREASURES OF THE HEART

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth

and rust can destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

MT 6:19–21

Idols have demons operating behind them. The Word of God states that idols are nothing at all, but behind them are demons which are being worshipped. Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, told them emphatically that they could not serve both demons and God; these acts of worship are mutually exclusive! One must choose who they will ultimately follow.

No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Or are we trying to provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

I CO 10:20–22

Idols are nothing. They are worthless. Those who make them are worthless, and those who follow them become worthless also. Idols can offer nothing of real value. They have no power. They can perform no deeds or acts. They cannot fill the void one may be seeking as they turn to idolatry. They can, however, deceive individuals into believing they have power and they do so through the operation of the demonic realm in an effort to steal worship belonging to God alone. They are nothing, and the ones who make them or serve them will come to ruin because they will incur the judgment of God.

All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless (Isa 44:9).

Idols are burdensome and heavy. Both the idols and the idolaters will go into captivity. Those who are held captive

in some form of idolatry wear a heavy burden on them. It is a burden of a physical nature as well as a spiritual nature. Aspects of deliverance prayer often include a physical sensation of feeling lighter. Due to the lifting of the spiritual weight, the body actually acknowledges the change.

Bel bows down, Nebo stoops low; their idols are borne by beasts of burden. The images that are carried about are burdensome, a burden for the weary. They stoop and bow down together; unable to rescue the burden, they themselves go into captivity (Isa 46:1–2).

Idols are created images in the mind. The images that we often carry in our minds and our hearts are images set up by the enemy to hold us captive, to weigh us down, and to bind us from accomplishing the will and purpose of God in our lives. Bowing to such forces will hinder moving ahead with God; it will steal our peace and joy; and it will cut off valuable resources and relationships. We are to pull down vain images and futile thinking.

GOING INTO EXILE

Idolatry guarantees bondage. There is, without a doubt, a form of captivity that takes place as one enters into the practice of idolatry. Overwhelmingly, a serving mentality occurs. First, the individual caught in the snare of idolatry believes that the particular thing worshiped is providing them with something they desire. In actuality, they have now become the provider of a service. Hence, idolaters become enslaved, bowing down to the very thing after which they lust or seek.

The idols themselves join their worshipers in exile (Jdg 18:17–18).

Idolatry is the worship of something, and you become like the thing you worship. Those caught in this trap will go into exile or bondage. There is a supernatural principle in which the one who bows down to false things becomes false them-

selves. Idolaters trust in something other than God. They put their faith in things that have no power and, moreover, they become like the very thing they desire. It is important to note, believers are required to worship God. It is in that process that He is reflected in them. Worship God!

But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands but cannot feel, feet but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.

Ps 115:4–7

Idolatry is not only worshiping something more than God, it is also trusting in something or someone more than God. Moses brought the Israelites into the wilderness. He had watched God supernaturally supply food and water. God instructed Moses to command water from the rock, however, Moses proceeded as he had in the past and struck the rock instead of commanding it to yield water. This action was regarded by God as a display of distrust, and that distrust kept Moses from entering the Promised Land. He failed to display the holiness of God by his disobedient act. Who or what are you putting your trust in?

Idolatry is rooted in a spirit of prostitution. The individual in idolatry loves something or someone more than God Almighty. Fidelity to God is to be one with Him. Infidelity to God is to be unfaithful to Him. Spiritually, idolatry is a statement of rejection or rebellion against God. It is a statement that ascribes power to a created thing over the Creator.

They consult a wooden idol and are answered by a stick of wood. A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to their God (Hos 4:10).

Idolatry leads to destruction. No matter what the idol,

seeking after anything or anyone with all of your heart, other than God, is a dangerous path which leads to destruction. We are to put the Lord first in our lives. If He is not first, then something or someone else is. Where have you given place to the Lord? Is He truly first? Any other thing placed before the Lord is idolatry and will lead to separation from God.

You saw with your own eyes what the Lord did at Baal Peor. The Lord your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, but all of you who held fast to the Lord your God are still alive today (Dt 4:3–4).

Idolatry is to trust in and believe a lie. Rooted and grounded in any form of idolatry is trusting in falsehoods. These lies are sown into the ears of those who allow an open door and they will be deceived. Deception is the very opposite of truth, therefore, individuals caught in the trap of deception will invariably be walking in the wrong direction. Money may indeed offer many material goods; however, the love of money will bring one to utter ruin. An idol offers something that is not real, again, because it is a false thing; it cannot produce what it promises. Therefore, lay down any desire or love you have for anything other than God.

They exchanged the truth for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than The Creator—who is forever praised. Amen (Ro 1:25).

The false image offers benefits, but those benefits are superficial. Scripture states the one held in bondage will worship the false image, bow down to it, be warmed by it, and will even pray to it, “Save me!” Satan is the force behind all idolatry and his demons are the instruments he uses to entice, seduce, or lure individuals into spiritual prostitution. Jesus taught some very important lessons in Luke, chapter four, as He went into head-to-head combat with the devil. Watch out for the same tricks Satan used as he tried to tempt Jesus.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS

Jesus was tempted by the king of temptation, Satan himself. We can learn very important lessons in the study of idolatry when we look at how Jesus had been tried and tested. He was tired. He was hungry. He was no doubt feeling weak. Satan visited him in the time of his physical weakness and demanded that *He prove Himself*. “*If you are,*” Satan jeered. But Satan knew who Jesus was. He knew He had come to save the world. Satan also knew that he had to try to outsmart God in His earthly form if he would ever win this battle. “*If you are who you say that you are*” is a phrase to be well aware of. It is a sign and portent that you are being tempted to bow to the beast. There is never a time or situation where the servants of God must prove themselves. Believers are righteous not of their own accord, but because of the Blood of Jesus. Therefore, they have nothing to prove to anyone or anything. They are in right standing. Also, God promotes, exalts and places into position, not man. Although He will most frequently use man, it will ultimately be by God’s design, and any other attempts would prove futile. Whenever being asked to prove yourself, either by words or actions, the indictment will result in it being of a demonic nature. Heed the warning and resist the temptation.

The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread” (Mt 4:3).

Satan wanted worship and there was no greater worship than to have the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords bow down to the god of this world. Satan offered Jesus a deal, a kind of covenant, with conditions and promises. The covenant had a condition: if Jesus would only worship him, then he would give Jesus world dominion. It would not require suffering upon a bloody Cross. It would not require being rejected by His own people, being spat upon, beaten or forced to carry a Cross through the streets like a common criminal.

Jesus would avoid being rejected and abandoned by His closest friends and confidants, His students. He would avoid being persecuted by those of His own house, the religious leaders, and the heads of the sanctuary. He would avoid the thorns of a mocking crown. Satan was offering Jesus all the authority he had been given through the fall of man, if only he would bow down and worship him. The offer was most assuredly conditional: “*if...then.*” It required an exchange. It would cost Jesus something. A deal with the devil will always cost you something. Is it worth the cost? The promises of immediate gratification of the flesh, avoidance of the pain of the Cross, and a shortcut to world dominion were the “then” part of the covenant. However, it was the “if” part that required Jesus to submit himself to a fallen angel, a created being, the captain and chief of the demonic hosts. Jesus said, “*For it is written.*”

Again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only””.

MT 4:8-10

Encompassed here is another precedent to observe. If there is a time when your worship is being threatened, challenged, competed for, or forced to be stopped, it is of a demonic nature. God was, is, and will always be the only true God worthy of worship. Whenever your worship is being compromised in any way, Satan is behind it! Satan’s tricks and schemes may be effective at distracting individuals from devotion to the Lord, by sending the temptation of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. However, resist such temptations and mark them as originating from demonic influence. Satan has another scheme he whirls against the servants of God. He often

implores individuals to test God or question His holiness. If he cannot get you to question yourself and your standing with God, he’ll try to set up circumstances that will cause you to question God. Why is this happening to me? This question is one that each and every one of us at some time or another will ask, most likely. It might be in the face of a serious sickness, financial ruin, or the death of a loved one. Invariably, there will come a time when Satan will send tormenting spirits to whisper in the ear, “Where is your God now?” The temptation was one that Job faced as he lost his family, his land, his possessions, and even his health. His wife begged him to just curse God and die, but Job, being a faithful and righteous man, would not question the sovereignty of God. Jesus too, in a time of great testing, refused the temptation to put God to the test. Therefore, whenever you are tempted to question God and His capabilities, refrain. We cannot understand the ways of God, because they are higher than our ways, but we can trust in His faithfulness, because it is His nature and character to be trustworthy. The heavens and the earth are His. He is God over the spirits, and He is God over man. Who are we that we should test Him? As the thought, “*If you are really God, then...*” arises, take it captive and actively cast it down. Understand the origin is in the demonic realm, sent to tempt you into sin. Therefore, resist the temptation and refuse to bow to the schemes of the devil.

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the Pinnacle of the temple, ‘saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,”...Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’”’.

MT 4:5-7

Satan most assuredly will offer empty promises, power or

position, and ill-gotten false spiritual authority. He will sow to the inward desires of the flesh that crave to be more and to have more. Jesus refused the offer and so should we. It is an obvious plan when what is offered caters to the desires that are in opposition to eternal reward. Heed the warning and resist those things that exalt and give place of honor and prestige by means of ill-gotten gain. Avoid shortcuts that promise promotion. Things that promote or feed the flesh can be quickly identified as being sent by Satan. Refuse to bow to the beast of this world and reserve for God what is truly His. Worship Him above all that the world may offer.

And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me it all will be yours." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only'" (Lk 4:6–8).

THE SIN OF COMPROMISE

There are indicators of compromise when an individual is being tempted to bow to Satan or his demonic foe. Often, these areas of testing come through the leading of man. Man, therefore, can lead you toward God or away from God. Notice these signs when you've been asked to compromise and use them as a measuring tool in evaluating whether or not you are being pulled away from pure devotion to Christ. One such compromise is the situation when your love for the Lord is being challenged due to circumstances. As mentioned above, Job is a good example of such a test. Satan had discussed with God, in the courtroom of heaven, the potential reaction of Job if he were to be stripped of everything he valued. Satan was sure Job would eventually curse God to His face. He was sure that Job would not love God through the misery he would have to endure. Satan was sure his faithfulness was strong toward God because God had shown him such favor. But

Satan was wrong. Job, stripped of everything, found within himself the ability to acknowledge the greatness of God. He could, with a clear heart and conscience, stand in the face of doubtful friends, a wife who wished death upon him, a body riddled with sores and disease, and still praise His God and acknowledge His sovereignty. Therefore, when situations arise that challenge your love for God, follow the examples of Job, Jesus, and many other biblical figures who refused to turn their love away from God. There is also the temptation to charge God with wrongdoing. When one loses something dear to them; a child, a job, a relationship, or a ministry, there is often the temptation to blame God for the loss. Blaming God always results in a hardness of heart toward Him. That hardness blocks His love from being received. There is a tendency to push Him away, thus giving Satan the opportunity to get a foothold. If you are dealing with a hard heart, if you have blamed God for a situation you have had to endure, simply stop and ask Him to forgive you. Ask Him to remove the hardness of your heart. He will restore!

There will be times when your worship will be challenged in an attempt to test your faith and force you to compromise. Satan tried to bargain with Jesus in an effort to obtain His worship. Moses was also given an option of compromise. Moses and the people of God were forbidden to worship while in Egypt. Moses asked Pharaoh to allow him to go into the desert to worship God. Pharaoh agreed to allow them to worship where they lived in Egypt, but Moses knew this would create chaos. The Egyptians would have stoned them for killing or sacrificing what they esteemed sacred. Moses refused. He went away only to return again with his previous request. Pharaoh then would allow only the men to go, without the women and children, or the livestock, which would therefore result in an incomplete service of worship. Moses refused his offer again. Hence, Pharaoh agreed to allow men, women

and children, but would not allow the livestock. Without the livestock, proper worship would be impossible because there would be no sacrifice to present to the Lord. Each time the issue was worship. Pharaoh was used to stand against God's people and the worship they desired to offer to their God. It was a battle of supernatural proportions and Pharaoh and his most favored magicians could not outperform the servant of God. Moses would eventually win out and be given permission to go into the desert to worship. As the Great Exodus proceeded, it did so with a cost to the enemy, the cost of the firstborn of Egypt; the firstborn of humans and the firstborn of animals. The people of Israel were freed from the house of slavery, but their worship was challenged throughout the long ordeal. Satan uses the same tactics today. Consequently, it is of utmost importance to recognize when your worship is being challenged, threatened or hindered in some way.

Scripture describes other documented cases where individuals' prayer lives were being threatened or hindered, such as in the life of Daniel and his companions. Daniel bowed down to God three times a day, even in light of a decree written by King Nebuchadnezzar. He refused the law of the king, and was determined to follow and serve his King, Jehovah God! Therefore, Daniel would face the lion's den and his comrades would be thrown into the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar commanded that everyone in the land bow down and worship the golden statue. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow to the statue knowing, the penalty would result in death. However, God had a different plan and, despite the destructive sentence, their lives were spared and God honored the refusal to bow down to the image. Is there a time when your prayer life has been compromised in some way? Heed the warning, recognize it as the work of Satan, and refuse to negotiate with your time that has been dedicated to God.

Freedom, when it is being compromised in some way, is

another tactic of the devil. Religious mindsets will sometimes try to force you into their mold instead of what God has made you to be. This should be a red flag. Jesus constantly stood against the mindsets that placed greater emphasis on rules than relationship. Therefore, there is a real potential to be led into such apostasy. The danger is not being able to determine the difference between submission and giving in to some form of idolatry which involves bowing to man, thereby creating false worship. Occasionally, within the religious structure of the church, there is the opportunity to fall into worship of what is false. Submission is to comply or obey a given set of rules, restrictions or guidelines, but there are boundaries. Bowing unrestrictedly to leaders and manmade regulations is to dismiss what is right and true, with no established boundaries, in an effort to fit in, get in, or give in. Resist! Identify the beast in your life. Idolizing a person, position, or thing occurs when the influence of someone or something is so powerful that you are ruled or controlled by their opinions, actions, responses, or the false promises they offer. When these things rule you, or influence the way you live your life, they will often absorb your time, attention, and money beyond what seems to be in your control. This is Satan's subtle way of gaining your adoration. His job is to take what belongs to God any way that he can.

You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak (I Co 12:2).

Money, man, fear, self, self-will, self-pity, self-distan, power, pride, position, or addictions to such things as shopping, eating, drinking, working, socializing, or sex can all be examples of idolatry. To truly obtain liberty, one must tear down the idols of the heart. Ministering to those who are trapped in idolatry begins with identification, then confession and repentance. Once an individual has decided to give up the desire for a false image, the Lord will remove the blocks as the spirits behind them are cast out. These non-entities, or

blocks, are labeled in scripture as being filth, abominations, and detestable things, and Ezekiel envisioned them in the temple of God!

DEMON WORSHIP

So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about (Eze 8:10 KJV).

Demon worship is simply submitting to their leading, obeying their desires, or being influenced by them. It is most difficult to see oneself as a demon worshiper under any scenario, but an individual is enslaved to the thing he or she is serving. If it is sin that we serve and obey then, yes, we are serving forces of the flesh or of a demonic nature, both of which are tremendously displeasing in the sight of God. The husband who bows down before his computer each night in secret as he destroys and defiles the marriage bed, is serving a false image. It is not real, though it can provide physical, mental, and psychological responses which seem beneficial for the time. It is an idol, and it is inspired by demonic powers. Marriage is a sacred covenant before the Lord and Satan desires to destroy everything God sees as holy. This is an obvious case of demon worship. The same is true for those who are in any destructive behavior which is out of their control. Demons lead individuals into destruction, therefore determine to be freed of any influence that stands in opposition to the nature of God or His Word. The Word of God warns us to flee from idolatry. Idolatry is spiritual adultery. It is the worship of something other than God. It is putting a false creation above the creator. Paul vehemently warns the Church to stay far away from idolatry. He confirms to them that these idols, which are really nothing at all, do have demonic forces empowering them and can lead one of the faith away. Therefore, identify the influences of the demonic nature at work. If

with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belong to the world? Paul asked this question to the Church of Colossae. Can believers submit themselves to demonic forces? Emphatically, the answer is yes!

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron (I Ti 4:1-2).

You can submit yourselves to spirits that are not of God. Here we see that submission to spirits that are deceitful will lead those of the faith away from following the faith. Those spirits had gained entry through teachers who were hypocrites and liars. They were false teachers who were teaching under the inspiration of Satan. They were denying the essential doctrines of Christianity and enticing members of the Body to depart from the Gospel that Jesus had taught. Believers are to follow Jesus Christ. Christians follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. They are to follow the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus, which includes preaching the Gospel, caring for those in need, casting out demons, and healing the sick. Be careful and do not follow one who preaches a different Gospel. Giving heed to *seducing spirits* will lead some who were once a part of the faith away from the faith. Note that Paul teaches, in this particular scripture, that those who were of the faith shall depart from the faith and submit themselves to spirits, and believe doctrines that were inspired by devils. These doctrines were given to pull people away from the faith they once acknowledged and accepted as truth, and did so through the expressed influence of the demonic realm.

Idolatry is the worship of something or someone other than God. Idolatry is empowered by demonic forces. You will either serve God or follow the leading of the demons behind the idols to which you submit. This is why we, as Christians,

are warned to stay away from any form of idolatry. God is gracious and slow to anger. There is, however, a limit on what God will do in response to idolatry. The following scripture indicates that the time will come when God will give up those who worship a creation to the lusts of their own hearts. The following scripture in Romans indicates that these whom He chose to give over were without excuse. It is stated in this passage that they knew God, but they did not honor him or give thanks to him. They are referred to as those who were wise in their own eyes, with darkened, senseless minds, fools who exchanged the glory of God for images resembling mortal human beings or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen (Ro 1:24–25).

Yes, we are free as Christians, but Paul is clearly warning Christians not to submit again to the yoke of slavery. *For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery (Gal 5:1).* According to the above scripture one can safely assume it is a choice. It is a decision. The good news of the Gospel gives all believers the opportunity to be freed from any spirits they may have been in association with, and reject their leading and guiding, thus refusing to worship them. The moment one accepts Jesus Christ he is freed, however, he can choose submission to the demonic again. Heed the warning and do not submit to such a burden-bearing yoke.

FORMS OF IDOLATRY

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pain (I Ti 6:10).

Where can the love of money lead those of the faith who give into it? These are, as stated in scripture, senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. Please heed Paul's warning, some have wandered away for the faith. Here, one can presume that they were once part of the faith, and now are not, because they gave into idolatry, the love of money. They bowed down and served the god of mammon.

(Gluttony) Their end is destruction; their god is their belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things (Php 3:19).

It is important to note, just as Peter had set his mind on earthly things, so did those who are described in the scripture above. Some versions of the Bible use the term appetite in place of belly. In either case, those to whom the scripture refers had entered into idolatry and served an idol or a false god, thus exchanging their glory for shame!

Therefore God gave them up to the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen (Ro 1:24–25).

Those who participate in some form of idolatry become slaves to the depraved ideas his or her idol represents. Idolatry will cause a person to follow their carnal desires. It demands that they focus on self. Gratifying the desires of the world, of the flesh, and of the pride of life, becomes the main objective of the day. Thoughts focus on meeting the need. They wash over every aspect of the person's life. Sexual immorality, materialism, or diverse lusts can be symptomatic of this false worship. These things stand against the desires God has for His children. Believers are to follow the desires of God. Purity, commitment and spiritual fidelity are the goals, as is self-sacrifice and death to the desires of the flesh.

For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God (Eph 5:5).

The Greek word for immorality is *porneia* (Strong's #4202) and it is the same root from which we get our English word pornography. Immorality encompasses all sexual sins: adultery, homosexuality, incest, fornication, molestation, bestiality, etc. Sexual sins not only defile others but also defile the body itself. The body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, becomes polluted and unclean. There is a spiritual joining together with another and the body itself takes on unclean spirits. Those who have committed sexual acts out of the context of marriage have opened the door to the devil and given him legal access to invade them with demon spirits, thus becoming defiled! This pollution has been internalized. It is sin that fills the body with degradation, shame, and unclean spirits. The place reserved for the Spirit of God has become desecrated, and therefore, what was to be a place reserved for the Lord to reside, has become a place for the demonic. What a sacrilege! The body is to be reserved for the use and service unto the Lord and therefore a place where He is glorified. Purity is the path to holiness, and immorality is the path to destruction. Satan has attempted to take what God meant for holiness and use it for degradation. Sexual sins, therefore, carry a two-fold consequence. Outwardly one wears the guilt and shame they produce, and inwardly one carries the pollution and filthy spirits that have taken up residency. Therein lies the reason for pagan temple prostitution. This false worship was a way of ensuring slavery upon individuals with demon spirits by way of the unclean and unholy joining together in physical association, thus defiling the body, which is the temple of God.

THE BEASTS WITHIN

When attempting to pinpoint an area of idolatry within one's own life it is advisable to start with self. Idolizing self through self-focus is a form of idolatry. Some examples may include obsessive exercise, diets, or excessive overeating. One may idolize feelings, emotions, "I feel so...therefore I just can't." They may be paralyzed by fear, rejection, anger, or loneliness. Does fear rule you? An individual who is trapped in the sin of idolatry may idolize family, friends, certain individuals, possessions, money, home, or vehicles. They may idolize position and power and do what it takes to get to the top: lie, cheat, steal, or discredit. They may have chosen to idolize their sickness, having an inward desire to remain in that condition. They may idolize sex, even to the point of risking their life for it. An example of this might be putting oneself in a dangerous situation where there may be the threat of disease. Those who idolize self may sometimes reflect pity, fragility, physical abilities or inabilities which gain them excessive attention. Their disease may become their identity, or they may operate in an attitude of constant defeat. Individuals may idolize self. Self-exaltation will ring with "I need, I want, I must have, I desire." They indeed take comfort in the very thing that has become their burden, and the thing they idolize has become their plague. Good news! One can be freed from the burdens of idolatry. First, identify the beast. Look for what is most important in your life, where you spend your time and attention. Second, repent of your association with the devil. Decide to break that connection and announce your decision to another witness. Third, renounce its control in your life. Fourth, command every spirit connected with that false worship to leave in the name of Jesus! Now proclaim your freedom in faith and watch God do the miraculous! Let this be the cry of your heart, "*Create in me a clean heart, oh God!*"

Our sin prevents intimate communication with the Lord.

It brings separation and estrangement. We feel isolated from God. Desires and habitual thoughts create and control our atmosphere of prayer. We become like the thing we worship, therefore it is of the greatest importance to put God in His rightful place in one's life. Anything that exalts itself above God is an idol or stronghold which must be torn down, and recognition and confession is the first step in removing that barrier.

Within the scope of the Ministry of Deliverance, one will almost surely deal with individuals who are in the practice of idolatry. Deception and denial will be at work to cover real root issues. Clearly, it is imperative to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit as one ministers to another who has been trapped in the snare of the devil and is involved in some form of idolatry. Truth will set them free. Breaking down those strongholds of blindness and confusion will allow the truth of God's Word to enter in and shine forth. Idolatry must be confessed and renounced for healing to take place. Gently leading those who have been deceived to a place of truth in scripture will aide in the desire to allow the idolatrous altars within to be torn down, clearing the path to spiritual liberation which is before them!

THE FATHER'S LOVE

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God: if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us.

I JN 4:7-12

The entire Christian faith is based on the spiritual principle that God is love and to truly know Him, we must walk in love. Without love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, not to mention the lost, we cannot know our Heavenly Father, and the opposite is also true. Without love for God, we cannot truly love others. We begin to love others more as we understand the love God Himself has for us. Often, however, due to life's circumstances, the love of God is blocked from us receiving what He has so graciously bestowed upon us. Either by choices we have made, or due to the poor choices of others that have been inflicted upon

us, even as a child, blocks or barricades are frequently constructed. Frequently, in the Ministry of Deliverance, there is a barrage of blocks. These blocks must be removed to allow the flow of God and His love into an individual's life. Those who have been abused or ignored by their earthly father frequently cannot receive the fullness of the love of God. There may be a "head knowledge" of His love, but the fullness of His love does not reach the heart. Therefore, those who have blocks cannot experience the fullness of their inheritance as children of the one and only living God. A critical aspect of deliverance ministry is the ability to convey to others the relentless, unwavering love of God, the Father.

Do you know God as your loving Father? The love a person can receive is often filtered through a distorted image of how he or she was loved and accepted by their own earthly father. This relationship often sets the tone for all other relationships one experiences throughout their lifetime. A poor relationship between father and child establishes a precedent. A pattern of rejection, failure, incompetence, and insignificance takes root. Strong mindsets are formed by years of twisted belief systems that hold people in bondage, making them captive to a faulty way of thinking. These lies of the enemy are played over and over in our minds until they look, sound, and feel like a part of us. Often, we believe it is our own character weaknesses that cause us to behave in certain ways, and sometimes it is. However, there are also spiritual aspects of our makeup that must be addressed in the spirit realm. The answer often lies in intense prayer, but it must first start with foundational truths of who we are as we relate to God, the Father. God, the Father, is perfect in every way. He is the ultimate role model for all earthly fathers to emulate. Our earthly fathers are often weak, broken vessels who are incapable of meeting all of our needs. Thus, we grow up looking for those needs being met in ways that are sometimes destructive, and often out of the

plan our Heavenly Father has set up for us and our lives. A father's role is one of creating us, establishing our identity, protecting, guiding and leading us. He is pivotal in the development of who and what we are to become. There is hope. The good news of the Gospel tells us that once we have been redeemed and adopted into a new family, a heavenly family, we can experience the love of the perfect Father. This transformation takes place as we grasp the truth of the scriptures and replace our old way of thinking by putting on the new man in Christ Jesus that we have become through faith in Him. We must simply have a change of mind. It is through the process of renewing the mind by which an individual can put failures of an earthly father behind him, no longer being held hostage to the disappointments that life has had to offer, or the beliefs Satan has thrown his way! First and foremost, it is critical that a decision is made to forgive the biological father for all his shortcomings. In some cases, this may be a very painful road to walk. No matter how heinously one has been treated or abused, God is waiting with loving arms to show Himself and the fullness of His love. Therefore, with a decision of one's will, the change will begin. Take a walk down the path of ancient truths that has long been established. Set your mind for transformation. Choose to accept the truth and forevermore reject the tormenting voices of the devil!

Once the decision has been made to forgive, the next decision that must be made is to trust. It is very difficult to trust others when there has been a breach in the relationship between father and child. Trust issues stem from broken promises, broken vows, or broken commitments. Recognizing the problem is the first step to rectifying it. Issues of distrust in relationships can stifle, hinder, or stop spiritual growth and development. If distrust has been prevalent in the life of an individual who is seeking healing and deliverance, it may stem from issues of intimacy, or the lack thereof. Intimacy within

any relationship requires honesty and self-disclosure. Satan may be whispering in their ear, “You can’t trust God, just look at your past, therefore you certainly can’t trust people!” Trust is vital to intimacy, and to be intimate with God requires that one trust Him. Decide to trust Him because He is trustworthy. His words are true. He is steadfast and unchanging. People who have had a difficult past frequently find it very difficult to trust, and there is the possibility of fear associated with exposure. From birth, we all share in the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. Other than these two, all other fears are learned behaviors. Fear of intimacy and fear of others can be overcome, but they require a certain amount of vulnerability. However, vulnerability may seem very threatening. Learning to trust is a process, and there are decisions that must be made to expedite the healing. Once again, simply decide to trust God. He is ready and willing to help with just a simple request. The establishment of healthy relationships is therefore critical. Those relationships that are healthy will exhibit validation of one another. If a relationship is one where validation is absent, it will not be edifying and the potential for distrust may arise.

Frequently, due to past circumstances, those in need of deliverance ministry find it very difficult to trust in God, especially after major setbacks or tragedies in life. Sometimes tragedy will become an impetus for withdrawing from God. Henceforth, of those who experience such difficulties, there will be some who will develop a system of relying solely on self. Underlying dependence on self is the issue of pride, and also an inability to trust the Lord for one’s needs, whatever they may be. God requires that His children trust in Him for everything: security, finances, identity, safety, direction, health, and even one’s own death. Trust means to make someone a refuge, and the Word tells us that God is our refuge. Self-protection, self-promotion, and self-preservation are acts

that speak loudly. They confirm a lack of trust in God. God is trustworthy and so are His precepts. In healthy relationships there is an allowance for differences. Differences do not have to be obstacles in a relationship, they can be building blocks. There are many strengths and weaknesses in the best of relationships and it is important to focus on the strengths. Intimacy offers the understanding that one is valued. They are valued emotionally, spiritually, intellectually, and physically in healthy relationships. God offers that value for His children. He establishes them. Our true self image is not determined by the world, the church, and not even our biological family. It is determined by God and God alone. It is established on what He has already said about us in His Word. As an individual determines to trust again, they should start with trusting God and what is written. This is, without a doubt, the biggest hurdle.

It is better to trust in God than put confidence in man (Ps 188:8).

Once a decision has been made to trust, then determine to be your true self. When there has been a breach in the relationship with an earthly father, individuals will quite frequently establish a false identity. They do so because they have not felt loved or accepted. Therefore, as a coping mechanism is birthed, a false identity emerges. False identities or facades can often keep people from the healing process. They are used as ways to protect and disguise the true self, and become a stumbling block in and of themselves. The true self, once uncovered, is the part of an individual where God can, and will, work. It is important as one is learning to uncover the true self, that they be committed to following God, and be connected with those who belong to Him. Connection is essential in the healing process. The local church is a good place to start. Those who project a false image of self must be cautious as they establish connections. It is common to see, in the Ministry of Deliverance, those individuals seeking out

others who will feed the false identity, giving credence to it as being acceptable. Thoughtful investigation and clear discernment will alert ministers to the false identity rather quickly as the prayer sessions take place. Those with a false identity should be encouraged to become who the Lord wants them to be, instead of wearing a persona that they have created. Exposure of the true self must take place in a safe environment, and a safe environment is one where the individual feels no judgment, only the truth presented in love.

Facades, or false identities, are in direct opposition to the plans and purposes for which an individual is created. Therefore, those in need of deliverance ministry must ultimately be willing to let go of what is false. False images of self can be found in those who are perfectionists, those who have found identity in their success, or it may be a false identity with things such as sympathy, self-pity, weakness, sickness, or pride. Whatever the facade, it must be broken down for true healing to take place. False images that are projected are done so as a means of protection, escape, disguise, or self-exaltation. The false self is often found being projected by the individual who has inner turmoil about who they really are. They prefer to be something or someone that they are not and, instead of accepting truth, they create a lie. The lie can become such a stronghold that they themselves begin to believe the lie that they have constructed. Frequently such fabrications are built on the premise of shame. Shame becomes so unbearable that the only option that seems to make sense is to create a “self” that is acceptable, or one that will gain potential benefits. Facades are also built in an effort to live life according to another’s blueprint. These blueprints may stem from a desire to conform, or one imposed on another through unreasonable expectations. The false identity must be demolished. False identities hinder the ability to truly receive love. At times, those who function under disguise are doing so as a means

of gaining some type of control. These techniques of covering the true self are designed and birthed in fear and thrive in a place of illusion. Therefore, rooted in most false identities are fear, control, and deception. There may be preoccupations of the thought process that engage in one particular aspect of the false image they are trying to display. Moreover, there tends to be a disconnection to those around them, or an extreme need for being overly involved in the lives of others. They may constantly put themselves in places or situations where they do not belong, therefore missing the plans God has for their own life. The destruction of false identities can be accomplished as one looks at the life and actions of Jesus. He came to reveal His Father. He knew His purpose for being created and His whole identity was established on God, the Father. Ours must be too! He did not seek approval of man, direction of man, or recognition of man. He did not submit to their ungodly pressures or demands. He submitted Himself completely to God and refused to be swayed by the circumstances that surrounded Him. He recognized and attributed His strengths and motivations to God alone. As an individual begins to understand that God has a plan and a purpose for their life, they become more willing to lay down the attempt to cover up who they really are. They gain an understanding that they are truly valued. Many people, even Christians, can have difficulty in believing that they are a treasure to God, just as they are.

Our identities are established by God. Therefore, to veer from the true identity of who we are is to deny His role as Father in our lives. Those who operate in their true identity will have a capacity to love, not in pretense but in reality. Control is not a problem in those who are comfortable with themselves and who God made them to be. Power struggles so often seen in those who operate under the false self-image are not necessary for the individuals who know who they are

and where they are going in life because they are focused on God's plan, not one of their own making. The individual who is content in himself acknowledges that he is created, loved and affirmed by God. Therefore, there is no need to seek out the affirmation of those around them. They have the capacity to develop deep relationships with lasting value. There is a connectedness in the spirit and, therefore, there is no need for manipulation and trickery so often seen in those who do not have a true image of self. Authentic image of self is essential to healthy living and those who seek deliverance ministry must start with the willingness to drop all that is false. Wholeness must be grounded in truth. Those with a healthy self-image will make clear statements of beliefs and values. Those with an unhealthy self-image will be wavering in their beliefs, or they will change their beliefs to fit the circumstances, especially if it is to their advantage to change.

FACADE AND FORKED TONGUE

I had prayed with Beverly numerous times. She had been an active member of the pastor's weekly prayer group which met to pray for the church, the staff, and the congregation. She seemed to have a heart for the lost, the broken, and the poor. Beverly was a bit quirky. One might assume she was a remnant of the sixties, a flower child at heart...frumpy attire, unkempt hair, and clogs were typical of her outward appearance. She had an uncanny ability to recall scripture. She often prayed, quoting verse after verse, without even taking a pause for thought. It seemed very natural for her. We had taken a trip together to attend a conference. It was on that trip that I discerned that Beverly was not who she had portrayed herself as being. She had been a longstanding member of this particular church and although most thought she was strange, she had the reputation of being a godly, prayerful woman, who truly loved the Lord. She attended a twelve week study

course I had been teaching and seemed very interested in understanding deliverance ministry. She had also volunteered to be an intercessor for my ministry and prayed over each team member and their families weekly. Being new to the city and the church, volunteers were readily welcomed. However, I soon realized I had made a very grave mistake. I thanked her for her willingness to serve and explained that I had acted presumptuously and would no longer be using her in the role of intercessor. She was noticeably distressed and asked me if I would consider beginning prayer sessions for spiritual healing from the pains of her past. I agreed. As I sought the Lord for direction for the first session, He said, "false things, false things, false things!" My prayer partner and I joined in prayer and I explained to Beverly what I had heard in my spirit. She began to cry. "Everything in my life is false. I hate to pray. I hate my mother. She was never there for me. I hate my husband for not loving me."

We had a great deal of work to do. Beverly had set up a false life, projecting a false image of herself, and took on a false identity based on what she believed would be acceptable to others. This loving facade, masked as an intercessor, was only used to cover the deep bitterness of her heart. Things got much worse, as her anger began to escalate. I asked her if she really wanted to be healed. Throughout the process, she began to confess her true nature. Beverly was a practicing witch. With the most intense evil on her face, she spewed, "I curse Christians. I curse married couples in the church who look happy. I curse anyone who looks innocent." I knew when I heard the last statement that I was dealing with a very dangerous scenario. She was very manipulative, but her intentions were well disguised. She had taken on the persona of a little, old, weak woman, and although she was only in her mid-fifties, she had convinced everyone around her that she was totally helpless. My prayer partners and I met with her on

several occasions and she went through a process of confession and claimed she would no longer be involved in witchcraft. She confessed that she had tried to kill her baby sister. As the confessions came forth, so did the demons. The *strongman*, we discerned, was a murderous spirit. She had bowed to it even as a child. The hatred she held in her heart toward her mother, her father, and husband acted as food and authority for the spirit to operate and witchcraft was its “out.” Beverly decided to truly give her heart to the Lord, however. My prayer partner then proceeded to cast out the spirit of murder. As it began to manifest, Beverly fell to the ground and literally crawled like a lizard. Her hands became web-shaped as her fingers were pressed tightly together, and slightly curved.

Her tongue moved in a supernatural movement, so fast that it was difficult to see. It looked as if it was a forked tongue like that of a lizard. She foamed at the mouth and there was a foul smell permeating the room, which is not uncommon for someone who has been involved in occult activity. Beverly started to bleed profusely from her nose and her mouth. We then commanded that the spirit come out without harming Beverly or anyone else who was present, in the name of Jesus. After a moment, the bleeding stopped. Beverly was quite shaken, but she knew she had been delivered. We met with the pastor of the church and explained what had happened. Beverly testified that had it not been for that prayer ministry, if she had died, she would have gone to hell. I strongly suggested to the pastor that we delay any more ministry until she had been examined by a physician, a psychiatrist, and we met with her husband to discuss any further ministry. As prayer ministers, we never counsel or diagnose medical or psychological issues, even if it is suspected. These evaluations must be left up to the trained professionals. We focus solely on the spiritual issues. Beverly was later baptized at that particular church, and the pastor then proclaimed her a child of God

from the pulpit. Beverly committed to lay aside the pretence of a false identity and be what God had created her to be!

God establishes our identity. God, the Father, creates us, names us, and honors us. Frequently in the Ministry of Deliverance, there is an identity crisis. Those in need of healing have often had a poor relationship with their earthly father. There may have been a situation where the father was not present due to abandonment, divorce, or death. Individuals who cannot see themselves clearly have, almost certainly, suffered some type of estrangement. When this estrangement is revealed, it is critical that they are presented with scripture that pertains to their true identity in Christ. Names are important and they are often a signal into the parent-child relationship. Throughout scripture God changed the names of His servants in order to point to their intended destiny. A change of names occurred throughout scripture to establish a new identity, to develop a new concept of character that is associated with the name change, to point to destiny, purpose and plan for one's life, or to be conformed to His image. Families offer a sense of identity, security, stability, trust and value, and fathers are to lead the way. Who are you? If you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then you are a child of God. Mindsets that oppose this truth need to be annulled. Past experiences with earthly parents can no longer define individuals who are seeking wholeness. Past failures cannot be blamed on others, or God, but must be accepted as learning tools for the future. Traumatic situations are a part of life and not the result of punishment from God. The Bible clearly states that it rains on the just and the unjust, therefore, blame and accusations are counterproductive. Also, mindsets which insist that God cannot love each and every one the same are spiritually unhealthy. Man cannot understand the depths of the love of God, but we can understand that He loves all of mankind, both sinners

and saints, the same. We know that this is true because He died for us while we were yet sinners.

There is a healthy and unhealthy fear of God. Fear of God, as in being afraid of Him, is a hindrance that must be removed as one accepts their new identity in Christ Jesus. One must, however, stand in awe of His greatness and desire to please Him, understanding that it is His nature to be a just God. This is a healthy fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. Teachings which instill fear or terror, instead of love and grace, are clearly out of balance and can block the love of God from being received. Such stumbling blocks hinder individuals from receiving the love of God. Poor parenting, as well as experiences with authority figures, pastors, or elders who have openly and blatantly used their position as a means of control or manipulation, can also be a stumbling block. Identify and place all these hindrances that have blocked you from receiving the love of God in their rightful place, at the foot of the Cross. God is so gracious and loving and He is well aware of bad experiences and situations. Ask Him to remove the blocks and barricades that have been a part of your past, open your heart to receive, and trust God to restore the godly image you've been given as part of your covenant promise.

WHERE DO I FIT IN?

As a tool of introspection, ask yourself these questions. Do you trust God? Does God like you? Do you feel polluted, corrupt, or unclean in the sight of God? Is God concerned with the small issues in your life? Does He know your thoughts, your desires, and your wishes? Have you been let down by God? Where and when? Do you wonder where God was when you were hurt, abused or rejected? He was right there! He sees all, knows all, and is all-powerful. Moreover, it is important to understand that He has structured life in such a way that spiritual authority within any structure is there for protection.

He has given man free will and spiritual responsibility. When that authority or responsibility has been compromised, protection is no longer in place and an avenue for attacks of the devil opens. Many bad experiences occur due to the free will of man, and they will not be overridden by God. Countless detrimental circumstances can be identified as being the result of sin at the leadership level. Fathers who are out of the will of God cannot protect, guide, or lead their families properly, and they become easy prey for the enemy. A family offers a safe place to obtain a sense of who you are and gives a sense of achievement which is found through obedience, responsibility, and success or competence. Often in the dysfunctional family structure, low self-esteem arises. Low self-esteem is another type of false self, and it often results in a sinful lifestyle. Attempts to gain love are often provided by Satan with images that mimic real love, but have nothing at all to do with love. Pornography, fornication,,” adultery, homosexuality, molestation, and incest are Satan’s tools to mimic what he will never be able to provide: true love. Low self-esteem results in being undervalued. Individuals who are ignored, nagged, or belittled may fight issues of low self-esteem. Those who have been under-nurtured as a child will frequently show symptoms of low self-esteem. Low self-esteem is, quite simply, another false image of self, and it must be dealt with as such. Patience, love, and truth are essential elements in the healing process. Often, those who suffer with low self-esteem are overly focused on self. They also tend to think in the negative. They likely will exhibit insecure tendencies. Those with healthy self-concepts are those who grow up in an environment where they have been appreciated, disciplined, and valued. They have a voice and it is allowed to speak freely without fear of reprimand. Low self-esteem is changed by renewing the mind according to the Word of God.

Those who suffer with false identities frequently have dif-

difficulties establishing proper boundaries in their life. They will be the individuals who cross boundaries without seemingly being aware of what they did. Ideals, morals and boundaries help individuals with such issues set clear cut guidelines as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Ideals and morals will shape the future; therefore, it is absolutely essential to spend time in the Bible and with the Heavenly Father. Open communication is also essential as individuals are going through the healing process. As one heals from the false sense of self there are some givens. No one but Jesus is perfect and free of making mistakes. Therefore, giving some leeway is important as one ventures into healing. We are all products of a sinful world. We are all born into sin. We often use what we see modeled, unless there has been some spiritual intervention. Divine influence will bring about change. We all operate out of our own pain and wounds, thus, we often inflict them on those around us. We all fall short of being the perfect anything: mother, father, daughter, brother, or friend. Therefore, we should have a willingness of heart to extend grace where grace is needed. Failure to acknowledge the power or the grace of God will keep individuals in the same place, stifling growth and spiritual advancement. God is, inevitably, the only one who can meet our needs. He meets our physical needs, our emotional needs, and our spiritual needs when we are in right relationship with Him. He offers a promise of stability.

SELF-IMPOSED IMAGE

Our self-worth and self-image should reflect God in us. He and His Son, Jesus Christ, are the perfect role models. Through their relationship, God shows us the importance of father-child relationships. The grace He has extended to us, we must extend to others. Healing of false identities occurs when we first go to God, and then we remember who we are in Him. Ask God to help you change. Rely on the Christian

community for guidance and relationships, and enjoy life and fellowship with God and with His servants in honesty and trust. Jesus came to restore the broken relationship between God and man. He came to bridge the gap, to light the path, and to remove every obstacle that stands in the way of close communication with our Father. As one begins on the road to healing, they may receive a name change. Let that name change come from God, and erase any self-imposed names or false identities! Gideon's name was changed to Jerubbaal, which meant "let Baal contend with him" because he pulled down the altars of Baal. Abram's name was changed to Abraham, meaning "the father of many nations." Sari was changed to Sarah, Jacob to Israel, Saul to Paul, Simon to Peter, just to name a few. However, there is an example in scripture where someone changed their own name. Let's look at the story of Ruth, whose mother-in-law, Naomi, took on a false identity and gave herself a new name.

The story of Ruth is a story of grace and glory. It gives us a picture of love that is found within the family structure. It displays an image of the circle of fellowship found amongst the people of God. Ruth was written during the period of Judges, possibly between 1350 BC—1100 BC. The land of Judah was in a time of spiritual confusion, compromise, and apostasy. This story, as are so many stories of the Bible, is rich in figurative images and prophetic implications. It foreshadows the marriage of the Lamb of God to His Bride, the Church. There is, however, another message for us today that pertain to God's sufficiency, His grace, His mercy, and our ability to see Him at work in the midst of a trial. It is also reflective of the attitudes we are to display toward others who are also part of the family of God. What starts out to be a story of pain, loss, famine, death and despair, quickly becomes a story of protection, provision, redemption, and restoration. The characters are exemplary in portraying the depth of loyalty, commitment, and

servant hood that should mirror the life and walk of every dedicated Christian. The story of Ruth begins in Bethlehem. The land was in the midst of famine. Elimelech, whose name means “God is King,” was the husband of Naomi and son of the harlot, Rehab. Naomi, whose name means “pleasant, delightful, and lovely” and Elimelech, along with their two sons, left Judah and moved to the land of Moab. Naomi experienced great loss there. She lost both her husband and her sons to illness. She then decided to leave Moab and return to her homeland. Upon reaching this conclusion, Naomi told her daughters-in-law and graciously released them from all obligations to stay and care for her. She requested that they return to their homes in an attempt to rebuild their lives. The daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, wept bitterly. Orpah kissed Naomi goodbye, but Ruth desperately clung to Naomi and solemnly stated:

“Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you” (Ru 1:16–17)!

Naomi had graciously canceled all obligations to past ties. Grace, release, and freedom occurred, but Ruth, because of her devout love for Naomi, stayed with her and refused to return home. Ruth displayed loyalty to the relationship over personal advantage. In this one verse we hear the sound of the family of faith, the fellowship of believers, and we see the picture of the unified Body of Christ. Let’s look at Naomi’s response, however, when they enter her homeland of Bethlehem. Naomi overlooked God’s grace. She saw her situation through a distorted image, an image of lack when God had provided her with a companion of love. So much so that she even changed her name to declare her overwhelming emotions and twisted self-imposed identity.

So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi? She said to them, “Call me no longer Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty; why call me Naomi when the Lord has dealt harshly with me, and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me (Ru 1:19–21)!

Notice the nature of her words. They were bitter. They were harsh and empty. Naomi chose to operate under a false identity. She took on the very image of her feelings, and renamed herself Mara, meaning “the Lord has dealt bitterly.” Wallowing in self-pity and emptiness, she gave herself a new name. It was not given to her by God. It was a self-imposed false identity that left her bitter and resentful toward God. Naomi chose to not see the grace which God provided in a faithful daughter-in-law who vowed to stay with her unto death! What has God provided for you that you might be overlooking? Are you overlooking His grace? In her vulnerability, Naomi chose to blame God for all the misfortunes in her life. We cannot overlook that misfortunes are a part of life. They can be caused by the fallen nature of man which introduced sin and sickness into the world, but they are also caused by decisions to be disobedient, selfish and fleshly. Additionally, they can be caused by the devil. Each of these causes brings destruction and chaos. God is not man’s opponent, or an adversary, but his Deliverer! Not only did Naomi fail to see the grace of God in the midst of her trials, she blamed the Lord for her loss. As you take a mental inventory of your life, be sure to not blame God for misfortunes that you may have experienced. The root of bitterness can grow and the Word of God says it will defile many. God is not your adversary, but He is your Savior and Redeemer. The Apostle Paul teaches us the proper attitude we are to have in times of distress, difficulty and weakness. After

pleading before the Lord for him to remove the thorn in his flesh, he learned that the proper attitude is critical. His thorn was a means of relying on the divine strength of God instead of his own strength. It was an instrument used to keep him humble. His thorn was a tool the Lord used to teach him to find comfort in the midst of pain. Paul refused to walk in an attitude of defeat, but chose to rejoice in his very weakness. He understood God's grace.

Grace is unmerited favor, undeserved blessing, a free gift, and it stems from the root word meaning "to rejoice." Paul found grace in his weakness and infirmity, and Ruth found grace in her lack as she was soon to be blessed with a man who would tenderly care for her! Naomi, now in Bethlehem, encouraged Ruth to go to "glean the fields." There she would find Boaz. Gleaning was a method whereby farmers would leave the corners of their plots to be harvested by the poor for food. There, Ruth found favor in the sight of a wealthy land owner who was of the family of Elimelech. It was the custom of the day for the closest relative to redeem possession of land and the wife from one who had died. There was one man who was in line before Boaz, but he forfeited his rights and allowed Boaz to take Ruth as his wife, and redeem her father-in-law's land. Grace, the favor of God, had been extended. Merciful and compassionately, He had rewarded her for her devotion and love. She had been redeemed, bought back with a price. This is the cry of the Father for the Church today: conviction, repentance, and sanctification. He provides grace to bring us to a point of conviction, grace to bring us to true repentance, and grace to refine us in the process of sanctification. Where do we find the grace of God? We are saved by grace. We are kept by grace. We abound or flourish in grace, and we are refined because of it! It is in this place where we will ultimately find our true identity.

We declare the things we have seen and heard so that you also

may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (Jn 1:3).

FAMILY OF FELLOWSHIP

Boaz is to Ruth as Christ is to the Church. He is our kinsman, our redeemer, and the life-giver. He is the nourisher of our old age. He provides protection, provision, redemption and restoration. Ruth is a prophetic picture of the Church. Her name means "friend" just as Jesus said "I now call you friend." She was the harvester in the field, just as the church is supposed to also be and do. She was a humble gleaner, obedient, quick to obey. There was a birth that took place in this union. The Book of Ruth is sometimes referred to as "The Crown Jewel of the Old Testament" because it is the root of the genealogy of Christ, our King. Bethlehem, the City of Bread, where the two became one, is the birthplace of the Messiah. The story took place at the beginning of barley season, which was the time of reaping, and foreshadowed the upcoming birth of Jesus Christ and the Church. Naomi is a picture of the Holy Spirit, gracious and tender, as He provides guidance toward the Lord, gently leading us to our accomplished purpose. Understanding that we all belong to this family of faith, the fellowship of believers, we are joined together as the unified Body of Christ. Truly, here are your brothers, your sisters, and your mothers! Embrace the fellowship of believers with which He has surrounded you. God has provided a circle of fellowship and all you have to do is simply join in. Jesus said:

And He replied, "who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mk 3:33-35).

The Lord called us before we were born. He gave us names. He bestowed on us a title of honor and redeemed us from darkness. He embraced us as part of the family of God

if only we would believe. That may be hard to grasp in our finite mental capability, however, we have it recorded within the written Covenant that God has done these things for us. God, the Father, teaches us, protects us, and guides us. The Bible explicitly tells us that God will be our teacher. Not only that, but He will also guide us in the way to go. His way is perfect and he is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. He promises to counsel us, and to deliver us in the time of trouble or danger. These promises are promises we can trust. Individuals who have sought for a leader in their life have one. This is God Himself who will lead. Such communication requires listening. God speaks, we must obey. He promises to satisfy our needs in parched places, and protect those who know His name. God, the Father, disciplines us also. He has made it apparently clear that He reserves the right to correct those He loves. He will not ignore sin. He brings us to a place of repentance and change. Change will occur in the lives of those who love God.

“My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are punished by him; for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts” (Heb 12:5–6).

God, the Father, hears His children and answers them. He has promises in His Word that if we ask Him in His name, with correct motives, He will give to us the very things we request. It is His will that our joy be made complete in this way. He gave us the task of bearing fruit. Just as a good Father should, He has laid out responsibilities that His children are to fulfill. He declares in His Word that those who are His will hear His voice. Rebellion blocks hearing. Lack of hearing is not because of God, it is because of our own shortcomings. However, God speaks to His servants. He did yesterday, today, and forever. Most importantly, as promised in the Davidic Covenant, God, the Father, will always love us. He will never

leave us or forsake us. His love for us has been established in the heavenlies and it is firmly written. We must all forgive the shortcomings of our earthly father so that we may come into the fullness of knowing our heavenly Father!

Do you carry feelings of resentment or bitterness toward your earthly father? Do you feel you have received feelings of unworthiness because of your relationship with your father? Do you feel emotions arise when you discuss your father or your relationship with him? Do you feel that your childhood was in some way stolen from you? If you said yes to any of these questions, then remember, there is hope for you. You are well on the road to recovery. Jesus Christ came to this earth and taught us that there is no relationship more important than the relationship with God, the Father. If you have not known Him as Father, stop and ask Him now to become Father in your life. Ask Him to make the love of the heavenly Father so real to you that you will actually see Him as your real father, and your earthly father as an imperfect, fallible man who is to be honored and forgiven. God, the Father, is now your eternal Father who cares for you and loves you. He will be your protector, your shield and your guide. He will be your refuge, and your disciplinarian. He will give you a new image, one that reflects Himself, and in that He will bestow you with honor. Accept Him now as Father, and receive the fullness of His immeasurable love. Recognize the work of the Cross, the power of the Holy Spirit to change and forgive. Decide to put your confidence in God alone, not in man, and not in flesh. Pray for release from generational patterns and ask Jesus to heal any painful memories. He may not take them away, but he will remove the sting of pain. Ask Jesus Christ to restore the image of God, the Father.

The Ministry of Deliverance will invariably involve the process of healing in areas of brokenness as it pertains to father-child relationships. Emotions often run deep as this issue is

addressed, and it is of the utmost importance to handle such topics with great love and compassion. Characteristically, it is often looked at by the receiver as a done deal, a finished thing. But, as the Lord leads, one may uncover pains and hurts that stem from fractured relationships that are paramount to all other forms of healing through which an individual desires to walk. It is at the point of complete honesty and confession that healing will occur. In saying this, every prayer minister must be willing to allow the receiver the option of not dealing with the issue if they so choose, as is the case with every issue addressed in prayer. It is only to the extent of willingness on the part of the receiver that freedom will come. God Himself will only move under the free will of an individual and will never force or impose Himself on anyone, and prayer ministers must be of the same mind. As an individual starts the transformation process of accepting God in the role of Father, then the love for others will consistently increase. The walls or barricades that have blocked the receiving of God's love will be torn down and a stronghold of godly love will take that place, and those spirits who have held on to hurts and unforgiveness will be forced to leave with a simple command, "Go, in the name of Jesus!" Loving others will result in action and deed. One's prayer life will take on a new dimension as well. Rejoice in this, that God, the Father, is eternally your Father!

THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAS COME NEAR YOU

"Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. "Carry neither bags, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. "But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' "And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; and if not, it will return to you. "And remain in the same house eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. "Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. 'And heal the sick there, and say to them,

'The kingdom of God has come near you' .

LK 10:3-9 NKJV

Prayer is the birthplace of miracles, healings, deliverances, reconciliation and restoration. In order for the power of prayer to be evidenced, a proper attitude must exist. If the attitude in which we enter into prayer is improper, we may be limiting our communication with God, thus hindering the very work we are asking to see accomplished. Jesus taught that wrong motives, empty phrases, and long prayers prayed for attention were of no value. As He stated, those who do such things were

hypocrites and they had received their just reward. While the things mentioned above are easily recognized as improper attitudes, how do we recognize, and develop, a proper attitude toward prayer? How do we approach a Holy God? The answer is quite simple—the ability to approach our Holy God can only be attained through the perfect Blood of Jesus Christ. As we enter into fellowship with our Heavenly Father, there is no other prerequisite. However, Jesus gave us a model to follow in “The Lord’s Prayer.” Through it, we understand that we are to revere the name of God. We understand the humility we must maintain in our hearts as we speak with Him. We understand our weaknesses, our imperfections, and our character flaws. We understand the forgiveness we extend to others is the same measure that we will receive. And in that we understand His mercy as well as His disdain for sin. We understand His dislike for the judgments we hold against others as we plead for mercy for our own shortcomings. We find the proper attitude we must have as we enter into prayer as we examine the life of Jesus Christ and the prayers He modeled.

When praying for others for freedom from oppression and bondage, the importance of attitude is sometimes understated. A minister of deliverance must be constantly aware of his or her attitudes and thoughts throughout the process, and realize that it is only by the grace of God that they have the honor and privilege to minister to those in need. One must also have the understanding that deliverance is not based on their own righteousness, but on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, God’s perfect Son. It should be the desire of the heart to strive to live a holy lifestyle. In the Ministry of Deliverance, one becomes keenly aware of the absolute total dependence on the Holy Spirit for everything: all guidance, all revelation, and all restoration. By ourselves, we can do nothing of eternal value. Coming into this awareness moves us toward the proper attitude of prayer. There is a biblical pattern to follow. Jesus gave

us a picture of what we are to do as His servants and followers. He moved from town to town and met the people in their place of need. He was not concerned with their background, their geographical location, their ethnic background, or even their church affiliation. He moved with great compassion and healed. Jesus sent the disciples out two-by-two into the towns and villages. He told them to stay where they were welcomed, to eat what was given them, and to shake the dust off their feet when they were not accepted.

So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them (Mk 6:12–13).

As one enters into prayer on behalf of others, it is absolutely essential that motives for doing so are to advance the Kingdom of Heaven so that God may be glorified. Jesus taught the disciples so that they would move out and teach others what they had learned. He taught them by example to heal, to deliver, and to teach the fullness of the Gospel, with all its benefits and privileges. He taught them, through example, to have compassion for the people. Compassion for the welfare of those in need of ministry is also another requirement for prayer ministry. Jesus healed with great compassion. His heart was so tender toward those who were held in the bondage of sin or sickness. He was moved by their brokenness, and often dealt with those whom the Church of the day saw as rejects. He ate with them, drank with them, socialized with them, and healed them. Jesus touched them because He sincerely cared for their well-being, and they knew it! He was not afraid to be seen with them, nor did He try to salvage His own reputation by distancing Himself from sinners, prostitutes or thieves, but embraced them with love and affection. Prayer ministers who are genuinely caring and gentle will be able to establish trust with those to whom they are ministering. Love for God and

love for man are the correct motives which will draw one near to the heart of God, and He will hear and answer!

Humility is another requirement in the life of a prayer minister. Jesus humbled Himself and took on the very form of a slave, being born in human likeness. He took a lowly position. We must also take on the attitude of a servant. Proud attitudes will open the door to all kinds of difficulty, ensuring an eventual fall. The devil, as we well know, looks around for those he can devour, and pride is the groundwork he lays. He will invariably take that ground and maintain it as long as he is allowed. Prayer is battle, and the prayer warrior is on the frontline. Pride destroys one's ability to hear. God opposes those who are prideful, so it stands to reason that the prideful are in opposition to the very nature of God. Hence, it is impossible to enter into communion with God when one is actually in opposition to Him. Prayer ministers must resist every opportunity to agree with the evil influences of pride. As one prays on behalf of others, a position of humility opens the lines of communication and reflects the model Jesus gave His disciples.

...I dwell in the high and holy place and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit (Isa 57:15).

Those who minister on the behalf of others must maintain a clean heart. We all sin and have fallen short of the glory of God. Therefore, it is essential that we ask the Lord to cleanse us from any unrighteousness as we enter into prayer on behalf of others. A repentant heart is one that can receive the things of God without blocks and hindrances. We are clean before the Lord as we wear our robe of righteousness, however, unconfessed sin can block our hearing, our faith, and our conscience, thus affecting our confidence as we pray. Moreover, we are promised to receive from the Lord by keeping His commandments and doing what is pleasing in His sight. Jesus was obedient to God even unto death. He learned obe-

dience through suffering. Obedience keeps our hearts from condemnation and allows us to pray with an ear to hear what the Spirit of God is saying to us as we are in prayer.

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God (1 Jn 3:21).

Prayer ministers must practice what they preach, and forgiveness is truly one of the most powerful tools of obtaining freedom in Christ. The law of forgiveness is not a choice, it is a command. God has clearly given us the guideline; if we do not forgive others, He cannot forgive us. Consequently, as one enters into prayer on behalf of others, it is a good practice to search out any trace of unforgiveness. Satan is the great deceiver and often, in prayer ministry, hidden sins of the heart are exposed. Accordingly, prayer ministers should be constantly aware of the need to pray for God to reveal any hidden sins in their own heart. Unforgiveness can restrict what God wants to do in the lives of others through them. It has a binding effect upon those who hold it, as well as those it is held against. Unforgiveness has a negative effect on the body, the mind, the will, and the emotions. It is wise to quickly address areas of unforgiveness. Whether you are a prayer minister or one in need of prayer, there are steps you should take in the practice of forgiving. First, you may need to forgive yourself, and then you may need to forgive God. When tragedy or disappointments in life come, we tend to blame God for the unfortunate happenings. It is imperative that we acknowledge any resentment or bitterness toward God, and then choose to release that bitterness. Are you blaming God for something? Confess it to Him; He already knows! Next, we are to forgive our family for any hurts we may be harboring. Pains from our past, even into childhood, can leave permanent scars if we refuse to acknowledge and address them. Lastly, we are to forgive brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as those who are not part of the faith who have harmed us in any way. We are

to leave our gifts at the altar and go to them. We are to live in peace with one another, as far as it is in our control to do so. We are to ask them for reconciliation and forgiveness. If they choose to accept the request for reconciliation, then the battle has been won. If they choose not to do so, then you have done all that is possible, so now go in peace! Jesus Christ displayed the act of forgiveness as He took His last few breaths and cried out, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" It's not a suggestion to forgive, it's a command!

But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses (Mt 6:15 NKJV).

Prayer ministers should have an attitude of reverential fear as they pray on behalf of others, as well as a high regard for scripture. Ministers of the Gospel, especially teachers and preachers, are held to higher standards. Prayer ministry includes teaching of the Word, as it is used to address areas in which an individual may be out of the will of God. Prayer Ministers are not counselors, in a secular sense, but should be in a biblical sense. They should be solidly grounded in the Word of God, because it is the truth that sets people free. Breaking the lies of the devil requires knowledge of the truth, consequently countering his lies will occur when truth is presented accurately. Hence, prayer ministers should accept this higher call along with the knowledge that God holds them to higher accountability. Awareness of this accountability heightens the weight of the work. It is a great privilege and honor to enter into the presence of God on behalf of others through prayer ministry, and reverence toward God, along with accurate representation of His Word, are essential elements in the attitude of prayer ministers in response. Praying for others is an extension of brotherly love. We are taught in Galatians that we are to bear one another's burdens, and in this way we are fulfilling the law of Christ. Appropriate mindsets of those who enter into prayer on behalf of others must be rooted and

grounded in love. In this way, we are sharing in their sufferings and helping to carry their burdens to the Cross of Jesus. Giving of one's time, resources, and self, is taking on the servant mentality Jesus modeled for us, as we then become the hands and feet of Jesus to those who are in need. All prayer ministry should be accomplished based on the brotherly love that Jesus emulated.

Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor (I Pe 2:17).

There is a proper way to come into the presence of the Lord. All believers are to enter with praise and thanksgiving in their hearts. God is to be praised for His majesty, His holiness, His mighty acts, and His excellent greatness. He is to be praised for who He is, and for what He is. He is Creator, the King of Kings, the First and the Last. He alone is God, and He is worthy to be praised. God is to be glorified with the words of our mouth and the testimony of our hearts that we proclaim. Also, He is to be addressed with thanksgiving. A grateful heart is a heart that is acknowledged by God. Those with a grateful heart see the best in life and attribute it to God, who is the rightful benefactor of our admiration. They can deal with the worst of life, because they understand God has our best interests at heart, even when circumstances make no sense at all. Prayer ministers must enter prayer on the behalf of others with that same zeal and adoration.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, bless his name (Ps 100:4).

Prayer ministers who pray on behalf of others should themselves be accustomed to spending quality time with the Lord on a daily basis. Private prayer time is the fuel required to obtain direction and focus, and to receive clarity about certain situations one may be facing. God gives the ability to hear in accordance with one's faithfulness, and prayer is the birthing place of this revelation. Before going to any prayer session on

behalf of another, prayer ministers should seek God for what He desires to accomplish in that session. It is in that secret place of private prayer with the Lord that mysteries of the Kingdom are shared. It is in that place that God reveals the plans and purposes of His will for those who will be receiving prayer. Moreover, it is in that place that prayer ministers get connection and intimacy with God, allowing them to be truly useful for His purposes.

But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door, and pray to your father who is in secret, and your father who sees in secret will reward you (Mt 6:6.)

Prayer ministers can model their prayer life from the example set forth by King David in the Psalms, “*Early I will seek You.*” David gave God the first fruits of his day, therein confirming the priority he placed on this time of prayer and communion with God. We have been instructed to do likewise and, “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness.*” We are to seek God while He may still be found, and to seek Him daily, resting on the promise that if we seek Him, we will find Him. Prayer ministers must have their own priorities in the proper place. God must be first and foremost in the lives of prayer ministers, or they should willingly set aside ministering to others until they are first committed to God. Set your heart to seek Him with all that is in you!

“Ask, and it will be given to you, seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” (Mt 7:7).

Have your spiritual house in order. In order to be effective, a minister of deliverance must enter into prayer with a repentant heart and a clean spiritual house. One whose own house is out of order will be ineffective in the cleansing of another’s. Defiled spiritual houses, and those who try to minister out of them, will prove ineffective. Demonic spirits are not subject to other demon spirits, and while it is the Blood of Jesus and His righteousness that they must obey, a person who is defiled

does not carry the spiritual authority to command, because they are not yet under spiritual authority. Their hearts being condemned and their conscience weak, they are incapable of such authority. Do not trample in His courts by entering into ministry improperly, or by praying with the wrong heart or the wrong motives. God requires right relationship. He clearly states in His Word that it is about relationship, not sacrifice or ceremony. Standing before the Lord on behalf of others requires that right relationship.

When you come to appear before me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts (Isa 1:12 NKJV)?

While we are under the New Covenant, in which the temple veil has been ripped in two, we must still understand that God is the same yesterday, today and forever, and He requires that we worship Him in spirit and in truth. Understanding the God who does not change will invariably lead us to reverential fear and awe as we approach the Holy God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is a consuming fire! It is imperative that one understand the principle of sprinkling the Blood of Jesus. As discussed in chapter 2, “The Red Heifer”, there is tremendous power in faithfully sprinkling the living Blood of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. One must have faith in what the Blood actually means in the spirit realm, and the effects it has on the natural world. One must also understand that it is ever-present. It has power today. It is the very thing to which Satan must answer. It cleanses, atones, restores and regenerates. Prayer on behalf of others should include the allocation of the Blood of Jesus as it is being applied over their needs. Grasping this one concept can greatly enhance one’s own prayer life as well. Prayer ministers should know who they are in Christ. They are ambassadors of the King of Glory. They should be able to empathize with weaknesses found in others based upon an acknowledgment of their own weaknesses. It is vitally important that servants of God who minister through prayer be willing to lay

down any personal agenda. The most effective prayer ministers will be those whose primary motivation is their love of God and of people. They must also be called of the Lord, not self-appointed. Additionally, they should minister before the Lord because they have pure motives to advance the Kingdom of God and display His wisdom on earth. There is a great deal of compassion that is needed in such a ministry. They should also be willing to intercede on behalf of the church, the pastor, church leadership, and the congregation as a whole. Paul prayed for the Church. We should follow his example. Paul taught the importance of rooting out and exposing heresy and false teaching. He responded to the voice of the python spirit that was sent to interfere with the work of spreading the Gospel. Those who feel they are called into the Ministry of Deliverance should be able to recognize the voice of the enemy and be willing to address it spiritually when it arises. Prayer ministers should also pray for repentance, revival, and restoration. They should pray that God will expose the plans of the enemy against the Church. True intercession on behalf of the Kingdom of God does warfare against the plans of the enemy, encourages evangelism, and breaks down barriers that stand in the way of those who are to hear the good news of the Gospel. It is through prayer and fasting that individuals are sent forth into ministry, and it is through prayer and fasting that the enemy's plans are thwarted. Those called into prayer ministry should have a heart for unity within the church. Praying on behalf of others will break the bonds, heal the sick, set them free from oppression, and demolish strongholds that have been raised up against the Word of Truth. Effective prayer ministry will assist in building the Body of Christ, His Church. Prayer ministers who are called and committed to minister will have an anointing for prayer. It is the anointing that breaks the yoke. Remember, your prayers are ascending to heaven, so graciously accept the call!

When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints (Rev 5:8).

TAKE OFF THOSE FILTHY CLOTHES

First in the natural, and then in the supernatural, we can see the importance of Holy attire. The Old Testament requirements were quite often a foreshadow of the better way offered through the New Covenant. We are to come in dressed properly, clothed in righteous attire.

He shall put the holy tunic and the linen trousers on his body; He shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen trousers and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments (Lev 16:4).

What does this mean to us today? How can we come in before the Lord with our garments spotless, washed, and free from all defilement? Deliverers for the people of God were chosen because God could trust them to take on a very difficult task. The high priests recorded in the Old Testament were some examples of those who were willing and able. The Apostle Paul, in the New Testament, was also such a man. Jesus Christ, the ultimate Deliverer, sent those into service who were truly His disciples, students who had committed themselves to earnestly follow Him, leaving behind family, friends, and futures to fully submit themselves to a life that reflected the power of Christ in healing, deliverance, and bringing forth the Good News. They too, were willing. However, such a task required proper attire.

Now Joshua was dressed with filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, "take off his filthy clothes." And to him he said, "See, I have taken your guilt away from you, and I will

clothe you with festal apparel." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with the apparel; and the angel of the Lord was standing by. Then the angel of the Lord assured Joshua, saying "thus says the Lord of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.

ZEC 3:3-7

Contact with holiness, like contact with what was unholy, required a change of garments and ritual absolution, therefore the Day of Atonement was employed. Priests under Old Testament Law were only allowed to come into the presence of a Holy God wearing holy apparel. This requirement included wearing the holy linen tunic, linen undergarments next to the skin, a linen sash fastened around the waist, and a linen turban around the head. Priests were required to go through a ceremonial washing. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of the priests and the people. The high priest took coals from the altar, with two hands full of sweet incense, placed it inside the curtain, and put it on the fire before the Lord. The cloud that emanated from the incense covered the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant and prevented the priest from dying. He then took the blood from the sacrificed bull and sprinkled it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. He did this seven times to make atonement for the tabernacle, the altar, the people's sins, and their uncleanness, indicating completeness. He sprinkled the blood of a slaughtered goat on the curtain, and in front of and on the mercy seat, to make atonement for the sanctuary because of the uncleanness and defilement of the people. He then dipped his finger in the blood and sprinkled it seven times on the horns of the altar to cleanse it. When he had finished atoning for the holy

place, the Tent of Meetings, and the altar, he presented two live goats which were chosen by lot. One was slain, the other used as a scapegoat. Aaron, the high priest, laid both hands on the head of the live goat, confessed over it all their iniquities and sins as a means of transferring, or imparting them onto the scapegoat, and then he sent it away into the wilderness, carrying with it the sins of the people. Upon exiting the Holy of Holies, the high priest bathed again, washing himself in the Holy Place, in the laver within the court. He left his holy vestments in the Tent of Meetings. The ceremony concluded after he offered burnt offerings on behalf of the priests and the people. The one in charge of leading the goat into the wilderness remained outside until he washed his clothes and bathed himself. It was of the utmost importance that the priest did nothing that rendered himself unclean. He committed himself to undisturbed devotion to the Lord during his time of preparation. Uncleanness would have surely resulted in death!

And the priest who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priest and for all the people of the assembly.

LEV 16:32-33

The priest's holy garments were an outward expression that he had been entirely cleansed from the defilement of sin, and that he was arrayed in the splendor of holiness. Incense symbolizes prayer and the covering of the mercy seat by the cloud it provided, signified the glory of Jehovah God being covered, thus protecting the priest from death. God's servants, the priests, were continually concerned about the presence of a holy God in the midst of unclean, sinful people. Such obser-

vances, however, were imperfect at best and would not suffice for internal cleansing. Under this Levitical ritual, many sins and defilements would go unacknowledged, therefore without expiation. However, under the New Covenant there is a spiritual washing that occurs through the Blood of Jesus, and it does far more: it purifies us from all sin. We are to confess and turn from them, and be healed from their dire effects. This spiritual cleansing takes place just as in the days of old, as they are confessed. Wash your garments now in the Blood of Jesus, repent of your sins, and be cleansed from its defilement. Take off those garments of shame, guilt, unworthiness, and defilement and put on the robe of righteousness, not only in theory, but in application. Accept by faith the fullness of being robed in Christ Jesus.

IMPARTATION

The laying on of hands is an act of identification, of impartation, or the act of transferring guilt from one to another. It is a means of blessing; the priestly blessing, the blessings of the father, and the deathbed blessings. It is also used in setting apart and designating one as devoted to God for service. The practice is used for ordaining deacons, sending out missionaries, and ordaining officers of the church. At times, it is used in inaugurating a successor to a particular role or responsibility. Moreover, the laying on of hands is a means of bestowing the Holy Spirit, as well as a practice used in utilizing, imparting or stirring up spiritual gifts, such as the gift of healing. It is important to note that this ancient act was also recognized by the early church as worthy of continuation. It is an act which we are encouraged to utilize today as a means of identification and impartation as we pray for others and as we bless. In the Ministry of Deliverance this ancient act is still used as a means of casting, blessing, and imparting just as seen in New Testament Scripture. A word of caution: laying on of hands

is also transference. It is of the utmost importance that one be prayerful as they lay hands on another. The Word of God cautions those of the fellowship not to lay hands on any man hastily, as this is in reference to ordination. However, it should only be done under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Before proceeding, one is advised to apply the Blood of Jesus, ask God for divine protection, and seek the Lord for council and guidance. Simply ask God with whom to pray, when to pray, and what to pray. Remember, it is wise to lay hands on another only under the anointing and leadership of the Holy Spirit. As we pray deliverance prayers we must put on the breastplate of righteousness, and the belt of truth, the helmet of salvation, shoes shod to spread the Gospel, the sword of the Spirit and shield of faith, because this is our heavenly armor to protect against spiritual forces of evil. To put it on is to know it and apply it. To know or apply it, we must first hear it or read it. Without it, we cannot stand against the wiles of Satan. The Bible is the written Word of Truth. It is our spiritual armor against the forces of evil that prevail in this world. Therefore, resist the devil. Use your spiritual weapons of righteousness and resist the plans of the enemy for your family, your church, your city and your nation!

ESCAPE FROM EVIL

There is a story found in Old Testament scripture that would be a best seller at the box office, or number one on the best seller list at the book store. It is a story of intrigue, one of power, pride, passion and position. It is about rebellion, hatred and fear, which was overcome through the power of love, humility, and submission. It's a story about choices, personal and corporate destiny, and decisions that are reflective in the life of every believer. It is a story of deliverance, and it gives us a picture of the heart and character of a true deliverer, chosen of God! Within this story there are five main characters.

There was a beautiful, young virgin, from humble beginnings, orphaned by the death of both parents, raised by her uncle Mordecai, called to change the fate of a nation. Her courage and passion resounded in her willingness and obedience to lay down her life for the sake of her people. Her life had purpose. Then there was Haman, a proud, arrogant, ruthless man, a man who thrived on place and position. He was desperately seeking man's approval and when he didn't receive it, He was filled with so much rage that he eventually was caught up in his own plan of destruction. There was a king, King Ahasuerus. He was a just king who ruled one hundred twenty seven provinces from India to Ethiopia. His name meant "mighty one." And then there was Mordecai, a servant of the king and a watchman at the king's gate. Faithful, humble, and self-sacrificing, he uncovered a plot to assassinate the king. This noble act would go seemingly unnoticed, but just for a season. Mordecai also refused to bow or pay homage to Haman which stirred so much hatred in Haman that he conspired to destroy the entire Jewish nation. Queen Vashti was a rebellious queen; she refused to go into the king when she had been summoned. In an effort to prevent an insurgency, the king wrote a decree that the men are to be the masters of their own households. The queen was stripped of her royal title and it was given to another, one who would be obedient to the king and submissive to His will. That was Esther. Queen Esther averted the attempted plot of destruction of the Jewish nation. She was instructed by Mordecai to conceal her heritage. In an effort to unveil the truth, Mordecai told Esther she must approach the king and plead for the safety of her people. Knowing that she would surely die if it would not be for divine intervention, she led her people in prayer and fasting, thus the fate of the nation was changed and the festival of Purim is still practiced today to commemorate the deliverance from the enemy of

God's chosen people. As we look at this story, there are lessons one can learn that pertain to the Ministry of Deliverance. First, when coming before the king there is a time of preparation. Esther was chosen to replace Queen Vashti because of Vashti's rebellion. Esther had been selected to be a part of the king's harem. When the time came, the women had undergone twelve months of cosmetic treatment: six months with the oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and cosmetics. As individuals are called into ministry, there is also a time of preparation.

In a large house there are utensils not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for special use, some for ordinary. All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work.

II TI 2:20-21

Second, there is a cleansing that must occur which will entail a willingness of heart to be submissive, obedient, and humble. Jesus Himself was heard of the Father because of His reverent submission. He learned obedience through what He had suffered. Third, we learn through the story of Esther that there is a point of decision. Timing is critical when we will be led into our destiny. Mordecai warned Esther that if she chose to be silent at that particular time, God would raise up another deliverer, and she and her family would perish. He graciously reminded her that she had come to this point in time for such a time as this! Hence, it is important to accept the call as it is given from the Lord. Fourth, there is a cost involved to be in the Ministry of Deliverance. Jesus asked, "Did you weigh the cost?" Esther told Mordecai to gather all the Jews found in the city of Susa and hold a fast. She instructed him to forbid them to drink or eat for three days, and she and her maidservants would join in. After the time

of the total fast, Esther would go to the king on behalf of her people even though the act was strictly forbidden in the law of the day. She stated emphatically, "If I perish, I perish." Therefore, it is wise to weigh the costs! In the Book of Esther, one may learn from the account that there is passion for the things you love. The very nature and character of God is that He is passionate for His people, and Esther was passionate for her God. Although the actual name, God, is never used throughout the story of Esther, her life and decisions exemplified the love and devotion she had for God. She loved Him so much that she was willing to walk the path of a deliverer, and risk her own life to save the lives of an entire nation. She had no guarantees, there are no prophetic words written here to insure safety on her journey. Mordecai too, exhibited great love for God. When he heard of the threat of extinction of his people, he ripped his cloths, put on sackcloth and ashes as an outward sign of mourning, and went through the city wailing with loud, bitter cries. He sat by the king's gate but could not enter in because of his state of mourning. He loved God and he loved God's people!

A MAN THE KING DELIGHTED TO HONOR

In the Book of Esther there is a man who the king delights to honor, to bring him recognition, and to give him a special place of authority in his kingdom. King Ahasuerus chose to do this because he found out through reading the book of records, the Annals, that Mordecai had uncovered a conspiracy to assassinate him. The king then used the enemy of Mordecai to suggest a means of honor. King Ahasuerus agreed with Haman and chose the highest form of honor that could be bestowed upon someone. This ancient practice is still acknowledged today. Haman suggested that the man the king delighted to honor be given the royal robe to wear. He also suggested that this man, thinking that it was he himself

the king wished to honor, would be given the king's horse with the royal crest to ride, and that there would be a royal parade throughout the city. Haman had undoubtedly envisioned himself parading throughout the city as one who had been elevated in the sight of the king; therefore, the people would surely have to acknowledge him now! He also insisted that this individual upon whom the king wanted to bestow special recognition would have the right to wear the king's signet ring. The ring was a seal of authority which allowed him the freedom to act in the same authority as the king himself. Wearing the seal was one of the greatest honors bestowed upon an individual within the kingdom.

What does it mean to wear a garment or robe of royalty? Haman suggested that the king should give his robe to the individual who was to be honored. Wearing a king's garment or robe was a sign of unique favor; it was to partake of his power and authority, share in his stature and position, and to receive great nobility and sanctity. Haman was not given the honor, but Mordecai was. The very gallows Haman had built for Mordecai would be used as he was summoned to death for the atrocities. Haman hung in the city streets to die, as Mordecai was given the king's robe, his signet ring and his royal horse to ride in a royal parade as he was being honored. Prayer, fasting, and proper heart motives proved to be weapons of warfare against the enemy. The love for God and God's people gave cause for victory. The nation of Israel was saved, the enemies plans thwarted, and his ultimate demise was witnessed by the entire city. Let's look at another account of the impartation of authority wherein the beneficiary obtained a pledge, as he picked up the mantle of his predecessor, which would grant him the same office and spirit of its original owner.

Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground (2 Ki 2:8).

MANTLE OF POWER

Imparted power is a privilege of wearing the king's robe or a robe of an individual in authority. In II Kings 2:9, the great servant of God, Elijah, asked Elisha, "What can I do for you before I am taken from you? Elisha responded with his request, "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit." Elijah promised, "If you can see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours," and Elisha called out, "My Father, my Father!" as Elijah was taken up into the air in a chariot of fire. Elisha picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. "Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over. Believers have also been given a robe to wear. It was given to them by Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He left His robe of righteousness for believers, with all its benefits. The robe comes with all the power He Himself implemented, because it is deeds of power done in His name that are ultimately effective. We have been given His authority because He has granted us the privilege of wearing His robe, His signet ring, and His seal which is the seal of our inheritance. There was a stipulation for Elisha, however, in receiving the power. Elisha had to take the cloak. Elisha picked up the cloak that had fallen to the ground. Had he not, it would have been of no benefit to him. Christians who do not realize the benefits of wearing the robe of Christ may not receive the full implications of the benefits of such a transaction. *As many of you were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Gal 3:27)*. Therefore, in wearing His robe, believers have been imparted with His power to act in His name, thus wearing His seal of authenticity. Royal and priestly is the condition of the new man in Christ Jesus once he or she accepts Him as their King!

I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of rightness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels (Isa 61:10).

Jesus taught the disciples that they are to be clothed with power from on high, as He promised what would come through the Holy Spirit. His disciples are every believer who chooses to fulfill the will of God in their own lives. They are those who are willing to lay aside their own desires, dreams and aspirations, and follow the leading of their King, Savior, and Lord. Then, those who do so will receive the power promised to implement the Kingdom of God here on earth as it is in Heaven.

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high (Lk 24:49).

What is the significance of the robe? What does wearing a robe of royalty mean to the believer? Well, you cannot get in without it. First of all, you must be clothed with Christ or there will be no way to get into the Kingdom of God. There is but one way. Jesus is the only way. Accept by faith, confess with your lips and believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead, then you will be saved and you will receive His robe of righteousness.

"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'bind him hand and foot and throw him into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called but few are chosen".

MT 22:11-14

Second, your robe must be spotless. Believers are to wash

their robes. Robes can become defiled and it is necessary to sometimes wash them if defilement has occurred. Salvation is the means of obtaining the robe necessary to enter eternal life, but washing is also a necessity! At times, our interaction with the world and sin in which we have become entangled may smear uncleanness, defilement, or even violence on our robes. Therefore, they must be cleansed. *Moluno* (Strong's # 3435) is the Greek word signifying *defilement* such as to: "to besmear, as with mud or filth, or to befoul" in other words, one's spiritual garments can be defiled!

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates (Rev 22:14).

Third, confession and repentance will result in the cleansing of a spiritual robe. Robes are to be unstained, void of any uncleanness, unclean spirits, violence, or defilement of any kind. At times there are defilements and pollutants encountered that may require a spiritual cleansing. The Blood of Jesus washes away those sins and defilements for all who approach God with a repentant heart, true confession, and a turning away from the sinful actions that brought about the defilement. Spirits of uncleanness will then have to leave! The Apostle Paul made this very clear when he stated that we are to no longer continue in sin. If sinful behavior seems to be out of one's control, then there is the real possibility of demonic influence. Satan sends his servants to defile and pollute. Be sure to clean your spiritual robe!

But nothing unclean will enter it nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lambs Book of life (Rev 21:27).

There are many who are called into righteousness, but the Word of God states that the road is narrow, and wide is the road that leads to destruction. Therefore, be careful to wash your robes. Be cleansed under the Blood of Jesus and turn

from every defiling thing. Come out and be separate. We do have a choice, and confession and repentance is the key. God cannot, and will not, accept those into His Kingdom who, after knowing the truth, decide to continue on the path of sin, destruction and lawlessness, thus having blatant disregard for His statutes, His precepts, and His Blood. Our robes must be cleansed! In the Ministry of Deliverance, one may encounter many who call themselves Christians but continue in their lives with hatred, bitterness, deception, and falsehoods, and believe they are on their way to heaven. Scripture clearly lays out that covenant relationship has covenant responsibilities. It is written, if one calls on the name of the Lord, they must depart from unrighteousness. These responsibilities, which are actually privileges, result in the blessings of God through obedience to His Word. Do not be deceived. Righteous living is not an option, it is a requirements.

Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood (Rev 22:15).

In the story of Esther, the king was to give the man he chose to honor his signet ring. To wear the ring was a sign of promotion, position and property. It is a type of seal. A seal has several functions as discussed in chapter five. For the sake of memory, to affix a seal is to prove authenticity or prevent tampering, to attest to weight or quality, to grant or assign under seal, to establish, to settle with finality, to determine. Therefore, wearing the seal gave substantial credibility, authority, and power to operate in the king's name! The king chose to honor not Haman, but Mordecai. The king gave Mordecai his signet ring. God gives each believer His signet ring as well; the seal of the Holy Spirit. Once sealed with the king's signet ring, the decree cannot be broken. Our written decree is the Holy Bible. The irrevocable book of promises has been signed in the Blood of Jesus and sealed with the power of the

Holy Spirit! Favor from the king also offers protection, grants requests, and honors those whom he has chosen.

1. *The king protects those under his care, and punishes the enemy for wrong doing.*

For an edict written in the name of the King and sealed with the King's ring cannot be revoked. A copy of writ, a decree issued, is a written document that is published to all people and cannot be nullified once the seal has been placed on it (Est 8:8).

Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me (Jn 17:11).

2. *The king grants requests to those who wear the robe, the ring or seal, and are willing to enter into the inner court, the Holy of Holies!*

On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, opposite the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne inside the palace opposite the entrance to the palace. As soon as the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won his favor and he held out to her the golden scepter that was in his hand (Est 5:1–2).

... Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone, may that person live. Then Esther approached and touched the top of the scepter. The king said to her, "What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom" (Est 5:3).

3. *The king honors those who wear his robe and his seal and prepares for them a banquet in celebration. He gives them gifts liberally!*

...the king loved Esther more than all the other women; of all the virgins she won his favor and devotion, so that he set the royal crown on her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. Then the king gave a great banquet to all his officials

and ministers— "Esther's banquet." He also granted a holiday to the provinces, and gave gifts with royal liberality (Est 2:17–18).

Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor (Jn 12:26).

4. *A king openly rewards faithful service, done in secret.*

"For the man the king wishes to honor, let the royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and a horse that the king has ridden, with a royal crown on its head. Let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most trusted noble officials; let him robe the man whom the king wishes to honor, and let him conduct the man on horseback throughout the open square of the city, proclaiming before him: Thus shall it be done for the man the king wishes to honor" (Est 6:7–9).

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 (Mt 6:6 KJV).

There are several things foreshadowed in the Book of Esther, which are essential in understanding the Ministry of Deliverance. First of all there was Queen Vashti. She is a foreshadow, and an ante-type of the false church, a rebellious bride who refused to come into the king. There are those in every congregation, and some entire congregations, who operate under a religious mindset, and who honor God with their lips but refuse to know Him with their hearts. It's a place that nurtures the pharisaical mindsets, strongholds and spirits. It may be found in mainstream denominations or charismatic churches. This becomes relevant to ministers of deliverance because a deliverance ministry cannot exist in such an atmosphere. Therefore, the warfare, which can be tremendously

intense, can ruin credibility; and that is exactly the plan of Satan. Second, Satan vehemently attacks those who work diligently performing the duties and works of Christ, as Satan's servants, demonic spirits are being de-housed. He will not give up without a fight, so beware! As individuals move in deliverance ministry, it is essential that they work in a church that truly believes we are to do the works that Jesus did. They should stay away from working in churches that do not practice what they preach. There is a Haman waiting to plot and employ a destructive scheme against the children of God!

Queen Esther represents the real Church, the Bride of Christ who prepares herself for intimacy with the King of Kings. She is ready to serve. She prepares herself. She weighs the costs. She also reflects what the real Church should be. Esther exposed the enemy, interceded on behalf of her people, and was willing to die for them. She was a deliverer of God's people. She accurately portrayed what should be the true character of those who are called into deliverance ministry. "If I perish, I perish!" is a mindset that points to a willingness and desire to do what it takes to get the job done! The level of warfare will vary, however, the dangers are real, and they could potentially result in the loss of life. However, as we look at Esther and the great love she had for her God and for her people, we learn the importance of the work. The local church is filled with individuals who have been held captive by the enemy. Those who have believed the lies of the devil; they have accepted chains that do not belong to them. They have been heavy laden, weighed down by beasts of burdens, beasts that Jesus Christ has already disarmed. They have been deceived into thinking that there is no help available and have accepted the tricks and wiles of the devil. But Esther, the true Church, will fight to set the captives, God's people, free from their oppressor and adversary. Esther, take your place, you've come for such a time as this!

"Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits: but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture (Jn 10: 7-9).

Mordecai foreshadows the Savior, Jesus Christ. Mordecai was appointed as a high official who was overseer of the King's Gate, as Jesus Christ is the gate. There is only one way in and that is through the Way, the Truth, and the Life... Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Haman is a foreshadowing of the false prophet. His slanderous tongue was used to propagate seeds of hatred against the people of God. He whispered accusations of rebellion supposedly rising in the Jewish people and got a decree written and sealed by the signet ring of the king. He gave orders to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young, old, women and children, in one day. A copy of the decree was to be issued in every province. A public proclamation was given in the city streets. Satan's plan caused great confusion. Wherever there is jealousy, envy, and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind and it will eventually prove to be earthly, unspiritual and devilish. Haman wanted exaltation. He wanted significance. He wanted to be recognized. He sought honor and acclaim for himself. He desperately craved to be honored, especially by Mordecai. Mordecai, however, refused to bow and a plot of destruction was set in motion. Haman was willing to destroy anyone who refused to acknowledge him, even a whole nation. He was the true enemy of the king, self-serving, self-willed and self-exalted. He came against the servants of God, with a burning desire to destroy them. Within every church there are those whose intended purpose is to come against the real church, the real work, and the real servants. Haman, your plan has been exposed! Churches who have embraced the false prophet or prophetess will suffer greatly. Pastors who allow the destruction of God's servants through slander will undoubtedly pay

a high price for such disobedience. Unfortunately there are many who, because God is slow to anger, think they have escaped the judgment of God. They are convinced that they are in the right because God has not yet showed His hand of wrath. This belief is fallacy. The church which embraces the slanderous tongue will itself be the object of slander, and end in ruin.

The story of Esther beautifully outlines a church within a church, the real Church of Jesus Christ emerging out of the delusion of ritualism and falsehood, with deliverance from evil being the constant theme. Although given in the form of an allegory, the Book of Esther portrays the real Church, which will embrace the Ministry of Deliverance. The real Church will expose the plans of the enemy against God's people. It will be ready and willing to risk even life to save the lives of those God has given them. The real church will be a church of action, with a demonstration of power in the Holy Spirit, not mere words that produce nothing. As Paul so aptly reminds us, the eloquence of words is irrelevant, but it is the demonstration of power that will produce fruit for the Kingdom. It will be a church that deals with the satanic antagonist with a passion and zeal. It will be a church that fights against the slanderous, false tongue. The real Church will be a church of love and compassion, and will weep and wail over the abominations that take place in the sanctuary. It will be a church which will expose the destructive schemes of the enemy, and be willing to pray and fast to avert the strategic wiles of the devil. It will be a church that will refuse the whispering of the false prophet's twisted words, and self-appointments. Therefore reject self-seeking ambitious snakes that have slithered their way in disguise as true servants, but have only set themselves up to be worshiped. These apostates who have allowed themselves to be tools of the devil, can only mimic the true saints of God. Their words may be called prophetic, but their

character is questionable, hence, they have no validity. They have called themselves into position. Satan and his workers mimic, therefore, the false church will always try to copy those of the real church, to no avail. Just as the magicians of Egypt could copy, to some extent, the miracles of Moses, they could not create, but only mimic. The real Church will be producers and multipliers, creative and not mere imitations. The real Church will glean successful plans received directly from the Lord!

The false church will fight deliverance ministers tooth and nail. They will resist for fear of exposure. They will fight those who have a proven gift of discernment. They will push out those with a true prophetic voice. They will turn a deaf ear to the call of repentance, wearing a badge of pride that says "we are so blessed of the Lord, we don't need to change." All the while, Ichabod, which means *no glory*, is written on the door frame. What was once living water flowing out into the streets has become a "dead sea" with no hope of life in it. Heed the warnings, Church, for if you remain silent, deliverance will rise from another place. Perhaps you've come for such a time as this!

Within each of us is an Esther, a Mordecai, and a Haman. The characteristics of Esther unearthed in us will display courage, passion, submission, obedience, being purposeful and headed toward our own destiny. The Mordecai in us, as it is revealed, will exhibit characteristics of being brave, humble, and faithful. We must also resist the push to bow to things of this world; self-ambition, self-promotion, and self-exaltation. We must refuse to bow to the false prophet or prophetess who has called and placed themselves; the results will be devastating. We must refuse to bow to the wickedness under the guise of "religiosity" and come out and separate ourselves from all that is false and deceptive. Last, we all have Haman in us at some time or another; a desire to have the acclaim and

honor from those around us, prideful, arrogant, and ruthless. Haman was stripped of his royal attire and faced public shame and eventually death. Resist the desire for self-promotion! There is a plan, a purpose, and a call into destiny for every believer and it requires a royal robe that has been washed in the Blood of Jesus and made spotless by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. It requires a seal of authenticity, and an emblem of authority. What are you wearing? Are your garments washed in the Blood or are they defiled by the pollutants of this world? Are you sealed, proven true and authentic, or are you playing a role, or worse, are you the voice of the false prophet, slandering and attacking the saints of God? It is clear-cut, black or white, with no area of gray present. Just make the decision today!

Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness, and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

HEB 5:1-3

ON THE BATTLEFIELD THE FORESHADOW OF A HEAVENLY ARMY

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*

REV 19:11-16 NKJV

Understanding warfare better prepares us as we work on behalf of the Kingdom of God. We have a mandate to spread the Gospel and do the work that Jesus did, teaching the Word, healing the sick, and delivering those who are in bondage. As we engage in this work, we will invariably find obstacles and opposition along the way. Jesus

did, Paul did, each of the disciples did and, unfortunately, we will also. Preparation can help ensure success no matter how intense the fight. There is no place in the work of the Church more reflective of the heavenly battlefield than the Ministry of Deliverance. A ministry which involves head-on confrontations with the demonic forces of hell is not for the weak at heart. It is not a ministry for “babes in Christ,” nor is it for those who are casual Christians. The Ministry of Deliverance, if one is truly called of the Lord, will invariably involve tremendous pain and suffering, challenges and trials. One does not casually choose this ministry, it is chosen for them. However, it is to be used by every true believer in Jesus Christ. There are unique difficulties which arise from the spiritual opposition often encountered to stop the work, and it can be quite messy.

In saying that, however, it is the responsibility and privilege of every true believer to confront and command authority over evil forces when deemed necessary. The Word of God commissions this task to each and every one of us. Every Christian can successfully fight such forces when they understand that it is only by the name of Jesus that demons submit. The power of His name is the place of victory in the fight, and deliverance occurs on this unseen spiritual battleground, as one enters into warfare. Warring is not a choice. It is a necessity whether we war on behalf of ourselves, for others who are in need of deliverance ministry, or over cities and nations. Effectiveness in the things of God requires that each and every Christian know the enemy and understand how to fight him and his army. We must first acknowledge that there is a real battle with real opposing forces. Who, what, when, where, and how do we fight? Demonic forces, powers and principalities, are the “who” in the battle, spiritual wickedness is the “what” in the battle, and high places are the “where” of the battle. We are to stand firm, take our position, and see the

glory of the Lord shine forth is the “how” of the battle. We are to be in a constant state of readiness, and this is the “when” of the battle. Often, in the midst of a battle, things seem rather surreal as we peer in, as if watching a scene from a movie script. Yet, as ministers of deliverance, while it appears that we are engaged in an unseen fight against unseen forces, both the wounds and the victories are tangible. Therefore, join the forces, suit up and enter in as we march onward in this spiritual battle between good and evil.

Then the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: “I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?”

JDG 2:1–2 NKJV

When understanding the Ministry of Deliverance, there is no better place to start than in the Book of Judges. The name of the book means “to deliver, to judge.” The Israelites and their experiences are a type and shadow of the Church, giving both warnings and examples to the Body, and expanding the Kingdom of God. They were to take the land, possess it, and drive out every defiling thing. They were to war on behalf of God’s purposes. They were to advance against the enemy and keep themselves from the evil influences of Satan and the world around them. The period of history during which the nation of Israel was under the influence and leadership of the Judges was about 1380 to 1050 BC. It was a time in history when these newcomers were in the midst of creating a new pattern of life for their people. They had rejected the oppressive political and social systems of the new land. It was a time of tremendous struggle and transition for the people of God.

Once again, the Israelites were in the midst of revolutionary social upheaval. Israel had conquered most of the land of Canaan, however, the acquisition was incomplete. They had failed to totally drive out the enemies of God. “Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants...Ephraim did not drive out...Zebulum did not drive out...Asher did not drive out...Naphthali did not drive out...” They were not experienced in warfare. They had no warriors of notoriety among them. Israel failed to follow the directions of the Lord and the results were astounding.

Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you’ (Jdg 2:3 NKJV).

Moses died in the wilderness. Now Joshua had also died and the people of the Lord were without strong leadership. Time had not yet come for the rule of Solomon and David. A whole generation grew up after those of the Joshua generation who did not know the Lord or the wonders He had performed for Israel. Therefore, Israel “*did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.*” This vicious cycle had been repeated for centuries as God’s people, because of their own idolatry, were forced into bondage and oppression. Disobedience, oppression and distress, followed by a time of deliverance, were the established patterns of the day. They were once again faced with the potential of being expelled from the land they had gained, thus possibly being forced out of the place of promise, into a place of bondage and oppression, because they had chosen to disobey the Lord. Moral and spiritual decline had insured being taken captive by the enemy of God’s people. They had failed to drive out the Canaanites. They had openly participated in idolatry. They had joined themselves with the ungodly through intermarriage with those of the surrounding pagan cultures. They refused to obey the rule of the judges and, at times, would

turn away from God after the death of their judge. Therefore, they could not stand against their enemies.

“...gave them over to plunderers who plundered them, and he sold them into the power of their enemies all around, so that they could not longer stand against their enemies” (Jdg 2:14).

God was angry with their unwillingness to fight. Complacency and slothfulness had preempted their love and devotion to God, thus they had lost the passion to fight the enemy. They had become tolerant. Compromise abounded in their actions and deeds. When their oppression became unbearable, they would cry out to God in their distress, and because of His promise of the Covenant, He would hear and answer their prayers. Seven apostasies, seven servitudes to seven heathen nations, and seven deliverances bring about a total and complete picture of the role of the Ministry of Deliverance in setting the captives free. The primary function of deliverance ministry is to free those held in bondage to the oppressor of God’s people. God raised up judges to deliver the Israelites from their oppressors, but He was their ultimate judge.

Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge, for the Lord would be moved to pity by their groaning because of those who persecuted and oppressed them (Jdg 2:18).

The judges were local deliverers who eventually gained national notoriety. Of the thirteen judges listed, one was a woman, some had military experience, and some did not. They were exalted to a position of judge and leader by God because the moral condition of the nation was so deplorable, and He needed deliverers. Spiritually, the Israelites had broken many foundational principles which were intended to keep them pure and undefiled. They had yoked themselves together with pagans. God chose to use willing vessels who could implement His government throughout the land with

righteous judgments, based on His precepts. Judges were to discern matters and rule by God's set of rules.

Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the Lord's (Ob 1:21 NIV).

During this period of time, Israel had become powerless. They had no experienced warriors and they had neither the skills nor the passion to fight. They were called of the Lord to be His army and advance His emerging Kingdom, however, they had been so influenced by the sinfulness in which they had chosen to participate, that they had lost even the desire to fight. As God's chosen people, they were to displace the Canaanites and cleanse the land of paganism, idolatry, and all its influences, but the Israelites forgot who they were. They had forgotten why they had been given the new land. They had forgotten His divine Covenant. The Israelites had settled down in the land of promise and had become comfortable with the very things they were to stand against. They had stopped fighting the battle of the Lord and had become inundated with the ways of the surrounding peoples. Ultimately, they had forgotten their God. The Book of Judges is a book of conflict. It is the record of ongoing battles, and the battles were to remind God's people of the Lordship of Jehovah. Moses established the Covenant which was subsequently renewed by Joshua but, during this time, that role belonged to the deliverers. Then, as well as now, God's people sometimes must be reminded of the Covenant, and their duty of advancing the Kingdom of God by driving out the enemy of their souls.

Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the Lord and did not serve Him. So the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the

hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon.

JDG 10:6-7 NKJV

The Ministry of Deliverance is foreshadowed in the Book of Judges. The Lord's holy war was underway, led by those God had chosen as deliverers. The judges were to execute judgment on the righteous and destroy the wicked. They had the task of deciding controversies and then hand down a verdict. They were to discern between good and evil, holy and unholy, and uphold the will of God. They were to guide military expeditions against the enemy, fight the oppressors, and deliver God's people. These charismatic leaders were also to rule, administer, and govern by God's set of standards. They were responsible for maintaining the expectations and responsibilities of a covenant people. They were instrumental in effectively implementing and upholding the name of the Lord. God is the perfect and the only flawless Judge but, through His divine power, He raised up men and women to fight. Thus, they were prepared to exert great power in affecting God's desires in the battle against the enemy of His people.

These judges had some commonalities. First of all, the Lord raised them up. Such position was not chosen, it was given by God alone. They were empowered with God's divine Spirit and given power and wisdom to carry out the task that lay before them. "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*" was a statement given by Jesus Christ of Nazareth as He preached in the synagogue. It was the introduction to His mission statement. It was a message of deliverance, to let the captives go free as well as to heal the sick and preach the Gospel to the nations. The judges had the same testimony, which was that the Spirit of the Lord was with them as they were called to lead the captives out of bondage and oppression. Deliverance ministry is a means by which the demonic hosts of Satan are identified, fought against, and pushed out. It is a means of regaining

ground that had been lost to the enemy. It is the tearing down of ungodly strongholds so that the Kingdom of Light may enter in, replacing the kingdom of darkness, just as in the days of the battle of Jericho. Spiritual warriors of God will fight for that advancement now on earth, one soul at a time. This Ministry of Deliverance is an earthly picture of a heavenly reality of what will come in the final battle. Fighting is not an option, it is an expectation, and everyone will be fighting on one side of the battle or the other.

God has consistently dealt with the temptation of His children in turning away from the way of righteousness. He frequently used men and women who were willing to lead to redirect the path of those who were His. Another commonality found between the judges of the Old Testament and the deliverance ministers of today is that they are all flawed and fight against some kind of weakness in themselves. Moreover, they are no more righteous or spiritual than others, they are simply willing warriors chosen by God for such a task. Hence, deliverance ministers are imperfect, and may exhibit character weakness, just as their predecessors of old. This fact does not disqualify those chosen, just as it did not disqualify the judges of Israel. Barak was fearful and God promised the battle would be won at the hand of a woman because of his fear. Gideon doubted his call, and maintained a weak theology in demanding a sign from God as to that call. He fell into pride and made an ephod for himself as a symbol of civil power and authority, which became a snare to him and his entire household. Samson gave in to the desires of the flesh, and submitted himself in to the hands of a pagan seductress, sharing the clandestine details of his strength. Samson had fallen prey to the enemy of God, his eyes were put out and he was dragged to Gaza where he stayed until his death. Regardless of the shortcomings of these great deliverers, it was through faith and supernatural revelation that human weakness and inad-

equacy faded into obscurity, as victory was gained through the power of a living God. The same is true today. Human weakness has never been, and will never be, the deciding factor in the selection process of God. Most assuredly, He has chosen those who are most incapable in their own abilities to be used for His glory.

These judges had in common the understanding of the curse of pervasive idolatry and spiritual prostitution. These leaders knew that such sin would invariably lead to permanent barrenness and bondage. It was a plague that would greatly hinder the expansion of God's Kingdom. It would cut off their blessings. It would lift the hand of God's protection over the land. It would guarantee oppression by the enemy. It was the impetus used to threaten the entire belief system of the people of God, and His deliverers knew it! They were ready, at all costs, to destroy the false worship of the land, to tear down the false idols, and to cleanse the land of pagan practices and idolatry, even at the cost of their own lives. The judges understood that they would have to fight to maintain ground. Even though God had given them the land, it was up to them to maintain their stance, and sin would assure the loss of ground gained. They understood that the enemy would claim rights to occupy the land given them by God. The Lord said, "*The land is mine.*" First in the natural, and then in the supernatural, Satan and his hosts are still trying to claim the ground that belongs to God. Gaza Strip, probably the most infamous land in the world, has been an issue of debate from the time of Samson's rule until today. This small strip of land is located near the last town encountered in the southwest Palestine. It is just a mere forty miles from the birthplace of Samson. At the time of the Judges, the rulers of the Ammonites claimed rights to the land that had been occupied by the Israelites for some three hundred years. Occupation was ownership during that time, but the Israelites acknowledged

that God was ultimately the owner and He had chosen to give the land to them. They were entitled to it because it was a gift from God. Satan tried to claim it, but it belonged to the Lord. It is, without a doubt, the most sought after land in history. Spiritually, the work of deliverance is reclaiming for God what He has already owned. Satan comes to steal it through false claims of ownership, thus a spiritual battle ensues.

Lastly, once called, the judges maintained their position as judge throughout their lifetime. It was a permanent responsibility which they carried with them unto death. The judges, just as deliverance ministers, were empowered by the Spirit of the Lord. They were given discernment, wisdom and power to accomplish the task at hand. Despite their human weaknesses, they worked diligently for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, and accredited the victories to the King of Kings! God raised up deliverers from their midst to set His children free again. Deliverers and warriors have something uniquely in common; they have a heart to fight against the enemies of God!

If you have come to me in friendship, to help me, then my heart will be knit to you; but if you have come to betray me to my adversaries though my hands have done no wrong, then may the God of our ancestors see and give judgment (I Ch 12:17).

THE HEART OF A WARRIOR

The heart of a warrior is best exemplified through the life of David. We can learn tremendous lessons about the art of battle from this great leader and king. It is rare that we envision ourselves suited up for war, but we are taught in scripture that this is our proper attire. We are to take up the whole armor of God, so that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. King David had a heart for the Lord. He understood that God was far more just than man. He preferred the discipline of the Lord over dealing with the judgments that

man may have chosen to impose. He trusted God implicitly. David was born in Jerusalem and his name means “beloved.” He was considered to be Israel’s most famous king. He was instrumental in the establishment of the ancestral line of Jesus Christ. David, even as a young boy, understood the battle. He was a shepherd boy who cared for his flock. At times, he would be faced with ravenous animals coming into the fold to harm or destroy his flock, and David fought against them. He even fought lions and bears as a young boy. Conspicuously, he would defend the weak who were being targeted for destruction. David was an avid lover of music. Even as a young boy he would play his lyre, which would later gain him a place in the royal household of Saul. King Saul, tormented by evil spirits, would call for David and, as David played his music, the evil spirits would depart from him. David was a young warrior fighting forces of evil through anointed music, as he was eminently gifted, powerful in driving out evil spirits. Saul was an anointed king, given to the people of Israel at their request, but he was tormented by “a distressing spirit.” Saul had been disobedient to God and opened himself up to an onslaught of attacks from those distressing spirits. During several of these times of torment he had attempted to kill David, although David was his armor-bearer and loved him greatly. His hatred and jealousy of David would overtake him during these times. However, evil spirits would depart from Saul as David played his lyre. Saul was in a spiritual battle he did not know how to fight. Even in the midst of pursuit, David was determined to protect and defend his adversary, Saul.

David took on the giant warrior of the Philistines, a champion named Goliath, as the army of Saul trembled at his sight. In response to this victory, David gained considerable notoriety. With just a slingshot in hand and stones from a nearby brook, David took down the most fearsome soldier the Philistines had to offer, and he did it in the name of the Lord.

David was confident. He was brave. He was mighty. However, it was because of his great passion and love of the Lord that he was willing to risk his very life and stand against the enemy who defied His God.

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied (I Sa 17:45).

David, a prototype or foreshadow of the future King and Messiah, was to lead great battles. He was a mighty man of valor. His skillful diplomacy, coupled with his brilliant military strategy was, at least in part, cause for the establishment of his own powerful kingdom. He had tremendous insight to the importance of organization, as his kingdom was carefully structured in such a way that it insured unity within the ranks. He was a wise administrator of his people and his resources. He was a fighter. He had many battles in his lifetime, both in the natural and in the supernatural, and he knew how to successfully fight them. David knew his mission. He was very skilled at gaining the respect and devotion of those around him. The Lord swore a sure oath from which He would not turn back and relent, the Everlasting Covenant.

Behold, the days are coming says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: *The Lord our Righteousness*".

JER 23:5-6

David, being a prototype of Jesus, gives us an understanding of the warfare on the earthly battlefield that is a shadow of the warfare in the realm of the Spirit. His life provides a dimly lit visual of the ultimate final conflict in which Christ

Jesus is our Mighty Warrior! David was the anointed king and a mighty warrior. He was a shepherd of the people and a man after God's own heart. Unlike Jesus however, he had many personal weaknesses, but he was the ruler of many and a son of God. David and his warriors were successful in war because they were equipped for battle. They had a singleness of purpose and they could keep rank. He chose mighty and experienced warriors who strengthened themselves, who had proven themselves, and who had "won a name" for themselves as they had a reputation for being mighty warriors in battle. Some were called to do great things. Some were called to stand beside those called to do great things, and some were left behind to support those called to do great things. Leaders of the people, those who are called into warfare, may therefore follow the examples set forth in the life of David. David was successful in warfare because he knew the art of warfare, he asked the Lord for directions, he listened to God and then obeyed those directions.

And David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hand? The Lord said to him, "Go up, for I will deliver them into your hand" (I Ch 14:10).

David was successful because he understood there was a right time. He was successful because he understood the need for sanctification as he cried out to God for a clean heart. David knew the importance of the presence of God and the dependence on God in the midst of every battle. He understood the importance of handling the things of God with great care. David had been given the responsibility of bringing up the Ark of the Covenant. He required the Levites to cleanse themselves and be sanctified so that they could handle the ark properly. When the people of God had reached the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzzah reached out to hold the ark which was being shaken by the oxen pulling the cart. God's anger

was kindled against him and he was struck down and he died. David was, from that time forth, fearfully aware of handling the things of God with great care. David was successful in warfare because he understood the importance of praise. He appointed certain Levites to minister before the Lord with thanksgiving and praise. He appointed singers to sing songs of praise in the presence of God. *Yadah* (Strong's #3034) in Hebrew means "to revere or worship with extended hands; to praise, give thanks, acknowledge or declare the merits of someone." By example, David encouraged those under his leadership to praise. He loved God and was not afraid to display his love. His passion for the Lord was expressed through musical and poetic gifts which clearly celebrated the magnificence of his God. He danced in the streets and worshipped God with a heart of thanksgiving, trusting in the direction of the Lord, and giving thanks for victory in the battle! David was successful as a mighty warrior for God because God sent him people to help him in the battle. David had confidence that the Lord would supply all he needs. He was confident that God would give him the men required to conquer the enemy.

Indeed from day to day people kept coming to David to help him, until there was a great army, like an army of God (I Ch 12:22).

David had a heart to build a temple for God. He was, however, denied that privilege because he had been a man of war, with much blood on his hands. Nathan, the prophet, gave him the word of the Lord guaranteeing that his son would build the temple and, due to the divine sanction, David was inspired to begin the process of collecting goods and materials to be used. Despite his great love for God, David was not without sin. In addition to the adulterous affair with Bathsheba and his murderous attempt to cover it up, he also called for a census. Satan put it into his heart to do it. He commanded that a census be taken and God was greatly angered. Therefore, judgment proved certain. Simply counting the

warriors of Israel was not the issue; it was the false implication that their numbers would be evidence of their strength. The spirit of pride and vanity had influenced him. David realized his decision was foolish and he quickly repented. This mindset was one in which David received such accolades as "doing what is right" in the sight of God. God sent the prophet Gad to allow David to choose between three acts of judgment. He chose to be judged at the hand of God over the hand of man. He trusted in God's divine nature of being a just God. David chose pestilence on the land, and the angel of the Lord went destroying throughout all the territory of Israel. Pestilence fell and seventy thousand were destroyed. David saw the Sword of the Lord in the sky. The Lord sent the destroying angel to Jerusalem, but in His great mercy, He relented and commanded a stay of the destruction. The angel appeared between earth and heaven with a drawn sword in his hand outstretched over Jerusalem. David and his elders fell to the ground, prostrate before the Lord, and pleaded on behalf of his sheep, those under his care, for the wrath of God to fall on him instead of those under him. The Lord commissioned David to construct an altar there, which would later become the site for the sanctuary and the center of national worship. David built the altar unto the Lord and presented a burnt offering and an offering of well-being, and the Lord answered him with fire from heaven. David announced that the house that was to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent, famous, and glorified throughout the land. It was a place sanctified by the presence of a holy God. David had a heart to build a house for the Lord! Firm and unshakable was the foundation on which David stood because, above all else, he trusted the Lord implicitly. Although he was a transgressor and had acted erroneously in his sinful nature on numerous occasions, he was not swayed from his desire to seek Jehovah with a passion. It was the most pure cry of his heart. He was sensitive to the

leading of the Lord, and was determined that God's direction set his course. His mouth was constantly full of praise, his heart full of love, and his mind focused on God's will. He had gained a healthy fear of the Lord. God showed Himself mighty in the face of David's battles. He taught David that his sins would have dire consequences on those who followed under him. God showed David the power of His hand in judgment. David struggled toward righteousness. A man marred by his own sin, he was relentless in his pursuit to be quickly restored to his loving and all-powerful God. David dedicated all that was won in battle to the Lord. The battle belongs to the Lord, and everything won during the battle belongs to the Lord. David knew that it was truly God who deserved any credit due to the many victories he had experienced. He knew in the deepest part of himself that, without God, the victories were impossible. He accredited to God what was rightfully God's, and God acknowledged his faithfulness, describing him as a man after God's own heart!

The Lord gave victory to David wherever he went (I Ch 18:6).

KINGDOM EXPANSION

Deliverance ministry is warfare. It is most successful as individuals move with the same intentions toward God that David displayed. Hearts that are fully submitted will obtain victory for the Lord. Those who understand the power of praise, the importance of rank, and the singleness of purpose in the battle will be effective in their efforts. The main goal of deliverance ministry should be the expansion of God's Kingdom, and the displacement of the enemies of God. Deliverance ministers will have a heart to build the temple of the Lord. They will be willing to fight at all costs. They will give God the glory for each and every victory. They will have a desire for holiness and will work diligently to uphold the Word of God. It will be their manual for living, as well as for fighting. Warriors

of God will fight against all that attempts to defile His name or purposes. They will devote themselves to prayer and seek the Lord before entering into any battle. The holy things of God must be handled with great care. David understood this responsibility and so will every good soldier who has been called into battle. Warriors of the Lord are to exhibit courage, power and strength. Such characteristics, clothed with compassion, humility, and the love of God, will be an explosive force against the enemies of the Cross.

Figuratively, warfare is an illustration of the wicked hosts of the devil being destroyed by the hands of a faithful, loving God as they come against His servants. It is a supernatural battle between the saints of God with the forces of darkness who have been sent to interfere with the advancement of the Kingdom of God, and to destroy the testimony of His children. As the forces of darkness are held in check, the ground for expansion may be gained, and the Church is successful in its efforts at being His hands and feet in the earthly realm. The extent of spiritual warfare may involve individual prayer ministry for others, or it may be as comprehensive as warring on behalf of cities or nations. Regardless of the call or responsibility, successful warfare is obtained by those who have a heart for the Lord to do His will and purpose here in the natural realm, using supernatural tools in the heavenly battle. There is not a question of whether you will battle, but when you will battle. Therefore, suit up and let the battle begin! Deliverers called of God will exhibit the same attributes as those found in the pages of the Book of Judges. They will be empowered by the Spirit of the Lord. They will operate in divine power, wisdom and discernment to fight and overcome forces of evil. They will accredit the victories to God, the ultimate Deliverer. Although they may have character weaknesses and are subject to fall into sin, they face the same issues common to man and, therefore, God is glorified in the

victories! There are some foundational principles one should acknowledge as the judges are reviewed. These precepts set up proper understanding of the process of deliverance ministry. Most importantly, the Book of Judges gives us the theological principle that still holds true today; obedience to the laws and precepts of God brings peace and life, and disobedience to the law brings oppression and death. It also portrays the heart of a merciful, faithful God even in the midst of a disobedient people. Spiritually, the Book of Judges shows us the faithfulness of the Lord to His covenant. If the people would only confess and repent, He would raise up a deliverer who would move on their behalf and set them free from their oppressor. As previously discussed, true confession is followed by true repentance, and deliverance from bondage is a spiritual guarantee. Also, God did, and will, turn persistently willful sinners over to the natural consequences of their sins. Therefore, they open themselves up to the divine judgment of God because of their own choices. When an individual is truly repentant, he or she will acknowledge the right of God to chastise, and will graciously accept such discipline. The heart of one who is grieved over their sin will pursue remediation, and their true response will invariably lead to deliverance. Jesus Christ came to set the captives free. It is in His name and His authority that the enemy must go, and we are His disciples commissioned to do the work He did during His earthly ministry. The deliverer will reclaim ground for the Lord. Through proclamation and a confirming agreement with the Covenant of God, publically acknowledged in the midst of solemn prayer as the Lord is invoked as witness, the lost ground is spiritually reclaimed. This will inevitably clear any false claims of ownership that the enemy, through use of demonic intervention, has tried to establish. God raised up a deliverer who would expel the evil from their midst and set His children free again. Suit up, you've been called to battle!

GUERRILLA WARFARE

The kingdom of darkness operates in a manner much like guerilla warfare which, from the Spanish term where it first originated, means “*small war*.” The significance of our English understanding is often used congruently as being descriptive of individuals as well as the tactics they employ. Similarities can be drawn that may assist the reader in grasping the nature of the spiritual battle. Guerilla warfare usually begins with a group of individuals who band together in rebellion against an established authority. The insurgents rise up in an effort to gain control or overthrow an occupation force which is lawfully in power. Often in this unconventional combat, they achieve momentum as they operate underground. The hidden or concealed organization uses illegal or secret tactics against their opposition as they engage in extended, low-intensity confrontation. Constant, random attacks over a long period of time are meant to destabilize their combatants. They try to obtain ground illegally and frequently stand in opposition to the officially authorized governing authority as they build a base of sympathetic supporters. Insurgents rely on, and seek out, those who will assist them in the coup. Much of their sustenance is reliant on those who agree with their position or doctrine.

Guerilla warfare involves an armed force which is irregular in form, but highly effective in strategy. Strategically, guerilla warriors fight by harassment, intimidation, trickery, and sabotage. They use deception and ambush to confuse their opposition. Combatants rely on carefully devised propaganda, espionage, and terrorism. They skillfully control information and twist it to accomplish their proposed objectives. Information warfare is highly effective in accomplishing their intended agenda as they gain knowledge concerning the opposition's capabilities, weaponry, disposition, and morale. Psychological warfare is used as a means of destroying the opponent's

morale, thus wearing them down through mental, antagonistic trickery. Discouragement and disillusion are tools guerillas rely on to effectively overwhelm their opposition. Combatants are highly knowledgeable of the established leadership, their constituents, and those who oppose their doctrine. Cloak and dagger methods are included in the scope of the guerilla warfare arsenal as covert operations are conducted behind enemy lines. Clandestine operations of intelligence quickly become a war of wits as the two opposing groups strategize their next move. The guerilla operative will infiltrate after careful analysis of the potential target and a friendly base will provide shelter, food, and supplies. Agreement and association becomes the invaluable lifeline of the guerilla operative. Conversely, a hostile population base would make success a virtual impossibility. Methods to oppress all who oppose their efforts are employed under the assumption that if they are harshly treated, those in opposition would give up and then become supporters of the rebellion. Therefore, oppression is a key tactical approach in winning solidarity with the views and beliefs of the illegal guerillas.

Guerilla warfare is most successful when employed on rough, rugged terrain. Insurgents are typically smaller, thus allowing for greater mobility. They plan surprise attacks as they draw out their often larger, less mobile target. They are more flexible than the more sophisticated organizations which operate in bands of a squadron, platoon or battalion. Smaller units quite successfully prolong the life of the fight. Consistent, methodical attacks often demoralize and wear down their opponents. Terror strikes are employed in an effort to hasten a quick withdrawal by the countervailing forces. Camouflage helps the insurgents escape, often with few casualties. However, suicide bombings are frequently employed, because ultimately they do not value human life. They refrain from wearing uniforms in an attempt to remain anonymous.

They require only a small inherent space, therefore, once they are dispersed, they are quite difficult to contain, capture or attack. Their commanders surreptitiously give directives from underground caverns, frequently operating beneath the earth in below-ground storage areas. Hostile plans and activities are devised against established authorities as the resistance primarily focuses on stirring a revolution. These insurgents have deserted their allegiance to the proper governing authority and spend much of their downtime between attacks in the indoctrination of their beliefs to all who will give them an ear. In the interim, they gather information, construct strongholds, and infiltrate their opponents. Terror, torture, and execution are part of the guerilla initiative and tactical elements of surprise and concealment give them the advantage as they hide in the mountainous regions, as well as the jungles.

The spiritual forces in high places operate in much the same way as guerilla warfare. The enemy has a well organized host of combatants who are well informed about their opposition. Satan's command headquarters are underground (concealed), and covert hostile plans are constantly being devised to wear down the target. Satan and his hosts are sent to attack believers. Their goal is to infiltrate, indoctrinate and control by illegally obtaining ground. The devil uses his mercenaries to intimidate, manipulate, and dominate by usurping the established authority given by God and such forces set up strongholds when they have been given a friendly base of operation through association and agreement. Rebellion is their unifying factor. The enemy prowls around looking for those he can devour. He persuades them, through discouragement and disillusion, to gain a sympathetic base. He uses trickery, harassment, and sabotage to demoralize and overwhelm his prey. He is well camouflaged and moves with flexibility to ambush, surprise, and overtake his opponent. His militant force is used effectively as it is sent out under his command. He is diligent

in understanding the weaknesses and strengths of his target and hits those areas of weakness through consistent, long-term assaults to eventually overtake legal occupation. Satan sets up areas of strongholds where he and his mercenaries can safely hide behind enemy lines. Illegal occupation attempts to persuade the opposition by oppression and acts of terror, thereby threatening their freedom and instilling fear.

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

The Church of freedom fighters for Christ are also crusaders of truth. Being in a hostile land, deep in enemy territory, believers are reformers, willing to fight for change in a culture of darkness. But to fight, it is imperative to understand both tactical initiatives and counter-intelligence. Believers are also emancipationists as they are in favor of abolishing slavery of their own people. The campaign against evil must also involve strategy. It is a prerequisite to success as one battles against this well-organized, hostile resistance. Deliverance ministers are simply well-trained warriors. All believers must fight, however, just as in the Book of Judges, there are those God raises up and anoints with power to stand in opposition against unseen forces. They gain their insight, direction, and power directly from the Holy Spirit. They have accepted the challenge and the responsibility, and have carefully weighed the cost. They have dedicated themselves to the Word of God and are determined to stand against evil wherever it is found. Deliverance ministers have committed their loyalty to God above family, friends, churches, or denominations. They have vowed to become experts at war. Training is critical as one advances in the battle between good and evil. Techniques for fighting against spiritual guerilla warfare successfully are listed below:

There must be a clear vision based solidly on biblical beliefs

which will neutralize the enemy. Therefore, search the Word for scriptures to counter the hostile faction as it attacks.

Deal honestly where there is a legitimate tie-in or association with the enemy and cut it off. Sincere steps taken in an effort to eliminate corruption will undermine the combatants and a base that is hostile to them will thwart their intended purposes. Place yourself under the proper governing body.

Resist the temptation to be overwhelmed when the enemy has been identified. Rather, move within the proper framework of the Church, exercise restraint, and follow orderly procedures, regardless of the length or duration of the attack. Accept wise council of those who are in leadership positions.

“Big gun” action may be necessary. In other words, there may be a battle with the enemy that requires specialized, trained warriors, such as deliverance ministers, to break up or stop the spiritual guerrilla concentrations.

Be mobile and aggressive. Locate, pursue and target the enemy. Complacency will surely lead to defeat. Keep the enemy on the run by declaring he is trespassing and has no legal authority over you.

Systematically gather and utilize information. Truth is your greatest weapon. Knowing the enemy, his tactics and operations is essential for long-term success. Most importantly, understand and use the truth of the Word of God.

Methodically clear and hold an area. In other words, look realistically at the conflict area under attack and prioritize what must be addressed first. Clear away any sympathy toward the enemy and hold claim of the area as ground for the Lord.

Carefully deploy all forces available. Through prayer and fasting, the heavenly hosts await directives from the throne room and God is more than willing to send forth His warring angels to battle on behalf of His children.

Worldwide, there is a turbulent environment of hostile factions and rebellious insurgents moving as terrorists to destroy

those of opposing doctrines. However, there is none as fierce as those deployed by Satan. He is the master of evil. He is the author of many guerilla conflicts and uses religious camouflage as his backdrop for terror and destruction. True spiritual warfare that results in successfully overcoming the enemy will not be a onetime battle, but an ongoing, systematic approach in controlling one's own spiritual house and the environment surrounding it. Counter-insurgency may represent a climate of change, revolutionizing one's surroundings as well as fighting on behalf of others. A Holy War is one of fighting against evil foreign occupational forces wherever they exist. It is an effort to maintain ground, or take back what the enemy has stolen from one's self, one's family, or even cities and nations.

“I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety. I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessings. The trees in the field will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in the land. They will know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from those who enslaved them”.

EZE 34:25–27

COVENANT OF PEACE

Israel consistently refused to follow the leadership of God's chosen deliverers. This resulted in a nation given to apostasy and anarchy. The development of a temple of false worship was instituted and the tribe of Dan fell into the apostasy. This place of false worship was no more than a counterfeit shrine.

It housed false images and was filled with personal idols made with money consecrated to the Lord. Micah was a man from Ephraim who was responsible for instituting a system of worship outside of the will of God. He set his own son as priest, and then, in an attempt to win God's approval, hired a Levite who had defected from his own inherited position. He, like the people of Israel, did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. The people of Dan were easily swayed to overtake Micah's household. They had not yet received their own inheritance, so they stripped Micah of his idols, household gods, and ephod. They invited his priest to leave with them. They were unable to hold off the Philistine incursions into their territory. They had forfeited their inheritance and migrated into Israel's northern land where the people of Laish lived. The tribe of Dan burned their city and killed a peaceful and unsuspecting town. The period of the Judges was one of Israel's darkest times. It was a time when “*Israel had no king,*” but they did have God, and they chose to ignore Him and His commands! The beginning of the battle between good and evil is found in the Garden of Eden as hostility is birthed between the seed of woman and the seed of the serpent. The seed of the woman would eventually be on the scene as the Captain of the Hosts, sent to break the serpent's control over the earth. In this final conquest, the seed, Jesus Christ, will forever rule as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, and every knee shall bow. It is in this final revolution of Satan that he and his faithful followers will be cast down into the eternal lake of fire.

THE NAME

I bow down toward your Holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

Ps 138:2

Who is this Jesus? Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Jesus, born of a virgin, was given His name by an angelic host before He was conceived in the womb. The birth of Christ was predicted in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament. Jesus of Nazareth was born in the town of Bethlehem of Judea, which means “city of bread,” and His father, Joseph, was from a tribe and territory known for the production of the line of the Davidic kings. Micah, the prophet, had prophesied His coming seven centuries prior to His birth, as did Isaiah. Joseph, His earthly father, was just a simple carpenter. He followed the direction of the angel Gabriel and named his son Jesus as had been instructed. Joseph and Mary, by angelic visitation, were also informed that their child would be the Savior of the world and that He was to be the Christ, the Lord. Christ’s genealogy included being the son of David, son of Jessie, son of Abraham, and Son of God. His maternal lineage included

three gentile women: Tamar, Rehab the prostitute, Ruth, the wife of Boaz, and one woman thought to be of Israeli descent, Bathsheba, who was the wife of King David. Mary, mother of Jesus, was visited by the angel Gabriel and the angel told her that she had found favor with God. Joseph was also assured that the child who was conceived in her was from the Holy Spirit. This miraculous conception began to unfold the Master's plan for all of mankind and it is in His name that we can begin to grasp His humanity, His deity, His attributes, His character and His power. It is in His name that we understand His purpose, His mission, His Lordship and His authority over the Church. It is in His name that His teaching and preaching goes forth, as He modeled in word and deed, for His disciples to become the image and reflection of a living, powerful, Savior and Deliverer.

Jesus Christ emphatically confirms to us who He was and is, as He declares His identity through His own words written within the pages of the Holy Bible. Seven times He proclaimed His oneness with God the Father as He stated that He is "I AM," just as God had said to Moses, declaring Himself as the great "I AM." He risked being stoned for blasphemy as those in His hearing picked up rocks to whirl at Him as He slipped away from the temple grounds. The Gospel of John is a book of identification. Throughout its pages Jesus is revealed in His glory, as both God and man. He is revealed first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. Jesus revealed Himself as the source of life as He turned the water into wine. He is revealed as the author of life as He explained to Nicodemus the process of being born again, which is spiritual rebirth. He is revealed throughout Old and New Testament scriptures as the preacher, the miracle worker, the healer, the deliverer, the evangelist, and the prophet.

"I tell you the truth, Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I AM'" (Jn 8:58 NIV)!

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Jesus claimed that He was the Bread of Life that came down from Heaven. He had just performed the miraculous and fed five thousand people, with an abundant supply left over. This sign, in the natural, was to confirm in the spiritual that He would sustain believers and provide them true bread from heaven, with the promise that they will never hunger or thirst. His flesh is the true bread and His Blood is the true drink, and those who eat and drink will never die. Manna from heaven, during the time of the Exodus, was Jesus Christ Himself as He provided for their every need.

I Am the Light of the World

Jesus declared Himself as the Light of the World. God is light, and all believers are to reflect His light. He came to light the path for everyone who would believe. He is both the source of seeing and the only means by which one can see. Jesus, being challenged by the Pharisees, declared that His own testimony regarding Himself was true, but He also declared God, the Father, as His witness. Light expels darkness. Darkness can never stand in the face of light; it is absolutely impossible. Spiritual illumination by the power of the Holy Spirit is the only way by which one can understand spiritual truths. They are veiled from viewing and cannot be discerned through self-effort. The Gospel, as it illuminates for those who will receive it, transforms them from being held captive to the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light. Henceforth, they become aliens of this world, no longer subject to the spiritual hosts of wickedness. Spiritual truths to the unbelieving are foolishness and vain thinking. To the believing, illumination by the Gospel brings freedom and deliverance from the bondage of sin and its chains of guilt and oppression. Light shows the way to walk. It illuminates the path. It helps one see

as they travel through this world, and it cleanses them from the defilement encountered along the way. Jesus is that light, and His life reflects the way believers are to walk, the path of righteousness.

I Am the Gate

A gate is an opening in a wall or fence to enter or exit. It can be an entrance to a city or castle that is walled. It can be an opening for a palace, a sanctuary, a tomb, or a prison. It is a place where proclamations are made, legal transactions are carried out, and criminal cases are tried. In antiquity, it was quite commonly a place of great celebration; therefore, it was also a place for festivities to occur. The gate of a city was the place where most important decision making occurred. Jesus stated that He is the Gate. He used this metaphor to explain that He is the only way to salvation. He is the authority upon which one may stand as they make proclamations. He gives the believer legal authority to claim righteous status in the courts of Heaven. He gives them victory in the final court case, as it has already been won. It is through Him that one may ultimately enter the Kingdom of God on earth and in heaven. It is through faith in Jesus that man receives the free gift of salvation and no one comes to the Father except through Him. It is through Him that miracles, healings and deliverance occur, and He instructed His followers when such things occur to say, "The Kingdom of Heaven has come near you."

I Am the Good Shepherd

Jesus described Himself as the Good Shepherd. He is the perfect example for an earthly shepherd or pastor to follow. A good shepherd feeds, waters, and defends his sheep. He provides a place of rest for them as he secures the pasture. He searches for the lost. A shepherd knows his sheep and they

know him. A shepherd stands at the gate of the pasture and calls his sheep by name. If there are other sheep together in the same pen, the sheep that are his will recognize their name as he calls to them and they willingly follow his voice, while ignoring the voice of another. A good shepherd would die for his sheep. Conversely, a hireling is a shepherd who is interested in the monetary rewards of his work and cares very little for the well-being of those under his care. False shepherds, those who do not have the best interest of the flock in mind, will run when a wolf enters in to scatter the sheep. They are unfaithful, unbelieving, cowardly, and selfish. Ruthless in their actions, their loyalty is to their own desires. With this analogy, Jesus gives us the most vivid picture of the leader of the local church, and the impact on the congregation when the wolf enters. Invariably, there will be a scattering of the sheep. Jesus used this metaphor to reflect the nature and character of a true pastor as being reflected of His own character. A true pastor will lay down his life for those under his care. He is the good shepherd who watches carefully over His flock, leading and guiding them to safety. Jesus also said that He had more than just these sheep, but others from another pen. Jesus was superior in His teachings as He referred to more than just what was at hand. Prophetically, He was referring to the Gentile nation that was about to be brought in under one flock and one shepherd. It is also of the utmost importance to reject prejudice against others from different denominations or church affiliations, and remember that we are of all one Body, with one Lord, and one Savior.

I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life

Jesus taught in the written Word of God that He is the Way. The Way was a name the early church first used. Those who believed in the life and teachings of Christ were considered part of the Way. Jesus declared unequivocally that He was the

only way to God, because He was the Truth of God in the flesh, and He reflected the very image of God in His life. As one understands this truth, they accept Him and, therefore, receive eternal life. Every major religion believes in the life of Jesus and all accept Him as a great teacher and prophet, but many believe that there is another way into heaven. If Jesus is not who He said He was, why acknowledge Him as being a great teacher or prophet? Great teachers do not teach error or lies. Great teachers do not teach principles based on faulty foundations. He is either believed in the entirety of the scriptures as being who He said He was, or rejected as a great hoax. Jesus said that He was the only way to the Father. He was, by His own admission, more than just a teacher or prophet. There is no gray area here. He was, and is, who He said He was! Jesus Christ let the world know that He is one with the Father, God incarnate, and His works are of God, and in God, as God is in Him. It is in Him that truth is revealed by His Spirit, because His Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, and accepting Him as Lord and Savior is the way to eternal life.

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

Jesus compassionately raised Lazarus from the dead. Martha could trust in the resurrection that leads to eternal life, but struggled with trusting Him in a time of personal conflict and crisis. Jesus taught her that death itself was no barrier for the Author of Life. He taught her that it is in Him and through Him that everyone who truly believes is promised life eternal. It is through accepting Him that one is made spiritually alive. Resurrection means “*standing again, or to be raised from the dead,*” and encompasses both physical and spiritual resurrection. Jesus, through His own resurrection, removed the sting of death and the fear of the life after death from all who believe. Also, it is only in Him that one can rest in the promise that they will never taste death but, instead, enter into life.

All men die in Adam, but believers are made alive in Christ Jesus and will stand again. He demonstrated for the believer that the mortal would take on immortality, and would receive a glorified body. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus took on His glorious form and this event modeled, for the disciples, the Second Coming of Christ when, in the twinkling of an eye, His chosen would be raised up with a new, glorious body and meet with Him in the air. Moses, a representative of the Law, and Elijah, a representative of the Prophets, are the written and spoken Word of God, joined together in resurrection power as they appeared by His side. The redeemed of the Lord, first in the natural and then in the spiritual, are being lifted up by Christ Jesus Himself, the Resurrection and Life, as the Kingdom of God was, is, and will be manifested on earth in the finality of its expansion. “Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in Heaven.”

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of His majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

II PE 1:16–18

I Am the Vine

Symbolically, the vine is a picture of the nation of Israel as well as the spiritual union of Christ with His followers. Jesus sustains and prunes the believer, and there is no fruit apart from Him. Good fruit is godly fruit, and those who do not produce it will be cut off. He is faithful to prune those who are His so that they will be fruitful. Although pruning can often be

painful, it is the necessary process of obtaining godly fruit in the life of a believer. Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing. In other words, man's most ardent attempt to produce anything of eternal value will always fall short and miss the mark. God is glorified through His children as He is reflected in them. We glorify God as we do the very things Jesus did.

FOREVER ACCLAIMED

The word *name* in Hebrew is *shem* (Strong's #8034) and it conveys the idea of a definite and conspicuous position, or an appellation as a mark or memorial of individuality. The implication suggests honor, authority, character, and fame (whether infamous or famous). A name often distinguishes an individual as being renowned, having an identity of intrinsic value, or possessing rank and reputation. Names are used to identify one individual from other, or the uniqueness of a particular family line. Names are used to distinguish a person's heritage or birthright. There is identification, recognition, and character reflected in a name. A name is used to establish a new identity, to develop a new concept of character that is associated with a particular name, to point to destiny or purpose for one's life. Jesus Christ acknowledged Himself as Lord, but He was also acknowledged as such by His followers, as well as those who were former persecutors of the Early Church. His name was acclaimed by witnesses such as John the Baptist, Peter, and Nathaniel, and was affirmed by the Apostles by their testimony and the work they performed in His name. The name of Jesus was to be a name that would be hated by the world. It was a name in whom the Sanhedrin, the rulers, elders, and the priests of the day, threatened Peter and John not to speak, teach, or preach. It was His name that was ridiculed and questioned by the most astute teachers of the law. It was a name that, even in death, would be ridiculed and despised by onlookers as He hung on a Cross. They cursed

and mocked Him, "King of the Jews, come down and save yourself."

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

JN 14:12-14 NKJV

The Ministry of Deliverance can stand or fall on this verse alone. All who believe the words of our Savior must readily admit that they are charged with the responsibility of performing signs and wonders in Jesus's name, just as He did Himself. It is in His name that believers become one with Him, become conformed to His image, and perform deeds of power: supernatural signs and wonders. Faith in Jesus, and understanding the power that is in His name as one performs deeds of healing and deliverance, magnifies Christ on earth and advances His Kingdom. It is an extension of Him and of His mission. To deny His work is to deny His deity, His power, and His authority. The use of His name is a means by which His power and authority is implemented throughout the earth. It is in this way that God is glorified through His children as they accomplish the same works Jesus performed. Believers await heaven, but have much work to do on earth now. In His name, believers are sent out into the world as His representatives to carry out His mission. Believers would heal in His name. They would baptize in His name. They would perform miracles in His name. They would cast out demons in His name, as He is the great Deliverer of His people. The Apostles did great things after the Ascension. They understood clearly that it was in His name that they could perform such miraculous deeds of power. They were neither superhu-

man nor super holy, they simply believed with childlike faith that they were authorized and empowered through the use of His name to do the work of Christ. They obtained their supernatural insight and revelation by the power of the Holy Spirit, and moved in faith as Jesus taught them. Man would not be venerated therefore it was only in His name that such miraculous signs and wonders were accomplished.

FULLY GOD

Jesus displayed the same nature as God, the Father, possessed the same attributes as God, the Father, and exhibited the same eternal existence as God, the Father. His name reflects His eternal existence as Ancient of Days, and His position as God, our Savior. It is written that He is the...Mighty God, Great God, Most High, Christ, the Power of God...Jesus was born of God, chosen of God, and empowered of God, as the First-begotten Son; first in place, first in preeminence, and first in rank. Jesus Christ is the exact imprint of God's very being, and is the image of the invisible God. Jesus Himself acknowledged He was the Son of God, and it was in this acknowledgement that He indicated His deity. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is fully God, as He is God manifest in flesh.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up to glory (I Ti 3:16).

Nathaniel identified Jesus as the Son of God. It is in this identification that we witness the pre-existence of Christ. He was with God from the foundations of the world. He was present in the beginning. Therefore, as the very Son of God, He maintains oneness with God, unity with God, and identity with God. Jesus Christ, being equal with God, is the heir and creator of all things. He is the firstborn of the dead and the firstborn of every creature. Jesus Christ is omnipresent,

omnipotent, and omniscient; therefore, He displays the divine nature that only God is capable of. Out of His own mouth, He has promised to be with believers always. He declared He is the life-giver, another divine characteristic that only belongs to God. As Jesus worked with the disciples, He frequently displayed an all-knowing capability reflecting the divine omniscience of God. Jesus, the Beloved Son, is the guardian of our souls and the hope of our salvation. He performed the same work as God and took on the subordinate state, and the fullness of the deity of God was exhibited as He became the Redeemer and Savior for all of mankind who would only believe. He is forever enthroned in heavenly splendor, being superior to Moses, the angels, and all created beings. It is in Him and through Him that believers have power to become sons of God.

But as many as received him, to them gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (Jn 1:12):

FULLY MAN

The "Son of Man" was a title Jesus frequently used when He was referring to Himself. This title and function was first developed in the Book of Ezekiel as he too was referred to as the "son of man" and is often seen as a type of Christ foreshadowed within the Old Testament. He was commanded to bear the sins of Israel and Judah as a symbolic affliction for the iniquity they had committed against God. The title was one Ezekiel used to emphasize his infinite dependence on God, as he obediently followed the instructions of the Lord. He was commissioned by God to be His spokesperson, and Ezekiel's function was to speak only what was given him to speak. Jesus also expressed His reliance, His guidance, and His confidence in God alone. He taught His disciples to do the same. The appellation of Jesus as being the "Son of Man" would announce His humanity as well as His deity. In humanity, He

was from the seed of woman. He had four brothers and was a man with human emotions. He laughed. He experienced anger. He felt pain. He wept. He took on the very nature of man and became a servant to all. Being fully human, the Son of Man learned obedience from what He suffered and humbled Himself, laying aside His divine riches, and willingly subjected Himself to kenosis. This term, found in the Greek, is a process of self-denial. It is a word used to indicate the emptying of oneself. Jesus Christ laid aside the entitlements exclusive to a divine God. It was a choice, a decision of His own making, to refuse to plead for the fulfillment of His own personal desires over the divine will of His Father. Although He had at His disposal the ability to radically change His situations at any time, He chose not to do so. He has been made perfect forever by a divine oath.

Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave being born in human likeness, And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a Cross.

PHP 2:6–8

God, in the person of the Son, became a kinsman to mankind. It is under this concept of Sonship that believers are inextricably bonded together with God through Jesus, as He has identified Himself with the human race. Jesus exemplified the loving relationship of a Father and Son, brother, and friend. His followers were to exhibit loyalty, honor, and fellowship universal to that of a loving family. They were to move under the leadership of God, even to the point of death, willingly laying down their lives one for another. It was inevitable that they would suffer for His name's sake. All believers, then and now, are to exemplify this role as sons and daughters of the

Most High, which will be evidenced in their new nature. They are to demonstrate the power and authority associated with the name to which they adhere. Also, as sons and daughters, they will be chastised by God, corrected for their wrongdoings, purified and refined. They will reflect His glory which is being manifested in the processes of regeneration, adoption, and glorification, as they are now part of a royal priesthood, and a holy nation. He was also named Immanuel, meaning “God with us,” as He reflected the role of perfect manhood. He was sent by God in the likeness of sinful flesh, thus exhibiting the fullness of both humanity and deity. Christ, taking on the flesh of man, dealt with the very challenges common to all. His experiences with pain, grief, rejection, and sorrow prepared Him to be one with mankind. He was wounded, bruised, oppressed and afflicted. This suffering servant could relate to those He came to save. He was stricken for transgressions that were not of His own making and, because of the perversion of justice, was treated as a common criminal. Jesus chose to pour Himself out even unto death as He sacrificed His own life so that man, made in His image, would see the true Light, and become transformed into His very likeness. It was through His anguish, being crushed beyond recognition, that He aligned Himself with the will of the Father, and manifested the love of God, as man would be made righteous through a self-sacrificing God. It was in this place that God manifested His judgment and His grace, a place where mercy and justice meet, through the giving of His only “Begotten Son,” who bore upon Himself the sins of the world.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on the account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Ro 8:3–4

THE MISSION

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”.

LK 4:18–19 NKJV

Jesus gave us His mission. His mission was to bring the message of salvation to the entire race. It was to heal the broken hearted and set free those in bondage. It is a comprehensive and detailed list of His intended purposes, and we find those purposes being reflected through the names and appellations He had been given. His mission is reflected in His personal name. The name, Jesus, identifies Him as Savior and was confirmed throughout the Holy Bible as being His most significant role. Jesus said He came to do the will of God.

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Ac 4:12).

Jesus was also the messenger of the Covenant. He came to fulfill the law, as He is the lawgiver. He came to save a lost and dying world, destroy the works of the devil, and preach the Good News of the Gospel. He came to bring everlasting righteousness. Jesus came to heal the sick, release those in bondage and oppression, and bring sight to the blind, both naturally and spiritually. He came to heal the lepers and the lame. He came to help man walk. Jesus gave His own life for ransom and took upon Himself the penalty that was due. He came as a judgment of the world and as a dividing sword, dividing man as well as the thoughts and intentions of man’s soul. He came to raise the dead and give life, and life more abundantly, for all who would believe. He even tasted death

so that those who are His would not die, but would enter into everlasting life. Jesus also came to do the will of His Father, as He became the propitiation for our sins. Thus He put an end to the law for the righteous, as they will stand uncondemned at the judgment seat of Christ. His mission is conveyed in His name. Jesus Christ of Nazareth holds an everlasting position over His Church. He has given to His Church the five-fold ministry gifts to equip the saints of God and to take captivity itself captive. He is the head of the Church, being both High Priest and Judge. He is the great Deliverer of His people and the only mediator between God and man. He is the King of His Kingdom, bringing those held in the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light. He is, to the Church, the cornerstone on which it stands, as well as its source of nourishment through His own Blood and Flesh.

For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost (Lk 19:10).

THE MESSIAH

He is the Messiah, the Anointed One, who is powerful in breaking the yoke of bondage from His people. Old Testament scriptures are replete with prophecies which point to Jesus Christ as the Messiah. The Messiah would be one who would unite God’s people. He would bring everlasting peace. The Messiah would die for the sins of man and be a priest to them. He would come from the tribe of Judah, the throne of David. He would be a forerunner who would introduce the New Covenant. This man would be betrayed at the hands of His own, spat upon, sold, mocked, and crucified as a common criminal. His hands and feet would be pierced, as would His side, and out of it would flow both blood and water. The coming Messiah would have His garments gambled for and would face His enemies with a silent defense. He would face death, but not a bone of His body would be broken, although that

was a common practice of the day. This Messiah would be buried with the rich, His body would not decay, and He would ascend into heaven and be exalted with God, the Father. There are approximately four hundred and fifty scriptures within the Old Testament which point to Jesus as the Messiah. Some are predictions and some are simply messianically applied. One, however, may find it hard to dispute the consistency and frequency by which these predictions came into being, varying both in authorship and time. The unfolding, gradual revelation, in view of the New Testament, gives us a comprehensive understanding of the Messianic age, a time of ingathering for the Jewish people, as well as the ingathering for God's people under the sovereign rule of Christ Jesus which will culminate at His Second Coming. Jesus confronted the Jewish leaders of His day. He accused them of searching the scriptures but, in their narrow view and unspiritual interpretation, they failed to see the King of Glory. Their mindset interpreted kingship and deliverance mainly as that which would be deemed as nationally significant and dismissed the true nature of the Messiah as Savior for all of mankind. Hence, they failed to acknowledge His role as the true Priest and true Prophet of the Kingdom of God. The Messiah is to rule and to save; He is Prophet, Priest, and King. The official identity of Jesus Christ as the Messiah was confirmed by Simon as he identified Him, and so did doubting Thomas before His ascension. Jesus, however, also acknowledged that He was the Messiah and that His claim was valid. His Messiahship is best understood in light of the Kingdom of God. A king must have a kingdom, and Jesus Christ came and unequivocally promulgated, through His authoritative rule of the heavens over the earthly realm, that He was indeed the Anointed one of God. The kingdom was in the beginning, it is now being consummated in this present age, and it will be established at the Second Advent of Christ, as He is arrayed in all His splendor and glory. Jesus

held the three-fold office of Messiah and is the one promised of God as Priest, Prophet, and King. As High Priest, Jesus was appointed of God. The position of priesthood required that He sympathize with the weaknesses of man. He was given a time of testing. Through the testing, Jesus was faced with temptations, hunger, physical exhaustion, mental duress, and many other trials common to mankind. It was in those times that the grace and mercy of God, the Father, carried Him through. It was in those times that He was to experience the depths of mercy exhibited by a gracious God. He was to be holy, blameless, undefiled and separated from sinners. Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for all of mankind, and became a sin offering, so that believers would be forgiven of their sins. He also offered redemption, through His sinless blood, and became for us the penalty paid. He intercedes for us in heaven and is the firstborn over all, thus meeting the requirement as priest of the whole family. Jesus is the great mediator between God and man, interceding on our behalf before the throne of God. He secured our unhindered access to God as He entered the Holy of Holies and stood on our behalf as High Priest forever, as the veil had been ripped during His crucifixion, thus opening, to all believers, permanent access to a Holy God. As a prophet, Jesus is the perfect revealer of the will of God. He communicates God's will to man and discloses the future to him. On Him, the whole council of God rests. He was to announce, declare, and interpret to man the truth of the Gospel, because He is the truth and light of men. Jesus spoke of Himself as a prophet. All prophets are called by God, sent by God, answer to God, and determine not to fear man. Jesus Christ of Nazareth fulfilled these expectations. He moved under the direction and leading of His Father and answered to no one. Prophets are to teach, proclaim, warn, and bless. They are to announce anointing and impart gifts. They are to proclaim divine judgment as well as divine punishment, and are

to be watchmen over the sanctuary of God. Jesus Christ held the role of a prophet and demonstrated it actively throughout His earthly ministry. He also held the position of King.

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee (Ps 2:6–7 KJV).

Jesus fulfilled the role of King as His right to rule was determined by divine decree. He was given the appellation as King of the Jews at His birth and His death, but its origin was designated by God Himself. The Magi who sought Him out at the time of His birth, under the direction of King Herod, acknowledged Him as King. They knelt before Him, bringing gifts that were customarily presented to royalty, as they acknowledged His divine origin as King. They brought gold as they paid tribute to the earthly king of the day, frankincense, as they honored the King of Heaven with the smoke of incense, and myrrh, the ingredient used to prepare a man for his death. A kingly office is held by one who is to rule as the supreme head, possessing supreme power. Jesus Christ of Nazareth is God incarnate in His manifested power and glory. It was prophesied that He would occupy the throne of David and, being the author of the Covenant of Peace, He did just that. He was born a king, rejected as king, died a king, and was resurrected as king...the King of Glory. He is given the title of King by sinners and saints, and it is written He is the... King of Israel, King of Zion, King over all the earth, King of the Jews, King of Kings, King Eternal, just to name a few. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, on the throne, with a scepter of righteousness in His hand.

THE MESSAGE

Jesus baptizes the believer with the Holy Spirit and with fire,

thus enduing them with His power from on High. He gives to His children through the power of the Holy Spirit, the right and ability to function in His name and under His authority, as they have been sealed with His Spirit. There is power in His name to judge, to save, to heal, and to deliver. It is in the authority of His name that His disciples can perform the same works He performed. Believers are to pray in His name, perform miracles in His name, baptize in His name, and to preach and teach in His name. It is only in His name that believers have authority to do such things and it is only because He empowers His servants through the Holy Spirit, to do the work He Himself did. The work of Christ accomplished through the body of believers glorifies God and reflects His image on earth, as truly, “Thy kingdom come on earth, as it is in heaven.” It is for this reason the whole earth groans as it awaits the revealing of the children of God, sons and daughters who are restored to their true nature and purpose in God, to come forth with the same mission and intentions that Jesus held.

Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father (Jn. 14:12).

Jesus Christ of Nazareth is holy. He is righteous. He is just. He is guiltless, sinless, spotless, innocent, meek, merciful, and forgiving. Jesus walked a life of humility. He worked for the good of others and refused the accolades of man. He sought to please His Father at all costs. He moved under the leading and guiding of God and did only those things He saw His Father do. The names given Jesus reflect His attributes, as He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present and His character is revealed in the appellations and titles also given to Him. Jesus is full of grace and truth. Grace, which is the point of having all of our needs met, is found in His fullness, which we have received as His followers. He is the only Begot-

ten Son of God, and it is in this unique loving relationship between Father and Son that we are to mirror Him with the same intentions, thoughts and deeds. He is the Beloved of God, a title of endearment, assigned to Him as the chosen of God as He, by a decision of His will, carried out the rite of baptism under the ministry of John the Baptist. He is the written Word and because He was the Word that came in the flesh of man, all things were made by Him, and through Him, and in Him was light and life. It is through Him that we gain right to become children of God.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God (Rev 19:13).

The word was with God, the word was God, thus *logos endiathetos* connotes the word conceived, and *logos prophorikos* connotes the word uttered. Jesus is the Word both conceived and uttered, the Truth, and the faithful witness to the mind of God. He speaks of God, points to God, and manifests the power of God. The name “Only Begotten Son,” is indicative of Jesus being the sole representative of the One who sent Him, being the exact likeness. Jesus did not *become* the Son of God, but was, is, and will forever be the Only Begotten Son of God. Thus, irrespective of time, He is eternally the Son. He is reflective of the full revelation of the character and nature of God and came by incarnation. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, nothing before Him and nothing after Him. He is not a created being, but the Creator of all. He is the firstborn of the dead and the firstborn of every creature. He is the heir and head of all things. He is the guardian of our souls. He is our hope of salvation, the hope of glory in us. There is identification in the name, as He is one with the Father, equal with the Father and the Word made flesh.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Ro 11:26 KJV):

THE JUDGE

For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him (Jn 5:22–23 NKJV).

Jesus is the Judge of all. He is the lover of justice. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His Father’s throne. He, like His Father, hates injustice and will execute vengeance on the disobedient. He is the avenger of all wrongdoing. He guards the faithful and rescues them from the wicked. Righteousness and truth is His measuring rod as He saves the needy and breaks the oppressor. It is through Jesus that believers receive remission of sin, as they once stood condemned, but now stand acquitted. The Lord will convict the world in righteous judgment. Jesus, through the work of the Cross, has already condemned the ruler of this world, and those who follow his ways will reap the recompense of reward of transgressions under the law, from which believers have been freed. There is the judgment seat of Christ where believers will receive rewards for their faithfulness to obediently follow the Lord, and they will also suffer loss for the actions that stood contrary to the will of God. All judgments, judgment of the believers, the world, the angels, and Satan himself, will be held accountable to divine standards, and not according to human or worldly standards.

LORD OF ALL

There is recognition in the name, and in it we find His Lordship. He is the...Lord of glory, Lord of Hosts, Lord of all, Lord of the dead and the living, Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Lord of Lords, Lord of the Sabbath, Lord of our Righteousness, Lord, our Redeemer. Jesus Christ of Nazareth declared His own lordship, thus assuming the appellation, as He taught

His disciples. It is vitally important to grasp the meaning of the word *Lord*. The title implies “owner or master, or one in authority” and is used to signify “having power or authority.” The same word found in the Old Testament is used in reference to, and identified with, Jehovah. It was transferred to Jesus in the New Testament scriptures and is used in signifying absolute Lordship. Jesus Christ is revealed as the Lord over nature as He walked on the water; and as Lord over death as He raised Lazarus from the grave. He reveals Himself as Lord over provision as He fed the five thousand. Jesus also revealed Himself as Lord of the Sabbath as He explained that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, and He was the spiritual manna sent from heaven, as He was the Word made flesh. God gave the day of rest as the promise of sanctification for His people. Jesus revealed Himself as Lord of the harvest to His disciples as He explained to them that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. The title, *Lord*, therefore distinguishes Jesus from teacher and master, although the term was frequently used in such a manner, as one who has power, dominion, and authority over the natural realm, as well as the spirit realm. He demonstrated the difference as He moved as one with supreme authority, absolute dominion, and unlimited authority. He acted on the power given Him by His Father, and He came to establish representatives to whom He also passed on His power and authority, by the use of His name, to those who would receive Him as Lord and Savior. He passed on to those who believed the same power and authority, so that the expansion of the Kingdom of God would go forth. Jesus also taught the principle of multiplication. His desire was to multiply himself through His sons and daughters who faithfully carry out His extended mission.

Our Lord, having power and authority, manifested the glory of God, as the wedding recorded within the Book of

John was the first miracle of Christ Jesus. It would be of no surprise that, prophetically, the necessities of the feast would be provided by the hands of the great Provider. He has prepared a wedding feast for His Bride and has already supplied the new wine. This wedding is a foreshadowing and prophetic picture of the end of the ages. The ministry of Jesus started at a wedding feast and will culminate at the wedding feast as He is united with His Bride eternally. The wedding at Canaan was to reveal His glory, reflect His glory, and resonate His glory. The making of the wine was a representation in the natural of the supernatural act in which Jesus was to supply His Bride with the power of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This visible manifestation of His power is His *shekinah* glory, which manifested acts of power, miraculous and divine. He dwells among His people. Jesus is our model, our motivation and the manifestation of God in us. He has unraveled the mystery of the Gospel that was hidden until the appropriate time, for all that will believe upon His name. Sinners and saints are to call on the name of the Lord for salvation and deliverance. The fullness of such an appellation as Lord can only be realized in the light of the resurrection. Hence, the significance of such a title can be seen through the work of the Holy Spirit as the power to heal, save, and deliver. He was, and is, the Lord and Savior, the Lord of Hosts, the Lord of the Sabbath, the Lord our righteousness, the Lord our redeemer.

Jesus identified Himself as being the Living Water. Water sustains life. It is necessary to wash, purify and refresh, both in the natural and the supernatural. As believers, we are to become channels of this living water. How does your life display this living water? How much do you put in and how much do you give out? Is your life representative of Jesus, the healer, the deliverer, and the miracle worker? Is it reflective of Jesus, the teacher and the prophet? Is it reflective of Jesus, the multiplier and sustainer? Out of the believer's heart shall flow

rivers of living water, and there must be overflow. Is there a part of Jesus's identity that you have a hard time embracing? Is there a particular part of Jesus's work that you find difficult to understand or believe? Can you identify weaknesses in your own life that Jesus can heal if you embrace the fullness of His identity? Jesus is the author of transformation as He leads those under His care into restoration and renewal, as they are being transformed into His image, thus reflecting His very nature and proving what the will of God is. The glory of Christ being reflected in every believer is the process of transformation as their moral character and the level of faith they profess results in the will of God being manifested on earth... Thy Kingdom come!

Believers must understand that in and of ourselves we can do nothing. It is only in His name, and the faith that one possesses in His name, that these works can be accomplished. It is not arrogant or prideful to assume the right to implement His authority to perform such works; it is an expectation of the Kingdom of God. The power is released in believers as they, like Jesus, decide to empty themselves of anything that may stand against the work of God, and humbly become a servant to man. Disciples, or those who study the life of Christ and His Word, are followers, and followers are believers. Hence, all believers have the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities given to the first Disciples of Christ. Man tried to exalt the disciples to the status of deity. Paul and Barnabas were in the Roman colony of Lystra where they had ministered to a man who had been crippled from birth. Once they saw he had faith to be healed, they commanded him to stand up and walk. The onlookers were astounded as they watched the miraculous take place. They proclaimed them gods and presented them with oxen and garland at the gates of the city. When Paul and Barnabas heard of their veneration, they tore their clothes as an expression of horror and revulsion. The

disciples refused to be venerated in any form or fashion as the crowd had acted in a blasphemous way. Paul explained to them that they were simply mere men, no different from any of them, who had been given the privilege of bringing to them the Good News of the Gospel. Church, this is the same mindset the Body of Christ is to embrace today. The disciples were just mere mortals. They were given a task to perform for the Lord and they did it. Jesus asked, "Did you weigh the costs?" The same question applies to all who follow Him today. His own disciples would deny Him, but later they would suffer for His name. They would eventually die for His name. There is no other name in heaven or on earth that carries in it the glory of God being made manifest on earth through willing, obedient servants of God. There is power in the Name!

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

PHP. 2:9-11

Deliverance ministry is only one facet of the ministry of Christ Jesus. It is to be embraced and implemented simply because Jesus taught His disciples to perform such works. He even scolded them for their unbelief when they were unable to cast out a spirit. As do all miracles of grace, deliverance ministry begins and ends with the Blood of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the work of the Cross and the power in His name. The authority given to believers is a manifestation of the power of God being reflected in His children. The process of deliverance occurs as those who aspire to perform the works of Jesus seek to understand the Covenant, the Blood, the Seal, and the Name. It is in the combination of these foundational principles of God that one is able to move out in faith and accom-

plish great things for the Lord. May the work begin, and may
God richly bless you as you go forth in His mighty *Name!*

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