

MILITANT EVANGELISM!

RAY COMFORT



Foreword by
WINKIE PRATNEY

Militant Evangelism



Militant Evangelism **—Ray Comfort**

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My special thanks to Daniel Comfort and Sarah Love for their editorial assistance, and to my lovely wife Sue for her support and patience.

Bulk copies of this publication are available at very low prices—see the last pages for details.

DEDICATION:
To three good soldiers of
Jesus Christ, Joey Kline, Andy Brink
and Kelly Kohlleffel.

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"The enemy is in front of us; the enemy is behind us; the enemy is to the right and the left of us. *They cant get away this time!*"

General Douglas MacArthur.

FOREWORD

"**T**here has never been a time when it has been more difficult to be a Christian," said William Barclay, "and there has never been a time when it has been more necessary."

In a world that seeks peace at any price, it may seem a bit outre to put out a book on how to wage war. But then God did not call us to party. The Church is an army, our purpose here is to fight and the Captain of the Lord's hosts has committed us to battle. The language of the Scriptures is unashamedly militant: "Put on the whole armor of God;" "Fight the good fight of faith;" "That he may please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier." The old Scripture said, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood;" our modern practical version usually reads more simply: "We wrestle not."

Ray's book is a gauntlet thrown on the ground to a man-centered Gospel that puts human need above Divine right, preaches happiness without holiness

and offers a fire escape without ever daring to mention the fire.

We will lose a whole generation if we do not speak the truth in love. Woe unto us if we do not preach the Gospel!

That grand old giant of spiritual warfare, William Booth of the Salvation Army, once prophesied of the coming twentieth century. He warned of a generation to come that preached a faith without repentance, religion without the Holy Spirit, a salvation without Lordship and a Christianity without Christ. That generation has come, and Ray Comfort has declared war. This time demands spiritual soldiers. That's what this book is all about.

—Winkie Pratney

PREFACE

As I sat in the plush home not too far from Hollywood, the flesh on my face was almost pulled back by the volume of the video I was watching. Two days earlier I had asked my wife Sue, where I could find some good military terms "to stir the troops" as I penned the final words of this publication. Now I sat in the home of a man whose job it was to check the sound of the "master" copy of "Gettysburg," the great motion picture epic which so graphically depicted the American civil war. My new friend, Michael Strong, had worked for many years with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association on films such as "Hiding Place" and "Joni," and for some reason he wanted me to see the battle scene in Gettysburg. Sound was his business, and sound is what we had, as troops rallied with a unified roar of admiration around their general, like "a mighty man who shouts by reason of wine."

As the battle began, most of the infantrymen lay

on the ground as cannons blasted the enemy, vibrating the room in which I was sitting and filling the battle scene with thick smoke. With less than a second between each blast, I sat wide-eyed as the sound of each cannon hit me between the ears. To my surprise, there was no direct confrontation between the two armies. The cannons did all the preparatory work, sending terror into the heart of the enemy, *then* the soldiers pressed in to the heat of battle. My heart was stirred as I saw the spiritual principles set so vividly before me.

We live in an age when the Church roars with adoration for our Commander on Sunday, but hides from the heat of the battle on Monday. I am certain that this is because we have set aside the cannons God has given us to do the preparatory work in our battle. If you are not familiar with these great cannons, it would be well worth your while to read our book, *Hell's Best Kept Secret*.

The key to accomplishing our aims is to have every soldier employed in battle, but sadly many are still in the barracks. One great military officer, Charles Spurgeon, let off a gun which whistled a burning bullet over the sleeping heads of the professing troopers of his day when he said, "Have you no wish for others to be saved, then you are not saved yourself, you can be sure of that!" Charles Finney said similar things.

May the fear of the Lord awaken the Army of

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God, and as we continue in training, striving *together* for the faith of the Gospel, may God grant us that which is necessary for us to strike terror in the heart of the enemy. May He employ us as never before, to take territory from the hands of the devil, the souls of men and women, in these closing hours of time.

CHAPTER ONE: STATIONED AT THE GATES OF HELL!

**"Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire ...
" (Jude 23).**

I was dancing around in a living room of people I hardly knew, because there was no way I could sit still! My ministry was finished at a mainline denominational church camp, and I was feeling quite pleased with myself. For the first time in months I didn't feel "wrung out." Often I would return from weekend meetings absolutely exhausted. Sue, my wife, would meet me at the airport, drive me home and put me into bed. But this weekend had been quite different. These people had not been to the *Squeeze the Preacher* school, and had let me off with an amazing three meetings in the whole weekend. Now the camp was over and I was being shown my lodging for the Sunday night.

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After seeing my room I made my way to an upstairs living room. The view was magnificent. Through the large window I gazed at the harbor below, and watched as the sun seemed to dance on the water. I sat down in an armchair and took a look around. A footstool, the view, a large television, a stereo ... and now the hostess entered the room with a cup of hot chocolate and a plate full of fresh home baking. *This place was made for Comfort.* Ease consumed me. I reached out to take one of the offered goodies when suddenly, much to my shock and the surprise of the woman, I jumped out of my seat like a frog on a hot plate. I turned around to see a yellow and black bee crawling around the seat of the armchair. *I had been squarely stung on the hindmost part!* I was in too much pain to be overly embarrassed. As I jumped about the room, my only consolation was the thought, "There's got to be a sermon in this." Some years before, I had prayed a most dangerous prayer. I asked the Lord to cause things to happen in my life which I could use as sermon illustrations. At this point of time I regretted that request.

However, it wasn't long until I saw the application. I am convinced that God wants the complacent Laodicean Church to rise up on its feet! For too long we have sat in ease and comfort. We have said, "I am rich, and have need of nothing." God is saying to His people, "Shine, for your light is come," and if it takes the sting of God's chastening

hand to cause the Church to stand upright, may it come quickly.

Charles Spurgeon said, "God save us from living in comfort while sinners are sinking into Hell!" White-field said, "The Christian world is in a deep sleep; nothing but a loud shout can awaken them out of it!" Catherine Booth, the gentle co-founder of the Salvation Army, regarding church buildings said, "A barracks is meant to be a place where real soldiers were to be fed and equipped for war, not a place to settle down in or as a comfortable snugery in which to enjoy ourselves. I hope that if ever they, our soldiers, do settle down God will burn their barracks over their heads!"

The Withered Hand

In Luke Chapter 6, the religious leaders were seeking an accusation against Jesus. We pick up the story in verse 6:

"On another Sabbath He went into the Synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. The Pharisees and the teachers of the Law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched Him closely to see if He would heal on the Sabbath. But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the withered hand, 'Get up and stand in front of everyone.' So he got up and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, 'I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or

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to destroy it?'

"He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He did so and his hand was completely restored. But they were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus."

On close examination one will find that the "right hand" of the Body of Christ is withered. The hand, which is supposed to be moved with and by compassion, *is not pulling sinners from the fire, hating even the garments spotted by the flesh* (Jude 22-23). The Church is hidden in and from the world. It has no unified voice or purpose. I am convinced that God is saying to His Body, "Arise, stand forth in the midst and stretch forth your hand." When this takes place, all of those who are truly part of the Body, will arise in urgent, militant, bold, zealous evangelism, and we will begin to see that glorious, spotless, victorious Church, Jesus is coming back for. This is the type of church we see portrayed in the Book of Acts—a far cry from the comfortable church of today.

We have become like a frog in a bowl of water. The water has slowly been frozen, and the frog, not able to detect the drop in temperature, has remained in the water until it is trapped in ice. The evangelical Church has become trapped in the ice-cold grip of traditionalism. It involves itself in everything but the purpose for which it was established—to reach out to the lost with the Gospel of salvation. "God's chosen frozen," may not be doctrinally sound.

Fight The Good Fight Of Faith

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he wrote in military terms—"Fight the good fight of faith", "Endure hardness as a good soldier," etc. He wanted to remind Timothy that we are involved in a battle, a conflict. We are a friend of God and therefore an enemy of the world. It is time for the trumpet to give a "certain sound" that the Church might prepare itself for battle. The Lord said to Israel, "And if you go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresses you, then you shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and you shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies" (Numbers 10:9). We need to sound the alarm to remind the Church of the battle in which it is caught up in. Either we fight with the weapons God has made available, or we wither and die.

I love the structure of the Salvation Army, with its barracks, soldiers, uniforms, generals, etc. General Booth formed that army of fiery believers so that they should never forget that they were involved in spiritual conflict. Satan has not declared peace on the Church, yet the Church acts as such. Men of God such as C.H. Spurgeon never lost sight of the spirit of militancy. In reference to inspired preaching he said, "Surely there is no weapon so powerful as that which is taken from the armory of inspiration." There will be no peace on this earth

until the Prince of Peace comes in power and great glory at the sound of the last trumpet, blown by the very cavalry of Calvary. Then, peace will only come when God judges the rebels of Adam.

Like A Mighty Tortoise

There was once a song that became popular in the Church that had the words, "God's got an army marching through the land, deliverance is their song, and healing in their hand, everlasting joy and gladness in their heart, and in this army I've got a part." What a song of victory! How the enemy must hate it, when the army of the Lord can sing words like that with conviction. But for the Church to sing those words at the present time would be nothing but a farce, an absurd pretense. Over the years, I have been trying to find out how much of the Body of Christ is actually involved in personal witnessing, and have come up with (by the showing of hands), the sad statistic of less than 10 percent. I have asked, "How many of you can say before God that you have witnessed verbally to more than 12 people over the past 12 months? That is, at least every 30 days or so somebody has heard the Gospel of salvation from your lips?" Bearing in mind that speaking to one person every 30 days isn't exactly "on fire for God". I have found that only 8-12 percent will raise their hands. Where is the zeal? Jesus said, "But you shall receive *power* when the Holy Spirit comes on you; *and you shall be my witnesses* in Jerusalem, and in all

Stationed at the Gates of Hell!

Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, italics added). The Holy Spirit wasn't given without purpose in mind. He was given that we might have power for the purpose of being witnesses of Christ. So many profess to possess the power, yet where is the evidence? If the light doesn't shine, either the power isn't flowing or the switch isn't on. It would seem that the fear of battle has left many a soldier cringing in the barracks. They are afraid to let their light shine before men, because they know that men hate the light. Yet, it is a natural principle that when light shines, darkness flees. Darkness cannot overcome the light. "Gross darkness" only covers this earth because the Church has not obeyed the admonition to "arise and shine."

In Australia some years ago, a traditional church dropped "Onward Christian Soldiers" from their song index because it made reference to war. This is typical of the poor, blind unregenerate who meet in a building they call a "church." The peace and animal rights movements have given the established church a reason to exit. Their spiritual inaction can be understood because they are spiritually dead. The world may think there is peace between man and God, but the Bible makes it clear that unregenerate man is an "enemy of God" in his mind through wicked works, that "whoever is a friend of the world is an enemy of God" (see Colossians 1:21, Romans 5:10, Romans 8:7 and James 4:4). Yet, many within the Church have lost sight of this great truth,

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something evident by their passive lifestyle. We have become like the Dead Sea. It is dead because it has water flowing into it, but no outlet. The water has become so salty, a human being can't sink into it. Nothing lives in it, no one can penetrate it . . . it seems that God made it as a type of the contemporary Church.

But, the Dead Sea contains very valuable minerals, which are waiting to be harvested. It's my conviction that we should stop joking about saving the Church before we save the world, and start doing just that. It is a field which is white unto harvest.

Perhaps much of the Evangelical Church needs to drop "God's got an army" and certain other songs from their song index until we can sing them with conviction. Perhaps we should think of dropping "Onward Christian Soldiers," or replace it with something more appropriate:

*Backward Christian soldiers, fleeing from the fight
With the cross of Jesus nearly out of sight. Christ our
rightful master, stands against the foe But forward into
battle, we are loathe to go.*

*Like a mighty tortoise moves the Church of God
Brothers we are treading where we've always trod. We are
much divided, many bodies we Having many doctrines,
not much charity.*

*Crowns and thorns may perish, kingdoms rise and
wane, But the Church of Jesus hidden does remain. Gates*

Stationed at the Gates of Hell!

of Hell should never 'gainst the Church prevail. We have Christ's own promise, but think that it will fail.

Sit here then ye people, join our useless throng Blend with ours your voices in a feeble song. Blessings, ease and comfort, ask from Christ the King With our modern thinking, we don't do a thing.

(Anon)

If you think I'm a little harsh on the Church, check this out. In 1992, over 3,000 churches from a mainline denomination *didn't report even one soul saved in that year*, while *Christianity Today*, an *evangelical* magazine found that *only 1%* of their readers had a zeal for the lost.

We need to ask ourselves: *Are we hot for God?* Could you say that you have witnessed to more than 12 people in the last 12 months? Do you have the testimony, "to live means opportunities for Christ?" Is there a zeal to witness burning in your bones? It doesn't matter how much we pray, tithe, fellowship ... Jesus said, "GO." Obedience is better than sacrifice. Sure, those things are essential, but if we are not witnessing we are not fulfilling our commission. We are *commissioned* officers. True Christianity is not a pleasure-cruiser on its way to Heaven, but a battle-ship stationed at the very gates of Hell!



SECTION ONE: PRE BATTLE

CHAPTER TWO: STANDARD INVENTORY

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4).

One great key to success in an army is a unity of purpose, a merging into one mind. This is unusually achieved by *de-personalizing* the recruits —"You scruffy lot! In the next six weeks we are going to make you boys into men ... you'll wish you'd never been born!" etc. The curly golden locks of hair are callously cut from the head. The reason for this, is that when an army is on the front lines, the commander doesn't want his troops spending time on the vanities of life. He doesn't want his men wasting time in front of the mirror. What he wants is one body of men who will move any way he wants ... pronto!

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God has made His own ways of getting new recruits into line (I think I prefer the army way). As a new Christian, I went into what is commonly called a "wilderness experience." It was the most dreadful, miserable, depressing experience of my life, but it was a necessary part of my training. God wants to shake the "world" out of new converts. They have enlisted in the army for active service, and the quicker they respond and are trained, the quicker they will find themselves promoted in rank, and to where the action is.

When the U.S. navy trains rescue pilots, they place so much psychological pressure on recruits that 50% drop out. They are pushed to the limits by being dropped out of helicopters into freezing water. In the water, a man simulates a drowning, and when his rescuer reaches him, he deliberately panics, grabbing the would-be rescuer and pulling him under. The trainee must take charge of the situation or be disqualified from the course. He must take control, not only of the circumstances, but also of his own fears.

God puts us through similar training. He saw the necessity to burn Jesus out in the desert—"though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things that He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8), so much more will you and I be tried and tested if we want to walk in the footsteps of the Savior! If we want to rescue humanity from the fires of Hell, we must take

control, both of our own fears and of the demonic restraints placed in front of us.

The time has come when every able soldier is needed in the front line of battle. He who will not overcome will be overcome. We need to know what our weapons are, and we need to have expertise in their use, so that we might be effective in penetrating into enemy territory. Ephesians 6:10-18 lists some of our inventory:

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the gospel of peace as a firm footing. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

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We have seven items listed:

1. The belt of truth
2. The breastplate of righteousness
3. Feet fitted with the Gospel of peace
4. The shield of faith
5. The helmet of salvation
6. The sword of the Spirit
7. The power of prayer

It was James the 1st who said that armor was a wonderful invention—not only did it stop anyone from harming the wearer, but it also stopped the wearer doing any harm to anybody else! Not so with the armor of God. It is effective in both defense and offense. But for it to be such, we must obey the repeated command to, "Put on the *full* armor of God."

First, we are told to have "the belt of truth buckled around (our) waist." This is a reference to the belt worn by soldiers around the time this Scripture was written. Their clothing wasn't like ours; it was often loose. To be free from being hindered by this loose clothing, a soldier would "gird up his loins," or fasten the clothing to his belt. The application of this is very plain. If we allow any untruth to be resident within our minds or be uttered from our lips, it will eventually trip us, cause us to stumble or be our downfall.

So our first preparation for battle is to determine to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, from the heart, *without compromise*. That means we are to be honest with ourselves and others. David tells us that truth should be our shield. He says, "I have chosen the way of truth," speaking of a willful resolution, while Solomon exhorts us to "buy the truth and sell it not." In other words, give your all for the truth and don't compromise at any price! If this is to be our attitude to truth in general, how much more should it be our attitude to the truth of the Gospel, where the eternal welfare of men's souls are at stake! We are to be "valiant for the truth," following He who has the "law of truth in His mouth," who is "full of grace and truth," who is "the way, the truth, and the life." Those who have been born of the Spirit of truth, "cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth" ... "with the belt of truth buckled around your waist."

Egg on the Face

The second article which we are commanded to put on as soldiers of the Lord, is the "breastplate of righteousness." In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul says, "Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love" Here we are reminded that we are enlisted in the army of the God of love. Righteousness by itself is no defense against the enemy. The Pharisees had a form of righteousness, yet were still sons of the devil (John

8:44). Righteousness must be linked with faith, for without faith, it is impossible to please God; and love, for without love we are nothing (1 Corinthians 13:13). The type of righteousness spoken of is that which determines whose side we are on: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother." If we have been born of the God of righteousness we will live in righteousness.

It is said of Jesus in Isaiah Chapter 59, "For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak." This gives us insight to the attitude of our Commander in Chief. Words elude me to describe my feelings, my admiration, my worship of Him who rushed headlong into battle for me. Such valor, such courage, such fearless gallantry stirs the fighting spirit within my heart.

Jesus Christ, the Lord of righteousness loves righteousness. He has a violent passion for justice! The soldier who has been taught and trained by the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead will not only have righteousness, but will do righteousness. He should love what is right and hate what is wrong. I have grown to hate abortion. I am horrified when I think of the slaughter going on in our midst. The child of God longs for a new earth wherein dwells

righteousness; he "hungers and thirsts for righteousness." If we haven't that testimony, then we haven't seen an answer to the cry, "Create in me a clean heart O God, renew a *right* spirit in me," or perhaps that has never been our cry!

The breastplate keeps the heart clean, for out of it comes the issues of life. How can we approach the Throne of God boldly with the stain of sin upon our heart! Righteousness breeds holy boldness. Who of us would approach a King with egg on our face? If we had an audience with a King, we would groom ourselves. His very position commands respect. How much more then should we cleanse our hearts and minds daily through the water of the Word that we might have a bold confidence before the King of Righteousness.

How loudly does the sergeant-major of our conscience need to shout to bring us to attention? Are we so dull of hearing that we do not hear the cry of conscience when we fall into unrighteousness? Have we debts unpaid; do we honor our parents; have we unforgiveness in our hearts; do we lack love; are we easily irritated; do we obey traffic laws; do we love and pray with our husband or wife; do we read God's Word daily; do we pay all our taxes; is our thought-life pure—do we daily confess our sins and ask for cleansing when necessary . . . are we "hot for God?" Better we are found out now, rather than on Judgment Day! Is God speaking to us

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about something right now? Then stop reading this book and resolve to do what you have failed to do, and undo what you should not have done. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. You can have a clean breastplate of righteousness, but if you leave that thing undone, you will give a foothold to the enemy. It will be a gaping hole in your armor.

Repent now, while there is time. There is no such thing as small sin. To steal one cent is to be a thief in the sight of God. He is not as impressed by the amount of money stolen as we are. Our holy Creator is devoted to righteousness. Adam's sin may look minor to the unregenerate, but we know that his act was willful, hateful, rebellious, and disobedient to Almighty God. How I want to always have a conscience which is void of offense to both God and man, not only for my own sake but for the sake of the unsaved. I so want God to use me to reach the lost. *If I am not a straight-shooter with a pistol, He won't let me near the cannon.*

One very valuable thing I learned as a new Christian was that the Scriptures say that we are to lay aside "all filthiness." The Greek wording actually says to lay aside "a perverted delight for that which is licentious or impure." How true that is of human nature! We have a *delight* for impurity—unclean, gutter humor. A few moments of "adult

humor" proves that to be true. But as children of God we are to lay that aside. Being involved in itinerant ministry I am able to fellowship with literally thousands of Christians. How grieved I am when I hear Christians, who are otherwise spiritual, dishonor their testimony by allowing themselves to delight in "borderline" humor. An understanding about this delight for impurity needs to be in the fore of our minds, if we have the liberty to watch television. Not only is most comedy unclean, but they employ "laughing audiences" which will have you laughing contagiously. Satan wants to stain your robe. Wash it constantly in the Blood of the Lamb ... "with the breastplate of righteousness in place."

Even the Lowliest Part

The next part of our apparel is often not seen as being a necessary part of our armor. Paul goes on to say, "And with your feet fitted with the Gospel of peace as a firm footing." I like the King James Version: "And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace."

How can our footwear be a vital part of our armor? Those soldiers of the Lord who have a fight within their spirit, a keenness, a smell for the battle, make the best soldiers. They are prepared within their heart: "The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips." Their running shoes are on. Their bayonets are fixed. One word from the Commander, and they are into the thick of the battle

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—they love not their lives unto death.

These soldiers have studied how to be effective as a witness of the Gospel. They know that he who wins souls is wise. They have ordered their priorities, and know that there is no higher calling than to lead a sinner to Christ. They seek that which the Son of man came to seek ... that which is lost. They know what pleases Headquarters; that Heaven rejoices when one sinner repents.

The Scriptures tell me in Romans Chapter 10: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace" Do you know what that means? It means that if you will obey the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, it so pleases God that He considers even your feet to be beautiful. If you can, slip off one of your shoes right now and have an objective look at your bare foot. With all vanity aside, you must admit that your foot is ugly. The small toe looks like a reject jelly bean, yet God says that if you preach His Glorious Gospel, He considers that lowly, unattractive (even ugly) foot to be beautiful.

Some years ago, I was on a plane on my way to preach the Gospel. It was called the "Champagne flight." The weather was hot and I was wearing open footwear. The stewardess, who was carrying the drinks, suddenly slipped and spilt the bubbly liquid over my feet, but a moment later, returned and wiped them dry with a towel.

I remember thinking, "Wow, what V.I.P. treatment God gives those who preach His Gospel—*I've just had my feet washed with champagne!*"

Effective warfare means taking the *full* armor of God, and that includes having "your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace."

CHAPTER THREE

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

"Whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4).

To speak of the next piece of armor, we have begun a new chapter, because this item is worthy of close inspection. In the version that Paul used, scripture says, *"Above all taking the shield of faith."* This piece of weaponry is fundamentally, ultra vitally essential. This is that which extinguishes all the "flaming arrows of the evil one." In other words, if you don't use this portion of your armor, you will be wounded, perhaps fatally, by the flaming arrows of the enemy.

Faith is spiritually what oxygen is naturally. If the life of the flesh is in the blood, the life of the

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

blood is in the oxygen. Without faith, the Christian gasps, writhes, and then dies. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). With faith, it is not only possible to please Him, but to move mountains, subdue Kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtain promises, and stop the mouths of lions. God has given us an honor roll of soldiers who have gone before us in battle. Hebrews Chapter 11 gives a list of those who, through faith, did exploits for their God, and as warriors, have now been promoted to Headquarters. They took up that mighty weapon of faith in attack and in defense and proved its worth. It's now up to us to follow their example. These soldiers of the cross found that faith in God gave them the ability to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," to be "more than conquerors," because they knew that God was for them, that He always caused them to triumph . . . all through faith.

It's all very well to speak in such glorious, victorious and triumphant general terms; but how can we live practically in this realm of faith in everyday life? To illustrate the principles of faith, let me share something interesting with you. For many years I had the privilege of preaching the Gospel almost daily in an open city square. In one sense I was fulfilled in my ministry, and yet I had a great longing to reach more with the Gospel. In 1982, doors began to open for me to do just that. Requests began to come from churches saying, "Come and

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stir up our people to evangelism." Yet, I was horrified to find that not only did few Christians witness of their faith, but I found that 95%-100% of the congregations of our "Gospel Outreach" services were Christians! It seemed that much seed was being sown in the barn.

Then I heard that in 1982, \$2,000,000,000 was spent on Christian television. I was impressed by the amount, until I found that those programs were being watched by only 4% of the viewing public. It would seem that \$2,000 million worth of programs, were being watched mostly by Christians—commonly called "inreach," we were "preaching to the converted." Sad though it may be, few of the unsaved tune into Christian television. They love darkness and hate the light, neither will they tune into the light, lest their deeds be exposed. Men and women don't want to surrender. They are going to fight until they are forced to lay down their arms. Add to that fact that no matter how comfortable we make our Christian buildings in an effort to attract them to church, we have to go a long way to compete with the warmth and comfort of their own living room.

Secular, not Christian television is the medium to reach the lost, but how do we get the Word of Truth through the secular authorities, when the Bible tells us that they "suppress the truth in unrighteousness?" If a program even hints of sin, righteousness or

judgment, it would no doubt be slotted into the early hours of the morning.

It was when I was considering these thoughts that I had an idea. Imagine you are an average unsaved person. You are enjoying your favorite sexually explicit and violent T.V. program, when there's a commercial break. Suddenly, a man appears holding a Bible and you hear the words:

"The Bible is the world's all-time best seller, yet many don't read it because they don't understand it. Let me give you an example: This is the King James Version: *"God commendeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness."* Now listen to how the Good News version puts the same verse: *"God commands all men everywhere to turn from their evil ways, for He has fixed a day in which He will judge the whole world with justice."* . . . Why not call into your local Christian bookstore and view the large range of Bibles ... You'll be amazed at the variety."

You watch a few more commercials, then back to the program, but now with the truth of Judgment Day burning within your mind! This thirty second commercial has a threefold effect. First, and foremost, it gets the Word of God, spoken twice (with a close-up shot of the wording for those who turn the sound off during commercials) into the hearts and homes of millions of viewers (remember, God's Word will not return void). Second, it

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promotes the Word of God (two versions). Third, it promotes Christian bookstores (most of whom advertise in church columns and Christian magazines, thus many are unknown to the general public).

I was so excited about the concept, I hardly slept for three or four nights. I submitted the scripts of the commercials to the advertising department of the local television network, and, to my delight, they said they were O.K. as advertisements! I could hardly believe it. They gave me permission to quote, "God commands all men everywhere to repent, etc;" "... You must be born again ...;" "The fool has said in his heart...;" "Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man ...;" "God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." *They saw the quoting of scripture in the commercials as merely a comparing of translations, to promote Bible versions!* Years earlier, I heard about a hardened sailor merely hearing Scripture as he stood outside a meeting, and was soundly converted. The same Word of God cut me to the heart on the night of my conversion, and here we had an opportunity to use this mighty weapon right in the very midst of the enemy.

It was on a Friday morning that I wrote in my diary to contact "Seven Seas Television," a Christian

organization who could advise me as to how I should go about making the commercials. I would find their address on the Tuesday when I returned from a series of meetings in another city. I wasn't even sure of the city in which Seven Seas was stationed, but I would make that a priority for Tuesday.

After a seminar the following day, when I shared the vision of the commercials with the people with whom I was staying, they told me that they knew a television producer who knew the Lord. I said that I would love to spend some time with him to get his thoughts on the commercials. He was duly contacted, and I was delighted to find that he had already decided to come to my meeting the following morning. After the service, I met the gentleman, and shared the concept of the commercials. He loved the idea. He gave me some helpful advice, then handed me his card saying that if he could be of any help, not to hesitate to contact him. I stared in disbelief at the card—"Ian Ralston, producer, *Seven Seas Television*." Standing in front of me was the very man I had wanted to contact on the Tuesday after my return. I neither knew the name nor the address, yet God had brought him to me. I felt sure that God was with me in the venture.

Where Was The Enemy?

The next move was to raise the necessary finance. A package of twelve commercials reaching

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a viewing audience of 3,600,000 would cost \$7,200. It was around that time, I found out that a Christian friend had just started a job with a local secular television station. On enquiry, I found that Greg's job was in the advertising department. Greg was ecstatic, and was even convinced that God had him in television for such a time as this.

I sent out literature to 350 churches, 90 bookstores and a number of individuals whom I knew had a desire to see the nation of New Zealand reached for the Kingdom of God. The response was very encouraging. Thousands of dollars began to roll in. Opening the mail was a most uplifting experience. One Bible distributor did express a concern that the commercials gave an impression that we were demeaning the King James Version. I wrote back and told him that we were using that in every one of the twelve commercials and that I was hoping that other Christians would see what we were actually doing. If we didn't structure the commercials to look as though we were comparing versions, there would be no way we would be allowed to quote Scripture. He was satisfied and showed his support by sending a large check. Almost everywhere I turned, I received nothing but encouragement.

All the money for the production and for the screening of the commercials rolled in. I felt that I was at last doing something substantial for the

Kingdom of God. I was going to have the privilege of firing the cannon of the Word of God right into the heart of the enemy. Over previous months, I had become disheartened that the Church was always on the defense. It was continually trying to stand against the influx of the enemy. It seemed I was forever being asked to sign petitions. We were putting all our energies into Holding ground, and little into taking any. Now it was just a matter of aiming the cannon and waiting for the right time to push the button. Everything was set. The commercials were made using a well-known Christian newsreader, who was delighted to do them free of charge. Alpha Video, a Christian organization had produced them giving a 50% discount—everything flowed. In fact, things were going so well, I was wondering where the enemy was. I was suspicious, but I wasn't complaining.

Enemy Sighted

I was relaxing at home when Greg appeared unannounced and grim-faced—"The top guy in television said that he did not approve those Scriptures ... he's lying. I remember his words Ray. Pharaoh has raised his ugly head!"

Twice Greg had sought written confirmation of the commercials and nothing had come through. We talked for a few minutes and then decided to have a time of prayer. As we prayed, different Scriptures came to mind, "The battle is not yours but the

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Lord's," "If God be for us who can be against us!" This was just another Red Sea. God would make the way for us to go through, and all we had to do was to "Stand still and see the salvation of God."

The combat had begun, and the battleground was in my mind. I was determined to hold onto my weapons. I held the shield of faith up high. Suddenly and unexpectedly, a fiery dart struck my mind—What if God doesn't help you? What if the television people see what you are up to? If they have seen that you are preaching the Word of God there is no way they are going to let it through! How naive, to think that secular television would allow the Bible to be read on TV!"

My mind flooded with the weight of other thoughts. I would have to return all the money. I would end up \$2000 in debt because I spent it on production costs. All that work down the drain! So much for the offensive ... back to the petitions.

Then I would say to myself, "What's going on, I shouldn't be thinking like this!" For the shield of faith to do its work I had to willfully stand within my mind. The enemy was seeking to take my courage from me. He was wanting to discourage me. These thoughts that had invaded my mind were merely imaginations based upon the thought that God was going to let me down. Paul exhorts us with the words, "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we

fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to tear down strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:2-5).

The King James Version uses the word "imagination" instead of the word pretension, and that was my mind stayed on God. I had lowered my shield of faith and allowed the flaming arrows to strike me.

The battle raged for about 24 hours before God brought deliverance. Greg received a long distance call from the top man in television advertising. He had viewed the spots, and said, "Those commercials look O.K. to me."

Doubting Castle

I had been through the same experience as "Christian" and "Hopeful," so graphically illustrated in, *Pilgrim's Progress*. Both Christian and Hopeful left the King's Highway and fell asleep in the grounds of Doubting Castle. Giant Despair woke them and asked what they were doing in his grounds. They said that they were pilgrims who had lost their way. Giant Despair, being stronger than both of them, drove them into Doubting Castle and thrust them into a dungeon which is described as being "very dark, nasty and stinking."

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For four long days and nights they lay there until Giant Despair's wife, Diffidence (lack of self-confidence) counselled her husband to beat them without mercy. Giant Despair was obedient to his wife, and beat them, then told them that they should kill themselves. Christian and Hopeful actually considered the suggestion, but the fear of God stopped them. The next evening, the giant returned and became furious because they hadn't taken his advice. His wife men told him to take Christian and Hopeful down to the castle-yard and show them the bones and skulls of those he had already dispatched. The next morning he took them into the yard, showed them the bones and skulls and said, "These were pilgrims who trespassed on my grounds and I tore them to pieces" (nice guy). The giant then assured his captives that he would do the same to them within 10 days! Hopeful and Christian decided to pray.

After about six hours of prayer, Christian cried, *"What a fool I am, thus to live in this stinking dungeon when I may as well walk out in liberty. I have a key in my bosom called 'promise.' That will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting castle."* Christian then pulled out the key, unlocked the door and they escaped . . . no doubt the wiser.

What a wonderful allegory of those who doubt the promises of God. How perfectly it described my own experience. The second my mind doubted the

promises of God's help, Giant Despair would appear and begin to beat me without mercy. What a fool I was to lie in such a dark, nasty and stinking dungeon! The moment I took out that key of promise, I found release.

A Day in the Life of "Mr. Spiritual"

Sue looked at me and said, "I have never had such a sore throat in all my life!" The painful expression on her face as she tried to swallow, revealed the truth of her words; and the painful expression on my face revealed the truth of my lack of trust in God. I suddenly became conscious of a dryness in my own throat. This was the morning I was supposed to fly to New York. David Wilkerson had asked if I could do a seminar for his church, and I had also offered to do an open air in what was said to be the most demonic stronghold of New York. I spoke in Washington Square in Greenwich Village six weeks earlier, and there was a great deal of opposition. Paul Jorgensen, a video producer offered his services, and was driving nine hours from Pittsburgh to New York to produce a video to inspire other Christians to do open air preaching. Hundreds had already registered for the two hour seminar, and I had heard that some were even praying through the night, that God would bless the outreach.

Suddenly, I found myself in the heat of the *Battle of What-if?* Fiery darts blasted an exposed and

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defenseless part of my mind. I pin-pointed the area targeted by the enemy. It was the open expanse of the Hill of Imagination. It seemed, like some gigantic magnet, to attract the missiles of the adversary. In they came, one after another: "What if you get a sore throat? What if, like your wife, you can hardly swallow, let alone speak? What about the video producer's nine hour drive? He'll have a nine hour drive home too—all for nothing. Nice. All the expense of the airfare . . . all the trouble ones have gone to. And you are going to let them down." I also thought about how I was hoping to sell our books and tapes that weekend to raise finance needed for three new tracts we were having printed. What if the weekend meetings were canceled and we couldn't pay the printers?"

I felt a little nervous at the endless thoughts invading my imagination. That had the effect of making my mouth go dry, which naturally made me conscious of my swallowing. *This was it! I was sure I had the beginnings of a sore throat. I wouldn't be able to speak!* All this, despite the fact that I wouldn't let Sue come within arms length of me. All this, despite that fact that I showed great faith and compassion by praying for her healing (by extending my hand towards her as she stood on the other side of the room).

I gulped down some water. That didn't help. What a pain! I might as well go somewhere, lay

down and die. The thoughts had a familiar "Giant Despair" ring about them.

It was then I remembered what I should have been doing with my shield of faith. I began to think of how negative our imaginations are. We find it so easy to lean towards pessimism, and so hard to be optimistic. It is as though we are halfway up the "hill of the Lord." On the top are our aspirations for the Kingdom of God, and below is the darkness of the devil's will. There is a natural inclination to fall back down into negativity, and any progress takes nothing but the muscle of determined effort, if we want to achieve anything. Yet, almost all of life is just like that. We battle just to stay alive.

Imagine if you became passive in life. You just lay in bed, refusing to move an inch, hoping that evolution will somehow cause you to better yourself in life. What will be the natural development? Your hair will become greasy. Your teeth will cultivate the "furry" feeling. You will get bed sores. You will develop body odor, and other natural bodily functions will place your friends at a great distance. Hunger pains will grip your stomach, and thirst will cause your tongue to swell and your lips to blister. Your finger and toe nails will grow long, brown and curly. Your inactive muscles will begin to wither. If you don't get up and fight for life, you will eventually die; and if we don't get up and willfully fight for the will of God in our lives, we will

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naturally incline to the will of the devil. Satan will sift us as wheat, and he will eventually kill us if we don't stir ourselves to fight like the man or woman of God we know we should be.

We are surrounded by negative laws. Light must have a source to shine. Darkness just is. It is easier to spend money than it is to save. It is easier to destroy something rather than build. Going down is easier than up. It is easier to criticize than to encourage. Weeds grow easier than flowers. It is easier to eat than to fast. Bills come more often than checks. Man is born to trouble as sparks fly upwards. The curse that came with sin meant that we have to work for that which is worthwhile, by the hard sweat of our brow. It takes effort to breathe in the benefit of oxygen, breathing out the poison of carbon dioxide comes easy. To grow in God, we must breathe in the life of faith, and breathe out the poison of doubt. One takes effort, the other comes easy.

Of course, I didn't get a sore throat. That was all in my imagination—an imagination fed by the father of lies. In fact, I spoke in three teaching sessions, and preached open air without amplification for over an hour in Washington Square.

I was very pleased with the turnout for the seminar—about four hundred people came on a Saturday morning, then about 150-200 showed up at Washington Square in Greenwich Village for the

open air. When we arrived, we found that the Hare Krishnas were having an open day. Hundreds of them had different weird and demonic displays—of "holy" cows, reincarnation images of half man and half pig (I know a few who are already like that).

Of course, after about ten minutes of speaking, the police arrived and pulled me aside. They seemed interested in what I was doing (a fake funeral), and then asked me to move. I wasn't breaking any law, but they were so polite and reasonable, I told the crowd we had been asked to move and invited them to follow us for 50 yards or so, which they did. I spoke on the fact that all religions are seeking salvation from death, and think that to do so they have to either do good works or offer some sort of religious sacrifice. In the West we sit on hard pews thinking God will be impressed with our suffering. The Hare Krishnas think they will be saved by their works and wear a pony tail so that Krishna can lift them up to Heaven when their reward comes. Not many know that they pour a mixture of yogurt and cow urine over the heads of their idols as a sacrifice. I'm sure God is impressed. Hindus also rub cow droppings into their skin as a religious act. Actually, the presence of the Hares in the park gave color to the afternoon. My video friend who drove for nine hours from Pittsburgh knew what he was doing and got some real good footage of hecklers, etc.

One of the greatest revelations a Christian can

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have is to realize that to doubt God is to call Him a liar: "Anyone who does not believe God has made Him out to be a liar" (1 John 5:10). If I was to ask you your name, and say "I don't believe you" when you told me, I'm sure you'd be insulted. If I don't believe what you say, it means I think you are a liar, that you're trying to deceive me! Martin Luther said, "What greater rebellion, impiety, or insult to God can there be, than not to believe His promises."

Mindless Obscenities

I looked at the angry police officer and asked, "Am I breaking the law?" "You are breaking about five right now!" he grunted. It was a warm Saturday night in Dallas in June of 1993. I spoke to a group of Christians who had never been involved in open air preaching, then took them to downtown Dallas and staged a fake funeral. I had been speaking to about 50 or 60 people for about 20 minutes, when two policemen arrived at the scene, left, and returned some time later with their boss. When I asked what laws I had broken, he could only give me two—I was blocking the sidewalk, and I was gathering a crowd. Both were minor crimes, but were enough to stop me from speaking. In the past, other officers had been reasonable and allowed me to ask the crowd to make room on the sidewalk for those who wanted to walk by. Not this one. When I asked if I may then conclude, he gave me the sum of 20 seconds to do so.

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Afterwards the local pastor and I went back to him and asked if there was anywhere in the Dallas area where I could speak lawfully. He wasn't very impressed, and when the crowd gathered around, he became nervous and told me to tell "my" people to go away. When I said they weren't my people and that I was a guest speaker, he became quite upset and asked his officers if they had their citation books handy. That's when I left. Both the pastor and I were very close to being arrested.

After the incident we felt a little discouraged, but instead of giving up and going home, our group split up and did "one to one." It was the first time many of them had ever shared their faith, and the pastor told me the next day, *every one of them* was bubbling with excitement, despite the brush with the law. In fact, the incident had stirred a greater enthusiasm in most of them, and opened their eyes to see how anti-Christian America had become.

Being an overcoming Christian means arming yourself with a fighting spirit. It means not giving up when something goes wrong. Most people naturally don't have an aggressive attitude. Even in secular life, the world will stomp all over you if you will let it. Surveys show that more than 80% of people will not complain if they are not happy with a job done by a store—they complain to many others, but not the store. We tend to shy away from confrontation.

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The Bible says, "Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you." The word "submit" means to obey in a subordinate sense. It means that we should understand the structure of the Army of God, and have faith in Him who leads us to a point where we fling ourselves, without reserve, into His all-powerful arms. The word "resist," means just that. We are to stand against the enemy, having a fighting spirit in every area in which he seeks to overcome us. The Church should be a force to be reckoned with, and it is satan's will that we don't see the power that a mere man or woman has, if he has a fighting spirit and faith in the promises of God.

One thing I find that stirs me to anger, is graffiti. I feel angry when I drive through a city in which local residents have obviously taken pride in their community and planted trees, gardens and parks, and yet have had mindless graffiti scribbled all over their buildings. It must be so disheartening that so much work can be so quickly and easily degraded.

I heard that some businesses, in an effort to fight graffiti, are having motion detectors placed above the walls of their buildings, and when someone is detected too close to the wall, they set off water sprinklers, dousing the would-be "tagger," and spraying the wall to a point where paint will not adhere to it.

Satan wants to scrawl his mindless obscenities on the walls of the mind of the Christian. He wants to

claim territory, and steal our confidence before God. But we must never become disheartened and give up the battle; we are to arm ourselves with a fighting spirit. That means having the motion detector of a *primed* conscience; a conscience which is sensitive to unlawful activity. As soon as there is any detection, we are to turn on the "washing of the water of the Word," so that nothing will stick on the walls of the mind.

Use every stick the devil throws at you to start a fire in your soul. Pile high every stone of persecution, then stand on it to be a true and faithful witness for the Kingdom of God.

I spoke to a man once who had the warmth of dry ice. I gave him two of our "I.Q." cards, as an icebreaker, and not a drop melted. His name was Dwight, and he had massive biceps that were even larger than mine (wow!). It turned out that he was another California Christian casualty—he had "tried" Christianity once, and it "didn't work" for him. Then he embarked on a theological speel of trying to justify Judas Iscariot. His line of reasoning was that Judas had no choice. I let him speak for some time on the subject, and then I told him that Judas was a thief and a hypocrite, and had the same choices as the other disciples. I told Dwight that if he stayed in his sins, he would follow directly in the path of Judas, but that God didn't want him to perish. The ice remained cold, but quiet. I think that

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Dwight felt my concern for him. He even took some literature, and allowed me to pray with him. When the devil tries to intimidate us through lack of warmth, we shouldn't be deterred. All we want is a listening ear, whether it be cold or hot, it doesn't matter.

We must have a fighting spirit, not only in the realm of claiming God's promises for ourselves, but for the souls who are taken captive by the devil to do his will. We are to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude verse 3). Both the words "earnestly" and "contend," are the same word in the Greek language. They are both "epagonizomai," from which we derive the English word "agonize," and mean that we are to "contend for a prize . . . to contend with an adversary." Have you ever seen arm-wrestlers contending for a prize? Watch them psyche themselves up. Look into their eyes and see their commitment. Watch their muscles flex and the sweat pour from their brows as they agonize, strive and struggle to come to grips with their adversary. At that moment nothing else matters but the prize.

We are to do the same thing in our wrestle with the world, the flesh and the devil, and with the souls of the unsaved. We are to take a firm grip around the throat of that which wants to swallow us, whether it is the fear of man, fear of the future, or trials and temptations, and not let go until we see the light of day. We can see it through the eye of faith. Though

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it may be dark down the throat of affliction, we know that if God is for us, nothing can be against us, and by the grace of our God, we can hang on until we get the victory, whether it is in this life or in the next.

"... take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one"

(Ephesians 6:16).

CHAPTER FOUR

PRAISE THE LORD AND PASS THE AMMUNITION

"When I cry out to You, then will my enemies turn back; this I know, because God is for me" (Psalm 56:9).

No armor would be complete if provision is not made for the most vulnerable part of the body, the head. Once again, Paul admonishes us to "take" the helmet. If we will not take it and put it on, we will suffer the consequences. The helmet speaks of guarding the mind, using particularly the knowledge of God's coming deliverance. This use of the helmet is made clear in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, " . . . and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." The word hope comes from a Greek word 'elpis,' which means more than the contemporary meaning of the word hope. It means a "confident expectation." David's hope in

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God was clearly evident in the opening Scripture of this chapter. He knew that God was for him, that the Lord would fight on his behalf; David was wearing his head-gear.

The Christian's hope is ultimately the Second Coming of Christ. He lives with the knowledge that Jesus will appear in unutterable power and splendor. The Captain of our salvation will burst through the heavens to do final battle with, and triumph over, the enemies of the Gospel. What a fearful Day for those who will not take heed to the call for surrender. Their proud, stubborn hearts will not allow them to lay down their weapons, lift up their hearts and cry, "All to Jesus, I surrender, all to Him I freely give."

As in any war, we may lose the occasional skirmish, but we, as Christians, have the knowledge burning within our hearts, that we have won the war already. This is the bold confidence of those who follow the Lord of Glory to whom all nations are as a "drop in a bucket." We have the key of promise that never fails to unlock any door the enemy may put in front of us. We know that the Scripture given to Adam must be fulfilled, that God "shall bruise satan under your feet." This must come to pass, therefore we need never lose courage.

In the opening verse of Isaiah Chapter 42, the prophet speaks of the office of the Messiah. In verse 4, we are told that Jesus was never discouraged. This verse is worthy of special attention because it tells

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us why, when it says, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged . . . " Jesus never lost His courage *because he knew that He would not fail!* How could He when the Father was with Him? There lies the key to not only the courage of the Son of God, but of Stephen, and every other hero of the cross who laughed in the face of the enemy's greatest weapon, death.

Our brethren had the courage because they knew they could not fail because God was with them! They had bolted down the helmet of salvation. They knew that death could not touch them—*it could only promote them.* It was merely a doormat on which they wiped their feet as they entered the joy of Heaven. Their strong consolation was, "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord."

The Christian's righteousness has been given to him by God. That's why we can have boldness even on the Day of wrath. That's why we can have strong confidence in God. That's why we can have God fighting for us rather than against us. We know that He who is within us is greater than he who is in the world. Our eyes have been opened so that we can see who God is, and that one person who is on God's side is an infinite majority.

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Imagine for a moment that you are in the front line of battle. The enemy is falling before you like flies. Courage fills your heart as you fire your machine gun after the retreating enemy. You laugh in victory. Suddenly, your laughter stops in your throat. Eight hundred enemy tanks, in one great arm of attack, rise over the hill in front of you. They don't break rank. They move as one mighty wall of metal toward you. Nothing will halt them. The ground shakes beneath your feet; your knees do the same. What then do you do? *You run!* What actually happened was you lost courage *because you lost sight of the victory!* Jesus knew that He could not fail, therefore He was never discouraged. Brethren, we have Him with us who could pulverize 800 billion enemy tanks into powder with the flutter of His eyelash! Never, never lose sight of the victory. Don't let the lies of enemy propaganda penetrate your mind. Remember the command, "Fear not; for I am with you; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness."

To be discouraged is to dishonor God. If He is with us we can never lose courage. Remember that satan is just a creation of Almighty God. *A blind, anaemic, feeble, sickly, dying, weak-kneed flea on crutches would have more chance of slaying a herd of a thousand wild stampeding elephants, than the enemy has of defeating God!* Over the years, I would often feel the weight of discouragement fall upon me when I didn't

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see fruit for my labors. Months would go by with many hearing the preaching, yet not a soul would be saved. But we shouldn't let any situation quench our zeal. A hen will scratch harder when worms are scarce. If souls are scarce, pray more, witness more, and you will get your worms . . . if you faint not. They that sow in tears *shall* reap in joy. John Wesley said to his preachers, "You have nothing to do but to win souls; therefore spend and be spent in this work."

In my travels I often meet ex-gang members, bikers, etc., who used to listen to my preaching, and they are now saved and going on for God. I have heard of people who have responsible positions in church, because they heard the preaching years before.

God wants to make His ministers a flame of fire. Look at the change in cringing, discouraged, cowardly Peter, denying that he even knew Jesus. After the Holy Spirit was given, fire burned in his bones. The Spirit of God opened to him a new realm of faith, courage and power. At Pentecost, tongues of fire came upon their heads so that tongues of fire would come out of their mouths! If we are filled with that same Spirit, we should also be filled with that same confidence. If God is for us, nothing can be against us ... "Take the helmet of salvation."

The Sword Of The Spirit

Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition

C.H. Spurgeon said, "We must thrust the sword of the Spirit into the hearts of men." The enemy does not like this part of our armor. This is the weapon he wants kept in its sheath. He doesn't want Christians to see the point of the sword of the Lord. The sword was to the soldier of Paul's day, what ammunition is to the soldier today. The Scriptures say, "And take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." This is the mighty weapon which God has issued to all who enlist for service. The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. It effectively cuts into the heart of all who oppose its gleaming blade. I have heard demons scream through the mouth of an unconscious girl when this weapon was used! When satan attacked the Son of God in the wilderness, Jesus did not react carnally. He picked up the glistening razor-edge of the Word of God and said, "It is written . . ." He used the two-edged sword, and it was effective.

I was saved in April of 1972. About two weeks after my conversion, someone told me about what they called "speaking in tongues." It gave me the creeps. The person who led me to the Lord had been taught that it was satanic, and he gently shared his concern with me about the experience. I talked it over with Sue, and she told me that it was in the Bible, but some didn't believe it was "for today." I began studying the Scriptures, and read the words in Mark 16:17: "These signs shall follow them that

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believe ... they shall speak with new tongues." That was all I needed. If Jesus said that it was a sign which would follow those who trusted in Him, that's all there was to it. I made it a matter of prayer, and said, "Dear Lord, if speaking in tongues is of You, please change my attitude to the experience."

The next day I began to think thoughts like, "It would do a lot for my faith to speak in a supernatural language which I hadn't learned." That night I attended a meeting where about 1,000 Christians had gathered to hear a visiting speaker. I had taken a non-Christian friend, and he seemed to enjoy the singing until they began worshipping God and "singing in the Spirit." My friend quickly went outside for a cigarette. He was scared, but I decided to stay, and after the meeting I went up to the stage and asked the preacher to pray for me to receive the gift. He prayed and nothing happened.

That just created a greater desire in my heart. I began crying out to God for everything He had for me. The next night, the preacher made an appeal for those who wanted to be filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit. We were led out into a back room, and I was told to go over to a corner by myself and lift my hands and worship the Lord. This was something I longed to do, but up until then I had felt that I just couldn't do it.

I raised my hands and began to audibly praise God. As I did so, I began feeling a tingling in my

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fingers, which I rejected as an imagination. Then I felt the same feeling in my feet. I couldn't reject this one. My mouth went dry. Strange words began to form in my mind, then I began to speak in an unknown language. Love seemed to consume me. I began leaping up and down saying, "You really are there!" God had already proven Himself to me by making me a new person, but this was the frosting on the cake! That night I took my Bible to bed with me.

The next day I telephoned the brother who had led me to the Lord and explained that the experience was definitely of God. I shared how I felt so close to Jesus; how I could not help but lift up my hands in praise to Him, that this was the sign that Jesus said would follow those who believe. He didn't rejoice with me, but instead explained that he still thought that the experience was of the devil.

From that point on, every time we met there was a barrier. Neither of us wanted it, but it was there. Others, in the weekly Bible study we had started, were "filled with the Spirit," which created terrible problems. We would have a time of prayer before the study, in which those who had the experience felt like an eager dog on a leash. The prayer time was sincere, reverent, but oh so quiet. We wanted to praise with words. After the study, that is precisely what we did. We had a short time of fellowship with the others, then slipped into another room to let off

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spiritual steam. This didn't exactly help unity. In fact, we were set straight by some of the more mature brethren who gave us scriptures which they thought showed us that we were in error. We were told of terrible things which had happened directly as a result of this "tongues" thing. This was the beginning of my "wilderness experience."

I walked headlong into Doubting Castle and right into the very arms of Giant Despair. What if they were right? What if the experience was of satan? I had led my friends into something demonic, thinking that it was of God! I had never known depression like it in my life. Of course Giant Despair whispered suicide, which, like Christian and Hope, I would have considered, but for the fear of God. I would go to sleep at night horrified that I would wake up in the morning in the same state. In the morning I was exactly the same. I would go to meetings and find that the singing would lift me somewhat out of my despair, so I recorded the singing and played it to myself at home. That didn't help. I was truly in a dark, nasty, stinking cell.

A number of weeks passed before I found that key of promise in my breast. I didn't doubt the reality of the experience I had been through, I just doubted the source of it. I thought that God had let me ask Him for something, and let satan enter me as some sort of twisted trick. The thought wasn't exactly a compliment to my Heavenly Father.

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Suddenly, it dawned on me that I had grievously insulted God, and cried out to God for forgiveness. Then I turned to the father of lies, who had so deceived me and stolen my joy, and said, "Satan, it is written, 'These signs shall follow those who believe ... they shall speak with new tongues.'" I thrust that two-edged bayonet right into his evil eye ... and he hasn't bothered me with that line of attack since!

Look at how Christian utilized his sword in that great classic publication, *Pilgrim's Progress*:

"Then Apollyon, (a name for satan meaning "destroyer") espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword fell out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now. And with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life. But, as God would have it, as Apollyon was setting his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, Rejoice not against me O mine enemy! When I fall I shall arise! and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian perceiving that, made at him again, saying, *Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.* And with that, Apollyon spread forth his

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dragon wings, and sped him away, so that Christian saw him no more."

Soldier of Christ, throw away your sheath, it is not part of your armor. Strap the two-edged sword firmly in your hand. The book of Revelation describes the glorified Jesus by saying, "... and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."

The way to keep the sword on hand is to have it in your mouth. In Jeremiah Chapter 1, God told the prophet not to speak words of fear. God then put His words in the mouth of Jeremiah, and in Chapter 5 we are given a development report of his transformation: "... thus says the Lord God of Hosts: 'Because you speak this word, behold, I will make My words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.'" God wants us to speak His word. In Genesis Chapter 1, God did not *think* "Let there be light," He *spoke* the Word. When Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus, He did not *think*, "Lazarus, come forth," He spoke the word. He said, "My words are spirit, they are life." He said, "Marvel not at this; but the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear His *voice*."

There is power to create in the Word of God. When the light of the Word is spoken, the darkness of the enemy must vanish. An elderly Presbyterian minister told me that in the First World War soldiers would come to him in tears, gripped by fear before a battle. He would read Psalm 91 to them and watch

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the fear vanish. Look at the wording: "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will *say* of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him will I trust."

The Psalmist didn't just think, he said! Hebrews 13:6 says the same thing: "So that we may boldly *say*: The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" If the enemy's strategy is to put a blockade in your path, speak to it: "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whosoever *says* to this mountain, 'Be removed and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he *says* will come to pass, he will have whatever he *says*." (Mark 11:22-23)

The enemy may have you in a place where there seems to be no hope. Like David, you feel that the enemy is about to "swallow you up." Then speak the Word boldly in the face of the enemy, grip the sword, flash it about like livid lightning, then thrust it at the enemy, you "mighty man of valor."—"And take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

Last But Not Least

The last of the weapons which accompany the armor of God mentioned in Ephesians Chapter 6, is the power of prayer. This is referred to in the KJV as "all prayer." Prayer is the line of communication we

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have with Headquarters. It is by that line that we send for supplies for the troops—ammunition, food, medical aid, etc. This is why it is essential to keep the communication line open, free from interference, from satanic static. Sin interferes with earth to Heaven communication.

Prayer is our lifeline to God, and it is evident that He is calling His Church to prayer—the kind of prayer that will storm the very gates of Hell in the Spirit realm. The kind of prayer that will stand firmly on the blood-bought promises of the New Covenant. We need world-wide revival in the Church that will boil over into the world! We need to call the things that "are not, as though they were," to look at the things that are not seen; to follow in the footsteps of Abraham, who "staggered not at the promise of God, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able to perform." Revival is God's will. He is not willing that any perish; He wants *all* to "come to a knowledge of the truth." Therefore we can with confidence pursue God for men, then in urgent zeal, pursue men for God.

Prayer is the key to every revival in history. Prayer is the key behind every preacher used by God in the past. For the soldier of Christ, true prayer should be a way of life, not just a call for help in the heat of battle. This message is made very clear in Scripture: Ephesians 6:18: "Praying always ... ,"

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Colossians 4:2: "Continue in prayer ... ," 1
Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing," Romans
12:2: " . . . Continuing steadfast in prayer."

Hudson Taylor, the great missionary, said: "The prayer power has never been tried to its full capacity. If we want to see mighty works of Divine power and grace wrought in the place of weakness, failure and disappointment, let us answer God's standing challenge, 'Call to me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'" It has been said that he who is a stranger to prayer, will also be a stranger to power. We need to seek God for the anointing which breaks the hard hearts of Hell-bound sinners. Hardly a day goes by when I don't beseech God for wisdom. Oh how I want the wisdom of God. The Scriptures say, "He that begets wisdom loves his own soul." If you have wisdom from above, you will save souls. If you have wisdom you will never say or do anything wrong. If you have wisdom, you will see all the traps set by the enemy, you will encourage other Christians with insights from the Word, and you will cut sinners to the heart with the wisdom of God.

We need such an anointing on our preaching that men will weep in a sense of their own sinfulness. When I speak of the "anointing," I am not meaning "power" ministries—those with much show but have little conviction of sin. I am speaking of that anointing that elevates the holiness of God, that is

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faithful to preach sin, Law, righteousness, holiness, judgment, and Christ crucified.

God loves His children coming to Him in the intimate communion of prayer. The Scriptures tell us, "The prayer of the upright is His delight." Let us never face a day in battle until we have faced the Father in prayer. John Bunyan said, "Prayer is a shield to the soul, a delight to God, and a scourge to satan." Satan trembles when he sees the feeblest Christian on his knees. How utterly convicting are the words of Martin Luther: "I have so much to do (today) that I should spend the first three hours in prayer." Of course, Martin was a monk, and therefore had the time to spend in prayer, but we can see the principle of what he was saying—"Seek first the Kingdom of God."

May each of us catch a glimpse of the power and the authority God's children have through prayer. We are privileged in having "whatsoever" we say. Obviously this doesn't include that which James says we want "to consume upon our own lusts" (James 4:3), but that which is in the will of God for us as His children. The reality of this authority was so clearly demonstrated in the following incident. I had just finished speaking at a Christian camp, and in closing, asked how many were not "filled with the Holy Spirit" and yet wanted to be. Eight put up their hands. I then said without any deep thought: "*I sanctify this area of the floor, in*

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the name of Jesus," and pointed to a specific portion of the floor. In Leviticus 27:16-22, the Scriptures speak of certain individuals "sanctifying" areas of the ground. The word is "qadash," and means to "pronounce as clean"—to "hallow" something. The Bible uses the word a total of 70 times, and I am convinced that when a certain thing is sanctified in the name of Jesus, God listens.

I then said to the group, "We are going to have a mini-Pentecost, right here!" and pointed to that same area. The eight came forward. Six stood where I indicated, and two stood to the left. The minute we began to pray, the six who stood where I indicated were immediately filled with the Spirit, and the two that stood to the left were not. I saw what was happening and pulled one across to where it was all happening, but it was too late ... they had missed the boat. God means what he says. He says that we are ambassadors. That means that we will be backed up by God in what we say, if what we say is pleasing in His sight. Satan knows this and seeks to stop you and I seeing the authority we have in Christ. Don't be afraid to exercise that authority by sanctifying your children, home, land, or even your car. God told Israel to sanctifying themselves, their firstborn, and even the ground around Mount Sinai before He gave them the Law. After this incident at the camp, I have always sanctified planes I travel on. As the engines roar on the runway, I say, "I sanctify this plane as a vehicle to transport Your servant to do

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Your will, in the name of Jesus." Look at the context of this scripture:

"If satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. No one can enter a strong man's house and spoil his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house" (Mark 3:26-27).

Jesus is talking about the enemy. He is speaking about the one who has taken sinners "captive, to do his will." One way to bind the satan's power over something, is to sanctify it, to set it apart as holy, then we may spoil his goods.

We are stronger than the enemy because our strength is not our own: "*The Lord* is my strength and my shield" ... "Be strong *in the Lord* and in the power of *His* might." When we submit to God and resist the devil, he will flee from us. The key is to live in that place of continual submission, sanctified to the Father and His will.

Within the very cartridge of prayer are the explosive forces of faith:

1. The name of Jesus (which brings terror to the enemy).
2. The blood of Christ (which is like a cauldron of boiling oil poured on his head).
3. The sword of the Spirit.
4. The unlimited potency of a confident

affirmation.

Look at the spirit of victory behind these words from Psalm 149, which seems to summarize what I have been trying to say: "Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, to execute on them the written Judgment—*this honor have all His saints.* Praise the Lord" (italics added).

Sharpen the Axe

A man was once cutting a tree-stump with an axe which was obviously blunt. He was only bruising the bark, as sweat poured from his beaded brow. Someone suggested he stop for a moment and sharpen the axe, to which he replied, "No way, I'm too busy chopping the tree to stop for anything." If he would only stop for a moment and sharpen the axe, he would slice through the tree with far greater ease.

Stop each day, and "sharpen the axe" through prayer. Seek first the Kingdom of God and you will slice through that day with far greater ease.

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints"

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(Ephesians 6:18).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCHARGING THE TROOPS

"... I cannot hold my peace, because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war" (Jeremiah 4:19).

While I was ministering with a fellowship one weekend, the pastor shared with Sue and I a dilemma in which he found himself. For about nine months his fellowship had run an entertainment club to make contact with local teenagers. Rock music was part of the drawcard. Over the months, a few contacts had been made, but there had been little fruit. He asked for our thoughts. We told him that it was good that he was wanting to reach out, but the real question was, what is God's attitude to the use of heavy rock music to draw young people to Christ? Does the end justify the means? Could we justify the use of alcoholic beverages as a means of

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reaching out to the ungodly—how do we reach out to the world?

I recalled how, a few days earlier, Sue and I had witnessed to a number of teenagers. They said they hated God. Their language was filthy. One hated his father and longed to kill him, while another had a genuine desire to murder someone "slowly." The pastor in whose home we were staying added to my disquiet by telling us that his counter-culture neighbors had named their child "Lucifer."

I was grieved at such a thought. How lost, how rebellious could a generation get! I began crying out to God, asking how this generation could be reached, when a still small voice said, "Go next door and befriend them." I said, "No Lord ... You're not capturing the spirit of my prayer!" The voice became stronger. After a little coaxing from the Lord, I went next door, but took a copy of my first book, *My Friends are Dying* (a book about the drug culture), to give to them.

As I walked up the driveway, suddenly I heard, "**Ray!**" There stood a long-haired man I had never seen before, holding a bottle of beer and pointing his finger at me. He said, "Ray . . . I just finished reading your book, *My Friends are Dying* three days ago!"

I was duly invited into the home and introduced to a number of residents. I told them that I had been

praying next door, and felt that God had wanted me to come and talk to them. As I sat in that filthy, smoke-infested, stinking room, surrounded by drugs, alcohol and blaring music, it dawned on me that if we cared, we would push aside our fears and boldly befriend this lost generation.

Holiness is not separation from *sinners*, but from sin. I made five friends that afternoon, and I didn't have to attract them, they attracted me. Like Jesus, we should be the friend of sinners, yet remain untainted by the things of this world.

Without Reserve

If there is one thing the Salvation Army had under the leadership of General Booth, it was a burning zeal for holiness and for evangelism. They would stop at nothing to take the Gospel to the lost. Some of their ways may even have seemed rather radical and unorthodox, yet God anointed their endeavors because their passion for souls was seasoned with holiness.

Holiness is a word the enemy fears because it goes hand in hand with the word "power." Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness . . . " Holiness signifies "(a) separation to God, (b) the resultant state, the conduct befitting those so separated" (Vine's Expository Dictionary).

This was the message preached by those early

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soldiers. They preached the great truth "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

They proclaimed the uncompromising Gospel which declares, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ, depart from iniquity."

Look at what happened to the tribe of Ephraim when they lacked holiness—"The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They did not keep the covenant of God; they refused to walk in His Law, and forgot His works and His wonders that He had shown them." To walk in His Law means to walk in the steps of Jesus, and walk in that same Spirit of holiness.

The Apostle Paul had a zeal that drove him to witness of his faith in Christ, even while in bonds. Can you imagine the boldness needed to witness to Roman guards, men who were hardened to cruelty? Yet Paul asked, "Pray for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." Instead of the attitude, "Oh no, here I am chained to two guards," his was, "Thank you Lord, I have two guards chained to me!" He looked for an opportunity to witness of his faith, because the zeal of God's house had eaten him up. He could not but speak that which he had seen and heard!

Discharging the Troops

Paul's zeal, his enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God, remained steadfast because it was fed by the Spirit of holiness. He was separated from the world to the God of holiness. This is the difference between the contemporary church and the fiery and militant army of the Church of the book of Acts. The tanks of evangelism of the army of God have become rusted to a standstill by the influence of the world. What is needed is an unprecedented outpouring of the oil of God's Holy Spirit to get mobile and into action, and that power will come when the Church becomes holy.

God wants those who will give their all to Him, without restraint! When God spoke to Gideon regarding his army to fight the Midianites, He said, "Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained. God wants dead men in His army! He wants those who are not afraid because they are already dead to themselves and alive to God. They are the ones who overcome the devil, because they "love not their lives unto death." They are already crucified with Christ. They are not conformed to the world because they have presented their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God ... their reasonable service.

George Mueller said, *"There was a day when I*

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died, utterly died, died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will—died to the world, its approval or censure—died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends—and since then I have only to show myself approved to God."

Caleb was another who had given all to the Lord. He knew that there was no place for retirement this side of Heaven. At the age of 85 he said, "As yet I am as strong this day as I was on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in."

Faith does not wrinkle with the skin. Look at his words of faith, "Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said." Remember, he was 85 years old!

I remember a 65 year old believer telling me that he expected to "take it easy" as a Christian when he retired. Shortly after his day of retirement, he was in a prayer meeting with three other Christians. There was a word from God through the gifts and an interpretation, the thrust of which was, "My child, this is not a day of retirement. I have work for you to do. I will guide and direct you as to the path which you are to take." Then there were some words of a

personal nature which needed attention. The incredible thing was that those with him never heard the interpretation. They heard the message, but felt things were out of order when nobody interpreted. God blocked their ears!

Two years later, this same elderly saint made an 80-mile train trip to visit and pray for a woman in her nineties. He had been requested by the family to make the trip, and as he journeyed, he kept thinking, "What a long way to travel just to pray for one old lady. I wonder if it is worth it?"

On arrival, he was ushered into the elderly woman's room. She lay motionless in a coma. He was left alone to pray. Suddenly, God began to speak through the mouth of that unconscious woman. The conversation started with the words, "As I was saying . . ." It was as though there was no time between the previous conversation two years earlier!

There is no such thing as an honorable discharge in the Army of God. The only "Heavenly-rest" is our promotion to Headquarters, and until that time, we must work while we have opportunity and the inclination. There is a time to rest, but there is a special rest for those who give all to the Lord. We enter that rest the moment we lay down our self-will and sanctify ourselves wholly for His purposes.

Equipped For Battle

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If there is one thing that equips the Christian for battle, it is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The saints of last century called it "the second blessing." How the enemy fears this experience. It can take the cringing, faint-hearted, fearful, nerve-ridden, terror-stricken Christian, and fill him with fire. I knew a young man who was so shy, even as a Christian, he was afraid of his own shadow. When the "power from on high" got hold of him he was transformed completely. He went alone to take free food to a houseful of bikers, who almost everyone avoided because their very appearance was intimidating. The baptism in the Holy Spirit took Peter, from being a man who could not testify of his faith in Jesus to a little girl, to a fearless soldier of Christ who saw 3,000 saved under his bold proclamation at Pentecost. He told the murderers of the Messiah that they needed to repent. No less-welcomed message could have been preached, yet Peter was able to because he was filled to overflowing with the Spirit of God, who is a consuming fire.

The question then arises, why doesn't every Christian jump at the experience? Why isn't every soldier of Christ eager to take hold of this great weapon? There are at least three reasons:

1. A lack of knowledge.
2. A lack of faith.
3. A lack of humility.

Knowledge that such an experience is scriptural should banish any hindrance. Jesus said, "And these signs will follow those who believe: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues" (Mark 16:17). Such clear words as to what should follow believers, directly from the mouth of Jesus, should be enough, but the Apostle Paul, humble though he was, said, "I thank my God I speak in tongues more than you all" (1 Corinthians 14:18). If Paul boasted of such a gift, how much more do we need it? He prized his devotional, personal gift of tongues to edify (build up) himself, as opposed to the *gift of tongues, given for the edification of the Church*. This must be accompanied by an interpretation.

The gift of tongues is foolishness to the natural mind, but those who understand the ways of God, realize that he has chosen the "foolish things to confound the wise."

The second hindrance is lack of faith. Look at these words from James Chapter 1, regarding asking of God:

"But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the lord, he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does" (James 1:6).

If we ask with any doubt, we will not receive

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anything from the Lord. I once prayed for a woman who insisted on shaking her head while I prayed. I placed my hand on her forehead and got her nodding in a positive gesture. It had the effect of changing her attitude from negative to positive, from doubt to faith so that she could receive from God. Another woman, as she was prayed for, mumbled, "It's so hard." We stopped praying and I offered her a can of beans, which I took from a shelf behind her. She looked at me with a puzzled expression. I told her to take it. As she took it, I said, "Was that hard? Did you screw up your face and say how hard it would be to receive it?" She got the message of the simplicity of receiving a gift from God. It is merely a matter of reaching out in child-like faith to the Lord and receiving it. Knowledge released her and she was filled with the Holy Spirit straight away. Another key to realize, is that **you** speak in tongues, not the Holy Spirit. He will give you the words, but you do the speaking.

God will not take over your will. If you don't speak out in faith, nothing will happen. I once counseled a new Christian that I thought I might have to pray for, for a few minutes until he "came through." I closed my eyes and reached out my hand to lay hands on him but I couldn't find him. I opened my eyes and saw that he was on his knees, his hands raised to God speaking in a new language—I didn't even get a chance to pray for him! He was filled with faith in his Heavenly Father, and the God of

lightning did a quick work.

The third hindrance is a lack of humility. If you have any social standing, any pride, any intelligence, you will never stoop to speak in tongues. It will be beneath your dignity.

How To Be Filled

If you are not filled with the Spirit, with an overflowing supernatural prayer language, what on earth are you doing in battle without standard weaponry? You need everything God is giving! Don't let the ammunition wagon pass you by, reach out and take that which is rightfully yours. The following are four principles I have found to be effective for those seeking the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (let God equip you, right now):

First, sanctify yourself. Confess any known sin, especially unbelief. If you are at all fearful of the experience, this is mistrust in disguise. Imagine if I bought a gift for my son, wrapped it up, put it on the kitchen table for him to unwrap, and said, "That's all yours son, a gift for you; go ahead and unwrap it." My son looks at me with deep apprehension and says, "I'm not going to rush at this thing—there may be a bomb in it!"

Such an attitude would be a direct insult to me. If my son returns my love, such a thought wouldn't enter his mind, he would rush at it and excitedly open it. Yet, thoughts of apprehension are common

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when it comes to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. However, Jesus reassures us: "And I say to you, ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son shall ask for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:9-13 NKJV).

Second, don't plead with God saying, "*Please, please* Lord." Sometimes, such words are indicative of unbelief. If I am holding out a gift to you, you don't say "Please, please," but "Thank you." Just relax and receive the present. As strange words begin to come to your mind, begin to whisper them. I say "whisper" because most people are a little self-conscious (proud), and find it difficult to speak out at first. As the words form, begin to say them a little louder. Resist any doubt as you would an adulterous thought. Say, "If Jesus said, 'Ask and you shall receive,' then when I ask, I shall receive."

Third, when you begin to speak in a supernatural language, reckon your carnal, natural, logical mind dead. When it tells you how stupid this whole

exercise is, don't listen. The Bible says:

"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Paul says the carnal mind is "enmity against God" (Romans 8:7). You will know that it is the genuine thing *because the carnal mind with fight it*.

Fourth, God deals with each of us differently.

Some get filled to overflowing, some don't. He knows best. When power flows into a light bulb, it's not the noise that matters, but how much light is spread. If nothing seemed to happen, don't be at all discouraged. The woman who had an issue of blood said to herself, "If I can but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be made whole." No doubt as she tried to touch Jesus, she had to push through the crowd that surrounded Him. She may have had some deliberately hinder her. Whatever the case, her attitude was, *"I'm going to touch Him, and I shall be made whole."* Always remember faith is dead to doubt, deaf to discouragement, blind to the impossible, and knows nothing but success in God.

Sometimes God will make us wait until we are hungry for the experience. There is not much pleasure in trying to eat a meal when you are not hungry. Have the attitude of Jacob, "I'll not let you go until you bless me." You can have confidence

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because you are not seeking the experience for yourself, but that you might reach this world more effectively. Always remember that evidence of being filled with the Spirit is love.

The Baptism Breeds Boldness

One evidence of being filled with the Spirit should be a holy boldness to stand up and do battle with the forces of darkness. In these days, the Church needs soldiers who will arise with "the word of truth, in the power of God, with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand (to attack) and for the left hand (to defend)" (2 Corinthians 6:7, Amplified Bible). In past years, we have been forced to defend in so many morally legitimate areas, but how much better it is to attack! One issue we must muster forces against is the enemy of abortion. This Goliath must be stopped!

Some time ago, I was asked to address an anti-abortion group. I declined on the grounds of not being "available." The real reason I was not available was, I would have nothing to say on the subject. I felt angry and frustrated about the issue. I felt as though I was in Nazi Germany, with innocent people being slaughtered around me, and able to do so little to stop it.

Forms of protest seemed so futile. In one city recently, thousands supported a pro-life rally, but the news media ignored it. No matter what wording is

put on banners, they seem to lack any "punch" and picketers are often forced to walk in circles so as not to breach the unlawful assembly law. Anything I would say to this anti-abortion group would just add to their feeling of helplessness and frustration.

That evening I couldn't sleep. Thoughts began forming in my mind. I remembered the movie "Exodus" in which a couple visited a museum in Hawaii where continuous movies were shown of the horrors of Nazi Germany.

The museum was run by Jews who were seeking to remind the world of the horror of allowing one man supreme power. They were saying, "Lest we forget." Thirty seconds of film was worth 10 million words. I wept uncontrollably. Ephesians 5:11-13 says:

"Have nothing to do with the worthless things that people do, things that belong to the darkness. Instead, bring them out to the light. (It is really too shameful to talk about the things they do in secret). And when all things are brought out into the light, then then-true nature is clearly revealed."

I am convinced that satan's ploy in the issue of abortion is to have people think that all that is involved is merely "fetal" tissue. I was a Christian for over five years before I had any thoughts on abortion; I was neither for or against... until I saw a picture of a bag full of dead babies—the work of one morning in an abortion hospital. The same day I

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saw the picture, I had it enlarged and took it to a pro-abortion rally and tried to pin it on one of their stationary displays advocating abortion. It created fiery resistance from the enemy. I have never been the same since seeing that photo and will do all I can within the bounds of law to stop the murderous spirit which pervades through abortion.

As I lay awake that night, my thoughts went back to the years when we owned a bus with Scripture written all the way around it. In my mind, I could see a large bus with large, bold signwriting around it, giving abortion statistics. Next to the signwriting, I could see very large pictures of aborted children. These pictures were coated in plastic (for protection) and framed firmly onto the side of the bus. The seats would be removed and reset around the inside of the bus. Carpet would be laid (as in our previous bus), making an excellent mobile prayer room. It could be used for counselling as well as prayer, for a mobile anti-abortion video room, for leading anti-abortion marches, as well as for transporting literature and teams of Christians. And where would we park the bus when not in use?—right outside the abortion clinics. If the presence of the vehicle causes a disturbance, good, I want it to be a thorn in the conscience of murderers. I am angry to a point of wanting to take that Scripture which says, "Be ye angry and sin not" and crossing out the "not."

As I lay there, I could imagine the impact of

parking the bus in a busy shopping center, lowering a hinged platform and staging a drama where a woman enters a doctors surgery carrying a baby-like doll.

She relates to the doctor that she is pregnant again and can't stand the thought of having another child. Could he "do something about it?" The doctor says, "Why not kill the one on your lap . . . it is easier to get at!" He takes an axe out of his drawer and proceeds to kill the baby on her lap. As he seizes one of the child's arms, she screams "murderer!" and pulls at the other arm. He raises the axe and begins hacking. No doubt such a drama would draw a crowd and would be an excellent springboard for the Gospel.

I did go along to the meeting. I did share the vision of the bus, and a number of people present pledged over \$4,000 towards our "Life-mobile." Sometime later, we found a bus. The owner was a Christian, sold it to us for \$5,000, and threw in a check for a thousand to encourage us. It did.

Getting the Point of a Tack

It is time for the Church to arise in new-found courage and not only defend, but attack the enemy. I don't mean to get distracted in a tangent of social work, but to be salt and light. Salt to stop the rot, and light to show the way to the salvation of God. To stand against abortion and yet not to preach the

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Gospel, is to point to the wound, yet not supply the cure.

The enemy knows the signs of revival. He has seen them in past centuries, therefore he will do all in his power to clothe the Church with a shroud of apathy to blind them as to what can happen when the Church is on fire.

When Job found himself covered in sore boils, he had two "comforters" feed him nothing but lies. In the background waited Elihu. As he listened he said, "For I am full of the matter; the Spirit within me constrains me. Behold, my belly is like wine which has no vent. It is ready to burst, like new wine skins!"

When we look at the lies being fed to the Job of this world, as it sits in despair, covered in sore bods, from the crown of its head to the sole of its foot, do we have Elihu's declaration? Is there a holy anger building within you and me as the father of lies deceives this sick world? Can we say, "For I am full of the matter"? Does the Spirit of Truth live in you; are you not filled with Him to a point where you cry, "The Spirit within me constrains me, pushes me on; the love of Christ burns within me! Behold my spirit is like wine which has no vent; it is ready to burst like new wine skins"? We cannot hold our peace! God has said, "You are my battle axe and weapons of war ... Make bright the arrows, gather the shields . . . set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon,

make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes ... attack, attack!"

If you are a sleeping saint, satan will gladly rock your cradle. Oh for a strong sounding trumpet blast in the ear of those who would sleep, "Awake, awake, put on strength, O Zion . . . " If we sleep on our own domain, it won't be long before we are asleep on enemy territory.

We haven't moved, it's just that the ground we are on has become occupied! Some of our churches are so dead, the only thing keeping many awake is the sound of snoring. Would to God that more church buildings would be struck by lightning, as in England in 1984.

Soldier, what are you doing for the Kingdom of God? Are you waiting for a "word from God?" Then here it is—"Go" (Mark 16:15). What are you waiting for? Go somewhere, do something, say something to somebody somewhere, somehow. One day you will be dead, and then it will be too late. While you can think, speak, move your hands and feet, do something for God. Are you content to sit in the barracks while the battle rages? Form a team. Get yourself a bus, write to the papers, drop tracts everywhere, speak for your God. Do something before the dust of apathy covers you. There is no neutral ground—you are either garnering or you are scattering for the Kingdom of God. We have been given our battle orders through the Word of God! He

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who reads them cannot but hear the "sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war." As a 12 year old Christian, I figured out that I had sat under the sound of 1,800 sermons! That was about three a week. Work out how many sermons you have listened to, and then ask how many should you take in before you give out. How much training do we need? Many have become so fat in God they have rocked themselves to sleep trying to get out of the pews.

We must run to the battle, sow seed in tears, for we have God's promise that we will doubtless reap in joy. Our aim is not to kill, but to make alive. Men have rushed into battle merely to obtain dirt.

They gave their lives to get back a hill in Vietnam, Korea or Israel, a hill which may be returned to the enemy through peace negotiations twenty years later. Their costly efforts were futile, our labor is not in vain. We have a wonderful mandate.

We have to shake off the fear of man. I often feel a flush of heat come to my face as I step into enemy territory to give out tracts or to preach. I don't find it easy, but the Bible says that, "the righteous are as bold as a lion." I am righteous in Christ, therefore I am as bold as a lion!

Sowing and Reeking Ministry

Think of the fate of those the enemy has "taken captive by him to do his will." Soldier of Christ,

while many of our brothers and sisters are content with "youth night," take a team and do a bar drop. Fill pits of darkness with the light of the Gospel. I find that I can put literature in a bar and be out the door in about two minutes . . . in one door, out the other before they know what's going on. Many a hero has been gripped by fear as he blasted the enemy.

If a hero wasn't fearful, then he's not a hero. Courage is to triumph over fear, not to be free of it. When I drop literature in a bar, half of me hates being there in the smoke, the smell of booze and the foul language, and the other half cries with compassion. Don't take any weak or soldiers who couldn't handle it. Those in this category can stay and intercede on your behalf.

We can so easily lose sight of the fact that we are called to be fishers of men. I once ministered at a meeting where the pastor had broken free from tradition. He decided to have his meeting outside at the local botanical gardens, reminding us that the church is not the building, but the people. As the meeting began, I noticed two, obvious non-Christians, watching intently. I approached them and found out that one of them was a fisherman. We spoke about his work for a while, then he asked about the meeting. He wasn't at all interested and both of them began to walk away. I called after them, "Hey, I'm a fisherman too." At that, they

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immediately swung around and came back. They said, "And all the time we were going on about fishing, and you're an expert!" I said, "Yep ... I've been fishing for over 12 years (and I've just got me a fish)." I was able to share with them that they pull fish to their death, but we pull men to life.

A short time after that incident, our family was on a train for six hours, traveling through our native country of New Zealand. I felt that this was a good opportunity to spread some literature around the train.

I waited for about three hours until I felt that the literature would provide a relief from boredom. As the guard walked past into the last carriage to take the tickets, I took courage, and got up from the seat with a pile of our papers in hand to cover the forward carriages.

However, the last carriage proved to be empty and the guard came back about five seconds after I got up. I quickly sat back down on another seat, with a pile of papers in hand and gazed out the window.

After he went, I handed out dozens of papers. As I sat down I wondered why I felt so nervous in the first place. People were glad of something to read. On our return trip, I was determined to do the same thing. We were in a carriage with about 40 American tourists, so I waited until I felt the time was right, ignored the hot flush and gave out the

papers. Almost everyone took them. One lady was a Christian and came and sat with us for a time. I could hear the people talking about the paper. About an hour later, the Christian lady who had sat with us, returned to her seat, took out a mouth organ, and played, "How Great Thou Art." Then the train stopped for no apparent reason. A woman down the back gently began to sing, "It's no secret what God can do ... what He's done for others, He will do for you . . . " It was so anointed, I am sure hearts were touched. God only knows what a work was done for eternity with that simple act of giving out Christian literature.

In the eighties, I would often go frog and tadpole hunting with my children. On one occasion, I had made a dragnet which I would throw into the pond, being careful to avoid weed which sat in the center. A normal haul was five or six tadpoles and perhaps a small frog or two. After some time, I accidentally threw the net right onto a large piece of weed and pulled it to the shore. I was a little dismayed that this was going to be a rather messy haul, but to our delight, that one haul netted 86 tadpoles! I had been avoiding the place they had been frequenting! Most evangelicals stay clear of bars and other weedy places, yet that is where the fish gather. Throw your net into the dregs of humanity and you will gloat at the results. Sinners flock to bars, not church buildings. We have as much chance of getting sinners to visit church buildings, as we have of

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criminals visiting a police station. If we were policemen and business was down, we could chrome-plate the bars, put in carpet and air conditioning, with a notice out the front of our jail saying, "Tonight—7.00 p.m.—all welcome," but still very few criminals would visit the police station. If business is down we have to apprehend law-breakers, and the same applies to evangelism. Our light shines most in the dark places.

I was recently sitting in a plane when a woman sat next to me. She turned out to be a bar-owner from England. We spoke of natural things, then spiritual. I prayed that God would prepare the heart of the person who would sit by me, and He certainly did. The woman listened with both ears. I took her through the Commandments one by one, explaining our true state before God, as reflected in the mirror of His Law. Then I asked if she saw herself as a sinner in the sight of God. Her words were, "I do feel bad, after talking to you." Then we went through the cross and I had the joy of praying with her. I am convinced that she was soundly converted because there were no lights dimmed, no organ-playing, no twisting of the emotions; just a poor sinner asking God for mercy 32,000 feet above the ground. As we came in to land she said, "It is so ironic. I have had to travel 12,000 miles to be shown the right way. *I feel a different person since we left the ground.*" I hope she never comes down. Brethren, there is no greater joy than to have God save

someone through you. We've been bought with such a price, let's spend Ourselves for Him who bought us. When it comes to doing something for the Kingdom of God, *some people stop at nothing!*

I guess one of the hardest types of evangelism is "door to door." I feel conscious that the cults have so imposed on people's privacy, they have stolen our thunder. I had this thought in mind once when a woman opened her door to me. I said, in a sincere tone, "Hello, I'm not a Jehovah's Witness," and she said, *"Well I am!"* Despite the knock-backs, door-knocking is very rewarding. There will be the usual, "We've got our own religion, thank-you," the occasional door slam, and the faith-testing dog, but you will make valuable contacts, meet some lonely old saints who need encouragement, place seed in hearts, literature in homes, and reap if you faint not. For too long, the soldiers have remained in the barracks. Organize a combat battalion and go into the fields. Why stay as Private Barracks, when you can be a Field Marshall! Promotion does not come from the east or the west, but from the Lord. If you prove fearless and faithful, you will be honored with promotion. Pull out the pin of self-will, then place yourself as an evangelical hand-grenade into the hand of God. *(For a survey for door to door evangelism, see the last pages of this publication).*

CHAPTER SIX

KNOWING OUR BATTLE-ORDERS

"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17).

In 1967, before my conversion, I worked in a bank. Each morning, it was my task to deliver checks from one bank to another. One day, I noticed a crowd of about 150 people packed around the entrance of a department store. The store was having a massive sale, and as a drawcard, they had some incredible bargains displayed in the window. One of the reduced items was a jacket, with a give-away price tag of only \$2. As far as I was concerned that jacket was made for Comfort. I wanted it, but there was no way I could get it with so many people waiting at the entrance of the store.

After my deliveries, I made my way back to the

store I waited until about 20 seconds before 9:00 a.m., stood at the back of the crowd and said with a loud authoritative voice, "*Excuse me!*" People at the back looked around, saw my black briefcase, and concluded the obvious. *This was the man whose job it was to open the door and let everyone into the store.* It was in their interest to get me to the front of the crowd as quickly as possible.

As I said, "Excuse me ... stand back please, excuse me," they opened up like the Red Sea. The timing was perfect. When I approached the door, a gentleman on the other side turned a key, and suddenly, the dam of human bodies burst, *pushing me into the store and straight to the goal of my jacket, which I purchased for \$2.*

How much do you want to live on the cutting edge of the will of God? Do you want to fight in the front lines of battle? If you desire it above all else, then set your sights on it, and don't let anything deter you from that goal. Set your face "as a flint towards Jerusalem." You have a large crowd to push through, and some won't move out of the way as quickly as others. *Self-will*, will be your biggest obstacle. He will take some prodding with your case. Directly behind him is his best friend, the never satisfied and overweight *Self-indulgence*. He is more interested in eating a donut than he is in moving out of your way. Just beside him is *Laziness*, and his two bedfellows, *Apathy* and *Hard-heart*.

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Pride will stand arrogantly in front of you, and will persist in keeping his position. He will be wearing the disguise of the "fear of man," so he may be hard to recognize.

Condemnation, *Doubt* and *Discouragement* will whisper lies in your ear to try and take your eyes off your goal. They can be dealt with through faith in God's promises. Watch them though, because they will be wanting to move back, the moment you push them aside.

Then you have to maneuver passed the attractive subtleties of *Legitimate Pleasure*, *Entertainment* and *Leisure*. They will want you to stop and talk for a while.

The fundamental principle to getting each hindrance to move back, is the authority you and I have in Christ. What I did to get that jacket was deceitful. I let those people think that I was something I wasn't. But, if you are in Christ, you are a son or daughter of the most High God.

The flesh, with all its appetites, is no longer a puppet for the devil. The strings were cut at Calvary. Jesus Christ gave you the right to boldly approach the Throne of Grace.

God will open doors at just the right time for you to get your heart's desire.

It is your blood-bought right to break out of the comfort zone of mediocrity, obscurity, mundane and

defeatist Christianity, and live on the cutting edge of the will of the Living God. Let's look at how you can do that.

Whose Idea Was it?

A young man sat in my office with a very troubled expression on his face. He had been seeking God's will for his life and had come to a point of total frustration. *He didn't know what on earth God wanted him to do.* It was clear that he wasn't clear of what his battle orders were. So, I shared a simple key to unlocking the will of God, something which had been a guiding principle by which I lived since I was converted at the age of 22. I had been apprehensive to share the key with anyone, but the young man so appreciated what I told him, I decided to begin teaching it from the pulpit, and to my surprise, it was also appreciated in the pew.

I reminded him of the incident where David slew Goliath, and asked him whose idea it was for the youth to fight the giant. He thought for a moment, and then said, "David's." He was right. If you take the time to study 1 Samuel Chapter 17, you will see that there is no record of him seeking God for His will in this instance. How could this be? The Scriptures say, "Acknowledge Him in all your ways and He will direct your paths." Shouldn't David have acknowledged the Lord in some way? No doubt, he did pray as he faced his enemy, but there is no record of David asking God as to whether or not he

should attack the giant Philistine.

The reason for this is clear. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 10:32, "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable." There are things in life that we know are not acceptable. If you saw an elderly lady fall to the ground, do you ask God whether or not you should help her up? Certain things should be obvious to the godly. David took one look at the situation, and saw that such a thing was completely unacceptable—that this "uncircumcised Philistine" should defy the armies of the Living God.

David could draw that conclusion because he had a relationship with God. His senses were "exercised to discern both good and evil." He knew the Lord, and "they that know their God shall do exploits."

Doing Your Own Thing

The thought that may come to mind, is that the Christian must be careful not to move into the area of what is commonly called "presumption." There is an incident in Scripture where Israel *presumed* God was with them, when He wasn't, and the result was great tragedy. However, the issue is clarified the moment one understands the difference between *faith* and *presumption*. Take for instance my faith in my wife. Sue loves me and takes care of me. She keeps the house clean and tidy to a point where I am proud to have visitors. I have great faith in her. But presumption says, "You guys leave that mess there,

the wife will clean it up ... best housemaid I ever had!" The dictionary defines the word *presumption* as "an arrogant taking for granted, a liberty."

Love, respect and faith go hand in hand, and I trust that I never *presume* upon my wife. In the same way, each of us should love and fear God enough never to have an arrogant attitude of taking Him for granted. In fact, he who *knows and fears* his God would *never* take Him for granted—he will not venture into presumption. Yet, so many are so afraid of presumption they won't step out in faith. They are so scared of 'doing their own thing,' that they don't do anything for God.

It is interesting to note that the Apostle Paul rejoiced even when certain professing Christians 'did their own thing' when preaching the Gospel. Look at his words:

"Some, indeed, preach Christ out of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other, of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way *whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and in that I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice*" (Philippians 1:15-18, italics added).

For many years, I crossed swords with a man called "The Wizard." The man was a very eloquent speaker, who would dress up in all sorts of costumes to attract large crowds. His message varied from

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things of interest, to stupidity. He would provoke thought by saying how senseless it is that we pay doctors when we are sick. It is not in the interest of the medical profession for you to be healthy. If we are in good health, our doctors have no income, so there's no great incentive for them to work for our well-being. It would be far more sensible for us to pay our doctors \$5 for every month we are well. Then they would have a reason to keep us in health.

We were both open-air speakers, and had a mutual understanding that I preached to the first lunch hour crowds in the local square, and he preached to the second. This happened almost daily for twelve years. Some days he would arrive while I was still speaking, and would suddenly burst from the crowd and verbally tear into me. I loved it. In fact, he was my best heckler. People thought I had great courage, but I knew that afterwards we would go off together for a cup of tea. The wizard and myself were what I called, "friendly enemies."

This man was very anti-Christian. He would, much to the delight of the public, make an altar to the God of Israel and sacrifice a \$10 bill by fire to God, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I was always surprised at God's patience with him. On a scale of evil, the wizard was seven out of ten.

I also had another regular heckler, whose name was "Bernard." On a scale of ten, Bernard was on

twenty seven. He would say and do things in public that would make your hair curl. He was so anti-Christian, he made Saul of Tarsus seem like Mary Poppins. With cutting sarcasm and a blazing contempt, he would say things like, "*Jesus died for your sins. You have to repent because God has appointed a Day in which He will judge the world in righteousness.*" One day he was spitting out hatred with such intensity, he embarrassed himself by accidentally spitting out his false teeth. I almost choked with joy.

What should our attitude be to such a man? We should grieve that he was so anti-Christian, but our grief should be for him, not for God—"Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap." It didn't worry me at all when he repeated scripture, because like Paul, I rejoice, even when Christ is preached from such an evil motive. The reason for this is that *the quality is in the seed*, not in the sower. A farmer can, with great proficiency, place his skilful hands in the sack of seed and scatter it on the sod. It will produce fruit if it falls on good soil. A simpleton can place his unskilled hands in the same sack and scatter the same seed, and it will also produce fruit, *because the quality is in the seed and not in the sower*. This is of great consolation to me. I know that God doesn't require my ability, just my availability to take the quality seed of His Word and scatter it on the soil of men's hearts.

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Let me give you an example of this principle. Around the time Bernard was evilizing, a young man approached me and said, "I have been listening to the Gospel for some time, and I gave my life to Christ last Monday." I said how pleased I was, and asked him for details. The young man heard Bernard spewing out blasphemies in his usual anti-Christian, mocking fashion. After listening to him for some time, the man was so disgusted, he went somewhere quiet *and gave his life to Jesus*. The quality was in the seed of God's Word, and it found a place in his heart even when it was thrown down in ridicule.

Paul rejoiced that somebody, even out of a wrong motive, was scattering the seed of the Word of God, *because anybody scattering the seed is better than nobody scattering seed*. With these consoling thoughts in mind, to illustrate another important principle, I now want to share with you four small exploits that God allowed me to be involved in.

A few months after my conversion in 1972, I suddenly felt inspired to buy a bus to use for evangelism. This sudden flash of thought came when I was driving through "Aranui," a suburb of my home town. I placed an advertisement in the church column of a local newspaper to purchase a bus, and when nothing came of it I put the idea aside.

Two or three months later, I was driving through that same portion of Aranui, when I felt impressed

to pray again for a bus. I could see it in my mind's eye. I would have scripture painted in quality sign-writing all around the bus. I would take out the seats and rearrange them around the walls, and lay plush carpet on the floor. It could be used for counselling, prayer, and for transporting Christians to preach the Gospel. When I arrived home, a friend called and read me a verse from the Book of Acts about turning "those who are in darkness to light." That night at a prayer meeting, another friend stuffed \$150 into my pocket (I liked that guy). The next day, God confirmed His Word with the kind of signs following most of us enjoy, by supplying finance, from four different directions. It was about that time that I heard of a bus auction and went to it with faith, a friend, and finance.

As I waited for the first bus to be auctioned, I had a sense of anticipation as to what the Lord was going to do. It was just a matter of waiting, and clutching onto my grand total of \$600. Unfortunately, the first of the three buses to be auctioned went for \$1900. I felt devastated, so I went for a long walk. It was then that God spoke to my heart with the words, "Lean not to your own understanding." The second bus sold for \$1100, still well above our price range. We left the auction for a quick lunch, but upon our return, found that the auctioneers had changed, this one was fast and the auction had finished. I felt the air drain out of my lungs as we leaned against our lost bus and gave

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God thanks anyway.

We didn't say too much on the way home. Then, while driving back through Aranui, *along the portion of road where I first prayed*, I noticed a large bus parked in a field. We stopped the car, and I went next door to see if I could locate the owner.

I looked through the back door and saw a middle-aged man, who was fixing something on the floor at the end of a hallway. The bus belonged to him, so I asked if he was interested in selling it. He stood to his feet, scratched his head, and said, "That's really strange ... *I was just thinking of selling it.*"



God gave me my bus for a grand total of \$600, and it was twice the size I had envisaged. We tore out the old seats, carpeted it throughout, and put new

seating around the walls. The destination on the front said "Heaven." We put scriptures around the outside, and also painted a large picture of a man in a coffin on the back of the bus. Piled around him were masses of money, and the words, "What shall it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul," under it. We didn't get too many tail-gaiters.

It was a big bus. In fact, it was so big, I steered the thing while Sue worked the pedals. One day I was driving through the city and found that it was so big, I couldn't get it around a corner. I carefully checked the rear view mirrors, and backed up. It was then that I heard a sound I will never forget. It was a high pitched "*Ne-ne-ne-ne-ne-ne!*" with a "*scrrrraaaaape*" following it. I checked my mirrors again. Nothing there ... and drove forward. Again I heard the mystifying "*scrrrraaaaape*" noise, so I pulled in around the corner to check what I thought was something dragging under the bus.

Suddenly, there was a feverish knock on the door. I opened it and saw a young man with a pale face. He had been parked directly behind the bus in a very small car, when a coffin with "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul," began heading towards him. He honked his car horn "*Ne-ne-ne-ne-ne-ne!*" as the bus scraped across the hood of his car taking the corpse, the coffin and the scripture right up to his windshield. *I*

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think God was speaking to that man. Over the years, the bus travelled thousands of miles, and was a means of taking the Gospel to many.

Locked Out

The second exploit was a tabloid Jesus Paper called "Living Waters." This 12-page newspaper had no income from advertising, no subscription fee and after the first issue, we never asked for financial support. We saw God supply finance for a total of 359,000 copies which were given away. On one occasion, I had ordered literature with only \$5.75 in the bank. Some time later, we found a paper sack with over forty \$20 bills in it, at our front door. The scripture which motivated us to get the bus and start the paper was solely, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

The third exploit was the writing of our first book. I had previously published an eight page paper called "My Friends Are Dying," and felt that there was an opening for the Gospel through a paperback with the same name. It was after I began writing the first chapter, that the verse was quickened, "Commit your works unto me and I will establish your thoughts." The first edition wasn't brilliantly written, but God blessed it anyway, and it sold between 15-20,000 copies, and now is in its ninth print. The scripture that motivated me to write the book was, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Three years after the book, we felt that a movie of the same name could also be an opportunity to share the Gospel, so we committed our ways to the Lord and He established our thoughts. Over a period of time, He supplied the necessary \$24,000 to pay for the production costs. An amazing two thousand three hundred people showed up to the premiere. The theater was so packed, a thousand had to be locked out and an unscheduled second viewing held. Since that time, it has been screened hundreds of times, and seed has been sown in the hearts of many unsaved. God didn't tell me to get a bus, start a paper, write a book or make a movie—the sole motivation for those exploits was the same, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

CHAPTER SEVEN IN HARMONY WITH HEADQUARTERS

" . . . that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

When things don't work out as we think they should, we often quote Isaiah 55:8: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord." God's ways are above our ways, and often we have no idea why He allows certain things to happen. But the scripture we so often lean on for consolation, is not directed at the godly. Here it is in context:

"Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ... For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are

your ways My ways, says the Lord" (Isaiah 55:6-8).

God is directing Himself to the wicked and the unrighteous man. He is speaking to the unregenerate, those whose "carnal mind is at enmity" with Him, who "walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened." Before we trust in the Savior, we are enemies of God in our minds through wicked works, and even our thoughts are an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 15:26). Like a lost sheep, we have also "gone astray," we have "turned every one to his own way," and our *ways* are an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 15:9).

Upon conversion, God puts His Law into our minds (Hebrews 8:10), giving us a new mind, the "mind of Christ," and renewing us in the "spirit" of our minds. He gives us a "new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20). Now God's ways are our ways and God's thoughts become our thoughts. We are led by the Spirit, walking "in His ways" (Psalm 119:3).

Once, our lives were dead in trespasses, governed by sin, selfishness, satan, the soul and senses. But God made us alive in our spirit. Now we walk in the Spirit, have the mind of the Spirit, worship in the Spirit, and live in the Spirit. If we are walking in the Spirit, with our Adamic nature crucified, we can therefore be assured that the desires we now have are in line with God's desires. For example, before I

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was a Christian, it never entered my mind to start a Jesus paper, or get a bus and put Bible verses all around it—*it would have been the last thing I would have been interested in*. Now my desires are *radically* different.

I'm sure few of us have failed to underline Psalm 37:4 in our Bibles: "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." But what are our desires? What do we want most in life? Do we desire above all things to have a better paying job, a bigger house, thicker carpet, a superior car, and more money? Are we controlled by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, or have we been transformed from the way of this world by "the renewing of (our) mind," that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God? Are our desires now in line with God's desires? Are we above all things "not willing that any should perish," that all men come to the knowledge of the truth? If that is our testimony, it is because we have the same Spirit in us as the Apostle Paul, who said, "For it is God who works in me to both will and do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Look at this verse in the Amplified Bible:

"(Not in your own strength) for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you—energizing and creating in you the power and desire—both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight."

Scripture tells me that the reason I get desires to do exploits for God, is because He is in me "energizing and creating in me the power and desire to work for His pleasure." When I get aspirations to do things to reach the unsaved, it is because my desires have become His desires, and His desires have become my desires. I can pursue my aspirations, trusting that they are in the will of God, and therefore I can confidently expect Him to honor them. Remember, this is not presumption, "an arrogant taking for granted," but a pure, unadulterated desire to do the right thing by reaching out to the lost.

Let me ask you another question. Whose idea was it for Peter to walk on water? See if you can detect whose idea it was in these verses:

"Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.' And Peter answered Him and said, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.'

So He said, 'Come.' And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus" (Matthew 15:25-29).

Peter said, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Peter had the idea, and

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Jesus put His blessing on Peter's notion. Peter knew Jesus intimately—he knew the mind of the Master. He knew that his desire wasn't an impertinent presumption, but just a longing to follow the Lord into the realm of the supernatural. Jesus said, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, *him My Father will honor*" (John 12:26, italics added).

This is why, when you and I do godly exploits, we can trust that we are in the will of God and that He in His goodness will honor them. This is the thought in the words of Jesus in Mark 11:24 when He said, "Whatever things you ask, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." The same applies to John 15:7: "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, *you will ask what you desire*, and it shall be done for you." (italics added). Or the often misinterpreted Mark 11:23: "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 come to pass, 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."

Does this mean that we need merely speak the words, "Mercedes Benz, diamond rings, fur coats," into the air through believing prayer, and God will

give them to us? I don't think so. If our covetous heart has been crucified with Christ, our desire won't be for *more, bigger, better*, but that none perish.

We seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to us, if we need them. Scripture actually warns that a covetous prayer will not be answered:

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:3).

Where No Oxen Are

A verse that ministered to my heart for years is a strange little scripture in Proverbs 14:4. It is strange because on first seeing it, you wonder how it could inspire exploits for God. It merely says, "Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; but much increase comes by the strength of an ox."

Let me try to illustrate what this means to me: I proudly display a trough I have built out of high quality timber. When you ask when I will be putting oxen into it, I look disgusted, and reply that I would never put dirty oxen into my clean trough, as they would only mess it up.

The trough may be clean with no oxen, but it is useless without them. In the same way, many won't do a thing for the Kingdom of God because they are afraid of making a mess. They want to keep things neat, tidy and uncomplicated. They don't want to

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take risks, so they don't do a thing for the Kingdom of God.

It goes without saying that we shouldn't move until we get a quickened word or a rhema from God in certain major decisions. For some years, I desired to set up what I called the Living Waters Free Christian Literature Distribution Ministries which, as the name suggests, is a ministry of providing free Gospel literature for the Body of Christ world-wide. To finance this I wanted to establish a Christian bookstore and use the profits for the ministry. I suggested the thought to a number of godly men who said the idea was good, but the timing was wrong.

One day, one of those men felt a strong impression that the time was right. That evening we prayed about it after family devotions, asking God to confirm it to us. The same evening, Sue and I began our own Bible reading from Proverbs 11:21. We had been reading through a portion each night and the verses following so confirmed my desire, failure to step out in faith would have been blatant mistrust in God.

Within days we had our own Christian bookstore opposite the local bar. The bar had a glass frontage and if drinking patrons looked towards our window they could see the words, "He who believes on Me shall never thirst—Jesus."

For that decision, which meant a change of vocation, we waited for a rhema, but the Great Commission doesn't leave any option. It is a *command* and therefore doesn't need a special word of confirmation. I don't have to seek God to confirm His directive to "preach the Word, in season and out of season." With such a clear admonition, we should be able to say as David, "Once has God spoken, twice have I heard . . . " We shouldn't neglect prayer—we *should pray as we go*.

The Original Greek

Here is a fascinating thing. The original Greek meaning of "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15) opens up some interesting thoughts. The word for "go" is very absorbing. It is "poreuomai," meaning "go." The word "all" also carries with it gripping connotations. It is "hapas," and actually means "all." And if that doesn't rivet you, look closely at the word "every." It is "pas," and literally means "every." So when Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," to be true and faithful to the original text, what He was actually saying was "*Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.*" We are so fortunate in this day and age, to have access to the original Greek.

Stunning Feet

Those who are obedient to the Great Commission

will find that God will honor their desires:

"And whatever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:22).

If anything is "pleasing in His sight," it is obedience to the Great Commission. As I have said earlier, God is so pleased with those who preach His Word and witness for the Gospel, that He sees even the lowliest part of us as ravishing—"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace." The Apostle Paul revealed the priority of his heart when he said, "To the weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Our bus, the paper, the book, and movie, were just concepts to reach the lost, and God in His goodness and His condescension, blessed them.

Those seeking a personal great commission need to go back to their relationship with Jesus and ask the question, "Do I know the heartbeat of my God?" If we don't know His will, the Bible says we are unwise—"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). Paul's prayer for the believer was that he would be "filled with the knowledge of His will" (Colossians 1:9). The very reason God came to this earth in the person of Jesus Christ, and suffered on the cross, was for the salvation of the world. Has

God lost His enthusiasm to see the lost saved? Has He changed His mind and is now willing that sinners perish? Is He now wanting worship *without service*? No, His will is that none perish, and that all come to repentance. To seek and save that which is lost is to flow in perfect harmony with the Father's will.

What a disaster it would be to have troops in the heat of battle, unclear as to what their mission was! How can any soldier apply himself to combat if he isn't sure what his orders are? Our directive is crystal clear. The charge to assault the enemy and bring back those who will desert sin and the world, rings in the ears of those who are truly born of the Spirit. They hear His voice, and run to do His will.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GAZING TOWARDS HEADQUARTERS

"... to him who knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

In Dallas Texas, W. A. Criswell, a Baptist legend who for more than 50 years, preached a literal Bible and an uncompromising fundamentalism, said that the Southern Baptist Convention is declining and will be replaced as the major evangelical denomination in the United States. "I don't think we will ever split. I think we will erode ... I think we will gradually acquiesce," Criswell said. "God will raise up somebody else to take our place." But he believes there are irreversible trends indicating that Southern Baptists as a whole are following the path of the United Methodist, Presbyterian and other mainline denominations that have downplayed soul-winning evangelism and have turned inward.

What he was saying in essence is, where has our *get-up-and-go* gone? Too many who profess to be Christians haven't got a *get-up-and-go* that has gone, because they never got it in the first place. The world may waste its time with its futility, but we have an urgent directive: "Let the dead bury their dead; but you go and preach the Kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60).

Watchman Nee, in his book, *The Spiritual Man* said:

"The passivity of the saint arises out of the non-use of his various talents. He has a mouth but refuses to talk because he hopes the Holy Spirit will talk through it. He has hands but will not engage them since he expects God to do it. He does not exercise any part of his person but waits for God to move him. He considers himself fully surrendered to God, so will no longer use any element of his being."

He continues by saying:

"They think their will must be canceled out and that they must become puppets. By falling into this state of inaction, the Christian now ceases from every activity. Indeed, he waits quietly all the time for some external force to activate him. And unless this force compels him to move he shall remain decidedly inert."

When Jesus ascended into Heaven, it must have been a glorious sight. The angels said to the

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disciples that "this same Jesus will come in like manner." He ascended in the same manner in which He will come, so there must have been "clouds, power and great glory." When the disciples were caught up in the glory of the ascension, the two angels appeared and brought them back to this world with the words, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into Heaven?"

We haven't been saved to stand and "gaze up to Heaven," but to take the light to those who sit in the dark shadow of death. How can any person who professes to have the love of God in them, sit in passivity while sinners die daily and go to Hell? Paul said, "Woe to me if I preach not the Gospel!" We are like a doctor who has found a cure for cancer—we *must* present it to the dying world.

A friend of mine couldn't get a word from God, as to whether or not to go overseas with a team, to both construct a church building and to evangelize. Then he heard about a man who was waiting on God for a long time. He waited and waited ... then he died. So, my friend decided to go in faith (before he died), and was blessed beyond words.

Honors and Big Prizes

Elbert Hubbard once said:

"The world bestows its big prizes, both in honors and money, for but one thing, and that is initiative. And what is initiative? I'll tell you: it is

doing the right thing without being told!"

If you want people to appreciate you, and heap praise upon you, *then do the right thing without being told*. If a friend drops into a seat, exhausted after a day's work, and you know he loves a hot drink when he is tired, then make him one without being told. You *will* be praised. David did the "right thing" when he heard Goliath blaspheming. Peter did the right thing when he wanted to be with Jesus, and you and I do the right thing when we seek and save that which is lost.

With that thought in mind, look at the New Covenant (conversion) in Hebrews 8:10:

"I will put My Laws within their mind and write them on their hearts ..."

The word "hearts" is "kardia," and means "the thoughts or feelings." Look at how the Living Bible paraphrases the verse:

"I will write My laws within their minds *so that they will know what I want them to do without My even telling them ...*" (italics added).

Have you ever noticed how Luke begins his Gospel? Does he say that God "told him" to write it? No, he merely says, "It seemed good to me" to write it. Luke had a perfect understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus, so he "took the initiative," put pen to paper, and God blessed his labor.

We need to "go to the ant, consider her ways, and

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be wise, which having no guide, overseer or ruler, provides her meat in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest." In California, you don't need to go to the ant, *the ant comes to you*. Ants don't need to be continually motivated to work. They are full of initiative, in fact, in my conclusive studies of ants, I have never seen one taking a rest. The only still ant you will see is a dead ant. They are maniacs for work, and God points to them as our example.

Look at what Ernest Newman said:

"The great composer does not set to work because he is inspired, but becomes inspired because he is working. Beethoven, Wagner, Bach and Mozart settled down day after day to the job in hand with as much regularity as an accountant settles down each day with his figures. They didn't waste time waiting for inspiration."

The revealed will of God in Scripture *should be our inspiration*. If God has purchased the car, filled it with gas, paid the insurance, given us the license, sat us in the driver's seat, shown us our destination, started the engine, and told us to go, *should He now have to push the car?*

Peter used initiative in Acts Chapter 3 when he prayed for the lame man. He did the right thing without being told. He didn't have to pray and seek God's will, because he knew it already. He knew that Jesus "went about doing good, and healing those who were vexed by the devil." In verse 12 of the

same chapter, we see that when the miracle of healing took place, "all the people ran together to them ... and when Peter saw it, he answered the people ... " A modern version says, "And when Peter *saw his opportunity* ... (italics added)." Peter didn't pray and see if it was God's will to preach the Gospel to every creature, he saw an opportunity, and used his initiative and preached to them.

Do you remember the incident in Acts 16:6, where the disciples were heading for Asia, and then God told them not to go there? What does that show us? It shows that the disciples didn't have a "word from the Lord" to evangelize in Asia. If they had prayed, "Lord, do you want us to preach the Gospel in Asia?" and God had directed them to go there, it means that He then changed His mind. Rather, the disciples merely obeyed the command to "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," and God, in His faithfulness had directed their steps by saying, "Not Asia, at this time."

If there is one thing satan seeks to kill, steal and destroy, it is man's initiative and creativity, *especially in the area of evangelism*. When people say to me, "You are very creative," I agree and say, "My Father is very creative. Look at Genesis Chapter 1." God is *creativity* itself, and I say it reverently, He is *full* of initiative. God took the initiative in the beginning when He spoke creation into being. When Adam fell, so did his direct contact with the Father,

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but now you and I have the mind of Christ. We have access to the incredibly infinite intellect of Almighty God, and we can let His creativity flow through us.

Left Foot of Fellowship

You may be asking the question as to what you can do in a practical way to reach people for the Kingdom of God. Here are a few suggestions: There are a number of evangelical organizations you may like to join. I was in Gideons International for seven years until I became a pastor (they don't allow pastors to be involved, only lay people). It is such a blessing to be involved in an organization that gives away copies of God's Word. There is Youth With A Mission, Youth For Christ, Full Gospel Businessmen's Association, Campus Crusade For Christ, Women's Aglow and many others you could become involved in. Perhaps you could invest in a small advertisement in the personal column of your local paper saying something like "Find reality, read John 8:31-32." *Get a cost quote before you commit yourself.* I wanted to buy a full page in the *L.A. Times* during the Gulf War in 1991. I thought it would be around \$6,000, and figured I could probably raise that sought of money.

I called the *Times* and the gentleman gave me the cost: "A full page is \$61,023." I thought he had slipped an extra number in by mistake. Wrong. I dropped that idea quickly.

Perhaps you could visit a hospital once a week, with the purpose of finding and befriending someone who doesn't normally have visitors. If you have a flare for drama, start a drama group. How about writing a tract? Don't say, *"But I can't write,"* say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Write out your testimony, and have a friend or two read it and give their opinion. Then print out the edited copy, and have it typeset at your local printers. Remember to get quotes before you do anything, so that you won't get burned. When it is printed, keep copies in your wallet or purse to give to old friends or people you meet, with the words, "You may like to read this when you have a moment. I wrote it myself." Put copies into the envelope when paying bills.

Back in the late 70's, I had 40-50 children in our garage every Friday for a 20 minute "Good-time" Club. I remember praying that God would send me someone who could play a guitar to give the music a bit of a lift. One Friday evening, my brother-in-law walked into our living room knowing nothing of my prayer, and said, "For some reason I feel the Lord wants me to give you my guitar." I hadn't thought of me. I was never able to play a guitar, but now I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (I just have trouble convincing those in earshot).

You could easily start a club through your local church. When I decided to start mine, I just took a

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marker pen and wrote, "KIDS CLUB, FRIDAY 4 P.M., (ADDRESS), CANDY, PRIZES, STORIES AND SONGS," gave out photocopies at a school gate, and had a crowd of children eager to learn about the things of God. Nowadays, with all the allegations and accusations of child molestation, etc., it would be wise to have both male and female leaders. Start with a firm hand, sing some lively songs, tell a Bible story, teach a memory verse, give out some candy, then tell the kids, "It's all over, see you next week." If the children don't say "Ohhhhhhh!" you've probably gone on too long and they may not be back the following week. I found 20 minutes was adequate for most.

Sometimes talented Christians don't feel right about using their gift of music or writing, etc., to reach the unsaved. It is often because of their own pride that their conscience is condemning them, and not God. This happens regularly with counter-culture people who become Christians. Their conscience will not allow them to eat meat. After some time they come across a Scripture such as 1 Timothy 4:3-4, which says that God has created all foods "to be received with thanksgiving by them who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused, if it is received with thanksgiving." Immediately their conscience is released by understanding the Word of God.

When we understand the emphasis which the Word of God places upon evangelism, we should humble ourselves, thank God for the gift He has given us, then use it for His glory. If you have no apparent talents, visit an old people's home, or ask your pastor if you can help in any way within the local church. Do something for God. Desire to do nothing, and God will give you the desires of your heart.

Dig in Your Own Soil

An old Arab once told a poor man of the beauty of diamonds. He told him that if he possessed just a handful of sparklers, he would never want for anything ever again. He could have whatever he desired in life. From that time on, the poor man began to dream about diamonds. He spent every moment thinking about those glittering gems. Finally, he was so consumed by that dream, he left his home and began a search for his dream. Wherever he went he would dig for diamonds.

Years passed, until that disappointed poor man flung himself into the sea and committed suicide.

The old Arab visited the poor man's home not knowing of his death. As he walked into the living room he noticed a rock on the mantelpiece and said, "Where did you get that diamond . . . is the poor man back?" Those in the house said that it was just a rock they had found in the back yard. The Arab

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picked it up in his trembling hand and said, "*I know a diamond when I see one—where did you get it?*"

They rushed out to the back yard and began digging in its white sands, and found diamond, after diamond, after diamond. Thus began the Golconda diamond mines, which exceeded the Kimberley mines in value!

You don't need to chase around the world searching for the illusive and sparkling diamonds of the will of God; *just begin to cultivate your own back yard*. The Bible says, " . . . a good man shall be satisfied from himself." Start digging for those gems of creativity, and then do something for the Kingdom of God.

When John Wesley was asked what he would do with his life if he knew that he would die at midnight the next day. His answer was something like this: "I would just carry on with what I am doing. I will arise at 5:00 a.m. for prayer, then take a house meeting at 6.00 a.m. At 12 noon, I will be preaching at an open-air. At 3:00 p.m. I have another meeting in another town. At 6:00 p.m. I have a house meeting; at 10:00 p.m. I have a prayer meeting and at 12:00 midnight, I would go to be with my Lord."

If we knew we were to die at 12:00 tomorrow night, would we have to begin or step up our evangelistic program, or could we in all good

conscience carry on just as we are?

It would seem that there are only three types of people in this world—the *jaw-bone*, the *wish-bone* and the *back-bone*. The *jaw-bone* says he will do something, one day. He never puts his muscle where his mouth is. He prays about things, but never does them. His conscience stirs him to prayer, but the warmth of his comfort zone stifles his good intentions, because his own well-being is more important to him.

The *wish-bone* gazes with starry eyes at his godly heroes and wishes he could be like them. His is a world of dreams. Like the *wish-bone*, he is easily divided from his goals. He wishes he could preach, write, pray, sing and dance. Yet, no one ever did anything without doing something. An aspiration will only become a realization with perspiration. If he wants to see revival, he should stop wishing and start fishing, but his dreams are not fuel enough to motivate him to movement.

In contrast, the *back-bone* soldier of Christ sees Goliath and *runs* towards him. He breaks out of the barracks of apathy, warmth, and security. He leaves the fat cat of indifference sleeping by the fire. He walks on water while others sit in the safety of the boat. He holds his weapons with resolution and takes ground from the enemy. He uses what he has to do the will of His Heavenly Father. *He knows His God, and does exploits*. He doesn't let his fears stand in

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the way of his dreams.

Let's close this chapter with some words from that distinguished and decorated veteran of the Lord, Charles Spurgeon. He sums up what I'm trying to say:

"Brethren, do something; do something, do something! While societies and unions make constitutions, let us win souls. I pray you, be men of action all of you. Get to work and quit yourselves like men. Old Suvarov's idea of war is mine: 'Forward and strike! No theory! Attack! Form a column! Charge bayonets! Plunge into the center of the enemy! Our one aim is to win souls; and this we are not to talk about, but do in the power of God!'"



SECTION TWO: THE BATTLE ITSELF

CHAPTER NINE

PERILS OF FRONT-LINE BATTLE

"Let the dead bury the dead, but you go and preach the Kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60).

There was once three doctors in the city of Adam. One day a deathly disease broke out in the metropolis, and authorities traced the cause to water from nearby Lake Iniquitous. Everyone was affected because the lake was the only source of the city's water supply.

The name of one of the physicians was Doctor Ian Dulgence. Unfortunately, Doctor Dulgence was a man whose sole motive for entering the medical profession was questionable. He saw his vocation purely as a lucrative means of income. As far as he was concerned, his patients' diseases were nothing more than the means to a wage, so he was never

genuinely interested in their welfare, only his own.

The second doctor was Doctor I.G. Norance (B. A.). Doctor Norance had a good and honest heart. The reason he entered the profession was for the relief of suffering humanity. However, this doctor found to his dismay, that even though his patients listened intently to his advice, they would never finish the prescribed medicine he gave them. In fact, he became very discouraged because many of his customers went back to drinking from the polluted lake. This mystified the good doctor, as he earnestly wanted to see his patients cured.

The third doctor was Doctor "Bib" Lical (B.A). Bib (an affectionate nickname given to him when he was a child), also had a good and honest heart, and if there was any difference between him and Doctor Norance, it was the fact that he would always do things according to the medical instruction book. Never would he deviate from the directions given in the manual, even down to his bedside manner.

This difference between the two could be seen in the way they dealt with their patients. Doctor Norance lacked knowledge as to how to effectively deal with the disease which resulted from drinking from the lake. He didn't appreciate the importance of the fact, that each patient needed a shot to kill the infection before giving him medicine which was to be taken orally. His lack of knowledge as to why the patient should have the shot, caused him to merely

give the medicine alone. Besides, he disliked seeing anyone in pain, and the needle *did* cause pain. Rather than labor on the consequences of drinking from Lake Iniquitous, he would speak of more pleasant things. He didn't want to alarm the patient, as he considered fear to be detrimental to his welfare.

"Bib" however, saw fear as something that could work for the long-term good of the sufferer. While talking with his patient, he would take the time to educate him by making sure he understood why he was ill, that it was solely because he had been drinking the water from Lake Iniquitous. He would show him highly magnified pictures of the virus, and watch his patient's eyes widen as he saw the death-causing bacteria that were invisible to the naked eye. He carefully explained that the disease produced tiny worms that would eat their way through the stomach linings, then through the bowels, eventually spreading poison throughout the whole body, bringing about an excruciating death. In fact, Doctor Lical didn't even hint that there was a cure to the affliction until he felt the patient understood the seriousness of his plight. Did the doctor do this because he wanted the patient to squirm in fear at the thought of what would happen to him? No. He knew that if he didn't see the seriousness of his dilemma, he would not continue with the prescribed medicine, and eventually die. Not one of Doctor Lical's patients went back to drinking from Lake Iniquitous.

Within the Church, we have three different types of professing Christians. First, we have the self-indulgent "believer." He made a commitment to the Savior under the sound of the modern Gospel. He was told that Jesus was a means of self-improvement, that He would give him an abundant life of peace, joy, happiness, etc. Despite his practice of the Christian life through fellowship, worship and prayer, he is still in his sins, because he has never been awakened by the Law of God in the Hand of the Spirit. He cares only for himself, and has no zeal at all for the lost. He looks at God as a means to his own ends, rather than Lord of his life. He *calls* Jesus Lord, but doesn't do the things He tells him. He is the "backslider in heart," who is filled with his own ways, rather than the ways of God.

The second doctor is typical of the believer who is truly born again. He is a genuine convert, but he is in ignorance as to how to effectively reach the lost. He has been unwittingly shaped by twentieth century evangelical tradition. He preaches Christ crucified, repentance and faith, thinking that is complete biblical evangelism. However, his message lacks the Law to bring the "knowledge of sin." He also neglects to mention future punishment, so his converts don't stick, mainly because they are "his" converts, rather than God's. He doesn't see the need to follow the example of Jesus, and use the needle of the Law to penetrate the flesh for the saving medicine of the Gospel. He thinks that it is biblical

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to draw people to Christ through the promise of a rich, full, abundant and wonderful life, rather than driving them to the Savior with the Law of God, as did Spurgeon, Wesley, Whitefield, Moody, Finney, Luther, and others God so greatly used to reach the lost. He gives the patient the cure before convincing him that he has the disease, and so the medicine of the Gospel runs off his flesh, and is unable to do its saving work. In his zeal without knowledge, he circumnavigates the Divine means of producing contrition. He doesn't use the Law to convince the sinner that he has sinned against God, so there is therefore no "*godly* sorrow" that "works repentance."

Doctor Bib Lical however, is the Christian who has gained light on *biblical*, rather than *traditional* evangelism. He knows that those who drink in iniquity like water have a disease which has ten clear symptoms. Sin is transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4), and the Ten Commandments tell the sinner what sin is (Romans 7:13). He realizes that he must convince the sinner that he has the disease of sin, and he cannot do this without the Law (Romans 7:7). If he isn't first "convinced of the Law as a transgressor" (James 2:9), he will eventually use the Grace of God as an occasion of the flesh; he won't continue taking the cure. The Law must penetrate the flesh and make a way for the Gospel that is able to save his soul.

The Christian who knows that biblical

evangelism is *Law to the proud and Grace to the humble*, will take the time to open up the Commandments as Jesus did, so that the sinner will see the seriousness of his plight. He will not be afraid to use scriptures that take away his sense of well-being such as, " ... fear Him who has power to cast both your body and soul into Hell" (Matthew 10:28), or "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God" (Hebrews 10:31). He knows that the effect, if used in conjunction with the Law and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, will result in the sinner seeing the seriousness of the disease of sin, and he will then take the cure of the Gospel with deep appreciation and gratitude. The Christian who has evangelical zeal *with* knowledge, lets the arrows of God's Law pierce the sinner deeply, and waits for the hand of God's conviction to press him down (Psalm 38:2) until he says with the Psalmist, "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger, nor any health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me." It is only then that the sinner will "labor" and become "heavy laden," and seek the Savior to find rest to his soul.

The Abundant Life

Still, the question may arise, Why not use the fact that Christians have a full and happy life, to draw people to the Savior? The answer is clear. It is not biblical. Nowhere in Scripture do you find Jesus,

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Paul, or any of the disciples telling people that Jesus will make them happy. But what about the "abundant life" Jesus said He had come to bring? True, the Christian life is full. Study the life of Paul and see if you think he was bored while being stoned, shipwrecked, beaten and whipped. Check out what happened to the disciples when persecution hit. Read *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, or study the life of John Wesley and see a man with a mission. He took the Great Commission seriously, and was *always abounding* in the work of the Lord, knowing that his labor was not in vain.

But, doesn't the Bible say, "Happy are the people whose God is the Lord?" (Psalm 144:15). Yes, and of course it is true. When a nation has God as their Lord, and obeys the Ten Commandments, then there is no theft, lying, murder, greed, lust, etc. In fact, the first of the Ten Commandments sets the stage for the rest.

It begins with the words, "I am the Lord your God," and when a people have God as their *Sovereign*, they are happy—as happened with Israel under Solomon. But when there are Christians in a nation whose God is not their Lord, there will be persecution, if they are living "godly in Christ Jesus."

Christians who are in ignorance as to biblical evangelism will be drawn into the unscriptural methods of modern evangelism, as I was for many

years.

Tomb-stone Evangelism

I spoke to a lady once who had lived in both Texas and California, and she said she preferred tornadoes to earthquakes. The reason she gave, was that you had no choice when in an earthquake, but if you could see a tornado moving across the horizon, you knew you were safe. There was however, one drawback. "But," she said, "if it remains still, you are in big trouble!" If the twister didn't seem to be moving, it was actually heading for you.

Christians are aware of the tornado of Judgment Day. We can see that Great and Terrible Day moving across the horizon toward unregenerate humanity. We know that we are safe in Christ, but the ungodly are totally unaware that it is heading towards them. They are not alarmed because the tornado doesn't seem to be heading in their direction. They say in their hearts, "The Lord does not see, nor does the God of Jacob understand." But we know that the Justice of Almighty God is gathering wrath, like a massive tornado, storing up fury that will be revealed on the Day of Wrath, and God has given us the sobering job of warning them.

I was encouraged to hear that Paris Reidhead, a well-known and respected Bible teacher who went to be with the Lord in 1992, had written across his tombstone the words, "How shall we escape if we

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neglect so great salvation!" He knew his Bible enough to see its message to this sinful world.

Those sincere Christians who are concerned about alarming the sinner, are like Dr. Ignorance. They need to see that fear works for the welfare of the sinner, not to his detriment. If he doesn't understand the full and dreadful consequences of sin, he will continue to go back to the waters of iniquity. We don't revel in the trepidation of our hearers, but we see that it is the way of the Spirit of God, that there may be a *fleeing* from the wrath to come.

Garry Ansdell, the senior pastor at my home church told me of a distressed mother, who brought her seven year old child to him for counsel. The boy had been stealing substantial amounts of cash from his mother's purse, and seemed to show no remorse when confronted by her. In her frustration, she took the child to the pastor, and when he confronted the boy, there was only silence on the child's part.

Some sleight-of-hand tricks seemed to brighten the sullen face of the boy, but when he was told that he needed to repent and ask both the Lord and his mother to forgive him, the lad remained decidedly mute. So, the pastor picked up the phone and said he was calling the police to have them come and pick him up. The boy's eyes widened, but there was still no sign of sorrow. As the pastor slowly dialed the number, he looked at the boy and asked if he knew

how to pray. He shook his head, so the pastor led him in a prayer, thinking within his own mind that the boy still wasn't truly sorry. However, when the child opened his eyes there were tears of contrition, and he then turned to his mother and said, "I'm sorry." It was fear of the consequences, coupled with the conviction of his conscience, that produced sorrow. He was a thief and his conscience smote him.

As impenitent sinners sit before us, we need not hesitate to summon the Law. Sometimes, we may have to dial through all the Ten Commandments before there is any reaction. Jesus called the Law into action to awaken a "certain lawyer" in Luke 10:25. He actually dialed six of the Ten Commandments for the rich young ruler, in Luke 18:18.

I have heard it said that the Ten Commandments are like a balloon—"one hole destroys all of them." If we offend in one point, we are guilty of all. However, the analogy would be better fitting if it was said that man is like a balloon, and the Ten Commandments are like ten sharp needles. Infringe one, and you are the one who perishes. If we didn't transgress the Law through sin, our lives wouldn't be a transient "vapor, that appears for a moment, then vanishes away."

Yawnese, the International Language

In the early 90's in Palm Bay, Florida, three

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youths picked up a video camera, and in a sense of bravado, filmed each other and boasted that they had committed a number of burglaries in the area. They then laughed, broke the video cassette and threw it into a river.

Some time later, two men found the cassette and were stirred by curiosity. They repaired it, and after screening it and seeing its contents, gave the cassette to the police. The guilt of the youths was so evident, they didn't even go to trial to defend themselves and were jailed for many years.

When graphic evidence is produced in court which shows absolute guilt, there is an appropriate legal expression. The literal interpretation for the Latin phrase used to describe such an incident is "the thing speaks for itself." That will be the case on Judgment Day for sinful humanity. Every transgression has been recorded by the omniscient eye of a holy Creator "who will bring to judgment every secret thing, whether it is good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). When Christians forget that fact, they lose sight of their priorities.

Early in 1993, I had the privilege of spending some time with Leonard Ravenhill. The well-respected preacher was 85 years old and took the time to share with me some of the wisdom God has given him over the years. He said that there are only two sorts of people on this earth—"those who are dead to sin, and those who are dead in sin."

Then the aged man of God said, "If God would give me one more chance to preach on a world tour, I would speak of the Judgment of believers, the Judgment of sinners, and the Judgment of preachers." I trust that you have similar urgent priorities, and still have opportunity, energy and motivation to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. May God give it to each of us if we are lacking.

The result of ignoring the fact of Judgment Day, is that there are many pastors who haven't motivation enough to motivate. There is no alarm in the pulpit, and therefore no alarm in the pew. If God is the pastor's ultimate Employer, it's my prayer that He will fire them—not *from* their pulpits, but fire them *in* their pulpits. Enthusiasm for the lost is contagious, and it can spread like wildfire in moments from the pulpit to the pew, if the wind of the Spirit blows that way.

I spent some time in Minneapolis, where the lifestyle is radically different from Southern California. In winter, the sidewalks have snow piled up along the edges of them because it is the legal responsibility of the business owners to keep them clear.

After having a meal at a restaurant, I walked up to the counter and heard the man I was with, say, "There is ice on *your* sidewalk. I fell over while carrying my child and he hit his head on the

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ground!" The lady behind the counter was extremely apologetic, because it was the restaurant's responsibility not only to clear the sidewalk of snow, but if conditions produced an invisible sheet of ice on the sidewalk, they were to scatter salt on it. It was then I discovered an interesting property of salt. The scattered salt generates heat and actually melts the ice.

That's how Christians can have a salty influence among those brethren who have grown cold towards the lost. Our enthusiasm for evangelism can melt their icy hearts.

Some time ago, I contacted a radio station and asked if they had recordings of noises such as horns honking, doors slamming, etc. When I found that they had such a recording, I located yawns on it, and had them duplicate ten minutes worth. I duplicated those ten minutes several times to make a one hour cassette tape. Just for fun, I had a tape jacket printed, and called the tape "Yawnese . . . the international language—60 minutes of pure, genuine, non-stop yawns." It had a variety of uses. It was the insomniac's dream. It was also invaluable for those late night visitors that won't leave. One could quietly put the tape on and watch as the guests began to yawn and look at their watches.

I noticed that seeing a yawn can start a yawn, and hearing one has the same effect. In fact, just *reading* about yawning can trigger the desire. A

congregation can detect a yawn in the pulpit. If the pastor is lacking in zeal for the unsaved, invariably, so will they. Evangelism to them will be one big yawn. The preference in the pulpit will determine the priority of the pew. If you don't believe it, listen to how many a congregation prays, and you will often hear the same phrases, expressions and even personal characteristics of the pastor. If he focuses merely on doctrines of self-improvement, so will the flock.

There are however, numbers of pastors who have not lost sight of the Great Commission. In January of 1993, I was invited to the Dallas area by a pastor who asked me to speak at his Sunday church services. He was a little disappointed, because he had invited me to go out witnessing on the Saturday night, and a thunderstorm arrived about an hour after my plane landed. I had never seen anything like it. There was such intensity of lightning, that every few seconds, the sky would light up like noonday. Then it rained cats and dogs (they were everywhere). It looked like we wouldn't have the opportunity to go outdoors, so we decided that we would go and witness at a mall.

The pastor was very gracious and gave me a choice as to whether or not I wanted to go witnessing, saying he would understand if I wanted to rest after the flight. I could either rest up in my hotel, or with the help of God, seek and save the

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lost. The temptation was there to rest, but I of course chose the latter.

The words "lifestyle evangelism" have come to mean to many that we merely live a Christian life in contrast to that of the ungodly, in the hope that some day they will be drawn to our light. But, if we want to see people saved, we will try and save them. Who could ever stand passively on a river bank hoping a drowning person will somehow be drawn to us so that we could then rescue them? The Scriptures use a more fearful analogy—fire rather than water: "Others save with fear, pulling them from the fire" (Jude 1:23). This pastor was putting legs to his prayers, and was going to the sinner.

It was dinner time, and he dropped me off at the entrance of a restaurant while he parked the car. Then, a few minutes later, we were seated in a warm and dry atmosphere as a waitress made us feel at home. As she began to walk away, I said, "Here's a little gift for you," and handed her a glistening penny with the Ten Commandments pressed into it. She took the penny and, predictably, asked what it was. When I told her, she said sincerely, "Thank you very much."

When another waitress brought the menus to us, I gave her an "I.Q." tract, and said that she might like to try it when she had a moment to spare. A few minutes later, another waitress came and asked if she could *buy* a penny. I gave her one, then the first

waitress returned and said she had failed the I.Q. test. It was then that I saw another waitress standing behind the pastor. She smiled, so I gave her a penny. When she was very open to Christian things, I gave her a signed copy of one of my books, for which she seemed very grateful.

Notice that we didn't just sit there hoping that our light would draw sinners to us, but we made an effort to reach out. This is "lifestyle evangelism" as it should be. If people are drowning in their sins everywhere we go, then we should make an effort to save them, everywhere we go.

As we paid our bill in the lobby, four or five members of the staff stood around us and asked us questions as to who we were, etc. To let our light shine is merely a matter of letting the love of God flow *through* us, rather than stop *in* us.

When we came out of the restaurant, the storm had passed. So the pastor (Mike) gave me a choice as to where we could now go—either to the "cowboy" part of town, the "prostitute," or the "punk" area. Somehow I didn't feel like trying to witness to guys twice my size in high heel boots and ten gallon hats. The last place I want to visit when I am away from Sue would be a prostitute area, especially in the light of so many preachers falling, or diving into sexual sin. I remember feeling unspiritual years ago, when I heard of a well-known preacher who would boldly go into brothels and

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witness to prostitutes. Here was one man who seemed to be able to keep the red blood in his veins, cool. It turned out that he eventually fell sexually, and left his wife for another woman.

Moths should stay away from flames, so, without any hesitation, I chose Punksville. Punks are always a challenge. Temptation stays away when a woman has tattoos, "hate" written on her cheeks, black lipstick, weird clothes, filthy language, semi-shaven scalp, a rooster hairstyle, orange hair and pins through her nose.

Unfortunately, we got lost and ended up in the Dallas "cowboy" area. As we made our way towards some very loud music, the wind blew something into the pastor's eye, and it lodged under his contact lens. It was so painful, we decided to go back to his car so that he could take the contacts out.

As we turned around, another gust of wind blew the hat off a man who was walking towards us. He was accompanied by a very pretty woman in her mid-twenties. As Mike and the man ran after the hat, *the woman lunged at me and, to my unbelief, threw her arms around my neck and tried to force her lips onto mine.* I screamed and pried the woman's arms from around my neck. Then I handed her a penny with the Ten Commandments pressed into it, and told her what it was. Mike and I witnessed briefly to both the man and Potiphar's wife, then we went back to the car and prayed for them both. As we sat there, I felt I

should somehow try and reassure the pastor, so I said, "That's the first time anything like that has ever happened to me." He looked back at me mournfully and said (with tongue in cheek), "It's *never* happened to me!"

We didn't find any punks that night, but we had a good time witnessing to a group of about a dozen youths. We entered a mall and gave I.Q. tracts to two teenage boys. They did the tests, and couldn't believe they failed them. One ran off and returned with two friends so that they too could feel the humiliation of failure. When they blew it, I said, "You can't trust your eyes ... watch this," and did some sleight-of-hand, which sent the same youth off with eyes like saucers, to get some more of his friends.

Suddenly, we had about a dozen young men watching my every move *and listening to my every word*. Even the security guard watched intently. When I told the young men I was a Christian and warned them that they had to face God on Judgment Day, they stayed and listened. We witnessed to them for a few minutes, shook their hands and moved to another part of the mall.

Perhaps you are thinking that you could never do such a thing, yet all you need is a little love to motivate you, and a little knowledge to equip you. We have a package which has two of the most incredible sleight-of-hand tricks, that will astound

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the person you are witnessing to. It is called "Getting the Ear lobe Using Sleight-of-hand." Write to us for details. Anyone with half a brain and two hands can do these tricks, and it has so much potential evangelically, because it will make your listeners respect you, and therefore listen to what you have to say.

Despite the loose woman, the lack of punks and the security guards who told me I needed a permit to do any more tricks, or to even hand out tracts, we had a good time. That night as I lay my head on my pillow, I smiled a lot, thanked God that I broke out of my comfort zone, and prayed for those who we had been privileged to witness to.

The Good Wine

One of the most fearful instances of a soldier giving his life for the cause, is Stephen. The Bible tells us that he was full of the Holy Spirit and faith.

He was respected in his office as a minister of the Gospel of Salvation, was wise, had a good reputation, and could have therefore lived a comfortable and abundant life as a Christian, enjoying the comforts of a happy family life. But he didn't. Stephen loved God, he loved truth and he loved sinners enough to preach the truth to them.

We pick up the story in Acts Chapter 6 when the twelve disciples decided that they didn't want to neglect prayer and the Word of God to serve tables,

so they found seven men to do the job, one of whom was Stephen. The Scriptures tell us "the number of the disciples multiplied greatly," because men like Stephen didn't confine their ministry to serving tables. They had their priorities sorted out, preached the Gospel, and God confirmed His Word with signs following (verse 8).

However, this didn't please supercreep. Whenever a servant of God serves the truth in the court of the world, the devil is going to return the serve with a vengeance. When professing godly Jews couldn't resist the wisdom by which Stephen spoke, the father of lies provided some more of his children to distort his words, and say that he was speaking blasphemy.

Suddenly, Stephen found himself standing before the council and his slanderous accusers. All it took was, "Are these things so?" to push Stephen's evangelical button. Beginning at Abraham, he recounted the history of Israel, saying nothing offensive to them until verse 51. He saved the good wine until last. His sermon ended with a number of relevant points for his congregation to consider, and it turned out to be a farewell sermon to those who would promote him to Headquarters:

1. His hearers were stubborn
2. They were unholy
3. They were spiritually deaf

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4. They and their father's resisted the Holy Spirit
5. They were the sons of murderers
6. They were betrayers and murderers of "the Just One."

Stephen disqualified himself from the "Popular Preacher of the Year" award. Then from his breast, he produced what Charles Spurgeon called his "ablest auxiliary." This was his greatest weapon—the Law of God.

The Jews were proud of the thought that they had kept the Law, and by saying they had broken it, Stephen touched the apple of their evil eye. He climaxed his sermon by saying that they "have received the Law by the direction of angels and have not kept it" (verse 53). He pointed to the Divine Plumb line to show his hearers how crooked they were. This made them foam at the mouth like mad dogs. They were cut to the heart, then "gnashed at him with their teeth."

Their reaction didn't seem to worry Stephen too much. He was so full of the Holy Spirit, he was gazing at a vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56).

Another puissant poke in the apple of their widened eyes. They cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, ran at him with one accord and

dashed his body with great stones until he breathed his last breath of this contemptible world's air.

Stephen's sermon was a little different from that of the modern preacher. He failed to mention "Christ crucified," or of the fact that God loved them. He didn't even mention Grace. He didn't give that which is holy to the dogs. Neither did he woo his hearers with soft words, low lights and soul-stirring music. If he had, he wouldn't have offended a soul, and could have remained in his comfort zone. Devil, demon, Jew and Gentile would have smiled. Stephen's "decisions" were non-existent. By modern standards, he had failed to reap any souls. The only decision made by his listeners, was a unified decision to spill the preacher's blood.

Stephen's boldness so stirred one hearer that he reinforced a resolve that would change the course of the Christian history. Saul of Tarsus was so disgusted by what he saw and heard, he decided he would wipe the Church off the face of the earth.

Stephen's precious blood was the first to be shed as ground work for the Church that would follow. He knew from experience the truth of the hymn-writer that would be penned many centuries later, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my all."

Evangelical Utopia

Every time you open your mouth for God, you

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are on the front lines of battle, involved in combat for the sake of the Kingdom. I was once sitting on a plane, relaxing and enjoying the flight. There were only a few people on board, so I had plenty of room to spread out and do some writing. I had good food, cool water, a pillow, and a tray for my computer. Happiness. It was a relief when no one sat next to me, so instead of getting into the "battle of the fear of man," I could relax in comfort.

After about three hours, I went for a walk to the restroom, and on the way back to my seat, I passed a man in his late twenties who looked a little bored, so I gave him an I.Q. tract. When he failed two different tracts, I sat down next to him and told him that we fail because our eyes are easily fooled. Then I did a sleight-of-hand trick that widened his eyes. He did the spiritual I.Q. test on side two of the tract, and proved to be very open to the things of God, so I spent about twenty minutes witnessing to him. Then I prayed with him, that his conscience would remind him of his past sins, that he would see the seriousness of his transgression, that the Lord would grant him light until he came to a point of peace with God. I also prayed that God would bless him and his family and keep them in health. We parted with a handshake, and his other hand filled with literature.

To break out of the warmth of your barracks means to risk the ice-cold air of rejection,

resentment and even hatred. But when you leave a warm room to venture into the cold, how nice and cozy the room seems when you get back. When I sat back down in my seat, I had the heart-warming knowledge that I had pleased God and done what I should as a Christian. If you have a good day for the Lord by being a true and faithful witness, when you go to bed at night, you will glow, knowing that this was a day of victory for you and defeat for the devil, because you broke free from the shackles of the fear of man.

The Stubborn King

Think of how many times Jeremiah warned King Zedekiah about the coming judgment of God upon Israel. The King was party to personal warnings, as well as public. I have never taken the time to count, but I wouldn't be surprised if he was warned over a dozen times. The batteries were removed from the smoke detector of the king's conscience, and one day, he was trapped by the fire.

Look at what happened when judgment came:

"Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes in Riblah ... moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon. And the Chaldeans burned the king's house with fire and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 39:6-8).

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I wonder what the king thought about as he stumbled in the blackness, bound with chains. Perhaps his thoughts were of the last thing he saw—the unspeakable agony of seeing his own beloved sons butchered before his eyes. Perhaps the words of Jeremiah flashed before his tormented mind, warning him that all Israel (including his sons) could be saved if he obeyed the voice of the Lord. We can't begin to imagine the remorse.

How this typifies the ungodly who have been bound by the bronze fetters of sin, "taken captive by the devil to do his will." We warn them that there is Judgment coming (both temporal and eternal) to those who live for the devil, but most remain in unbelief. Their master is he who came to "kill, steal and destroy." He blinds the "minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them." Like Zedekiah's sons, so many see their own sons and daughters die before their very eyes. AIDS, and other sin-related diseases, as well as alcohol drugs and suicide, kill many before their time. Multitudes give themselves to the burning fires of sexual lust, and so the devil breaks down the walls of a whole nation.

Yet, there is still time to warn many, praying that God will open their understanding. God told Jeremiah to tell an Ethiopian called Ebed-Melech, that God would deliver him from judgment. He said,

"For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not

fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, because you have put your trust in Me,' says the Lord" (Jeremiah 39:18).

This is the message we are to deliver. He who keeps his life will lose it, but those that trust in the Lord will be safe on that Day. On the Day of Judgment, the sword of the Word of God will not fall upon him, because it fell on the Savior two thousand years ago. The name Ebed-Melech means "servant of a king." Those who are servants of the King will be true to the commission given them and carry out His every command.

CHAPTER TEN

THE TEN STAR GENERAL

"... looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

In previous chapters we have established that it is very clear from scripture that God doesn't want sinners to perish. His will is for the world to be saved, and it is also clear from scripture that we should be seeking to fulfill the Great Commission. How then can we motivate ourselves to do so?

I wonder if you are happy with your reaction to the word "evangelism?" Does it produce a feeling of guilt or joy? Do you run *to* your evangelical responsibility as did Philip to the Ethiopian in Acts Chapter 8, or do you run *from* your evangelical responsibility as did Jonah? The answer will more than likely be, "A little of both." The spirit is willing,

but the flesh is weak. You could identify with me when I said in an earlier chapter I was pleased to have an empty seat next to me in a plane. Our heart wants to seek and save that which is lost, but our Adamic nature would far rather stay tucked in the bed of indifference. However, my motivation comes from the knowledge that, *if I really care about the person who sits next to me*, I will make every effort to witness to him.

I remember sitting next to a man in his early twenties who wasn't at all open to the things of God. He wasn't antagonistic, just apathetic. My questions received minimal response. I could have easily pacified my conscience by saying that I had done all I could to reach out to him.

As I was typing on my laptop computer, he looked at it and said, "I'm not reading what you are writing—my eyesight isn't good enough." Suddenly, I saw my opportunity and said, "This is an amazing computer. It can create *huge* type." I quickly typed out, "Unless you repent, you shall perish," and said, "Watch this." I put a 60 point "font" in front of the scripture, pushed a few buttons, and before the man's eyes appeared the huge wording, "UNLESS YOU REPENT, YOU SHALL PERISH." He was very quiet. I told him they were the words of Jesus, and that if he as much as lusted after a woman, he had committed adultery in his heart. He looked at me and soberly said, *"I'm going to Hell a thousand*

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times over then." For the next few moments I had the opening to reason with him about his salvation. If we love the world enough, we will break free from every argument, reason, excuse, rationalization, defense and justification we can find for silence, given to us by the devil or by our fearful and dispassionate mind.

In the Epistle of Paul to Philemon, he tells how he continually prays for Philemon, saying that he has heard of the "love and faith" which he has, both towards the Lord and towards his brethren. Then he says that the "sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgement of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus" (Verse 6).

The Greek word **for *effective*** means "active, operative and powerful." Isn't that what we want? We want to be active, operative and powerful in our witness for the Gospel. The key to getting this effectuality is very clear.

Both the love and faith Paul spoke of are not *passive*. Love is not dormant. If we have love for God and man, we will share our faith because from those two fruits of the Spirit (love and faith) spring most of the other fruits. Love will produce goodness, gentleness and patience, while from faith issues joy and peace. Our love will be the gasoline to motivate us, and our joy will be the energy that keeps our battery charged.

The fact that God wants sinners to be saved is the very reason He tarries (2 Peter 3:9), so the sooner the Gospel of repentance is preached to all nations, the sooner men will repent, and the sooner Jesus Christ will return to this earth to set up His everlasting Kingdom.

The Key

In Philippians, Paul speaks of God exalting Jesus and giving Him a name which is above every name, and that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). Then he says that we should work out our salvation with "fear and trembling." How do we obtain those commanded virtues of *fear* and *trembling*'!—by seeing Jesus Christ as "Lord." This same thought is brought out in Psalm 2:11-12. Yet, many Christians still see Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels, the man from Nazareth limited to time and space. They still picture Him as the man who grew tired, hungry and thirsty. If that is our image of the risen Son of God, whether it be in our mind or a picture on the wall, we must rid ourselves of it because it is hindering us from growing in God.

The Apostle Paul said that we "have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more" (2 Corinthians 5:16). The word "flesh" is "sarx," and means "human nature with its

frailties." Look at the Amplified Bible's rendering of the verse:

"... even though we did once estimate Christ from a human viewpoint and as a man, yet now (we have such knowledge of Him that) we know Him no longer (in terms of the flesh)."

A five star general has a way of encouraging the troops, just by his existence. He is someone for the average soldier to look to for leadership. He carries an authority—power to make life and death decisions (yours), and he didn't get to his position of responsibility by sitting in passivity. His place of status commands respect.

Our Captain of the Lord of Hosts is no longer "lower than the angels." That was purely for the "suffering of death." He is now "crowned with glory and honor." His position commands our utmost respect, our veneration, our worship. *He is to be feared.* He is the Lord of Glory, all power has been given unto Him, with the glory that He had with the Father "before the world was."

Isaiah saw Him in His pre-incarnation glory and said that he saw the Lord sitting upon a glorious throne, and that He was "high and lifted up and His train filled the temple . . . the seraphim cried, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts . . . the posts of the doors moved at the voice of Him ... then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone!" (Isaiah 6:3-5). John also saw Him in His glory and said that he saw "the Son

of Man ... and His eyes were as a flame of fire ... and His voice as the sound of many waters ... and His countenance was as the sun shines in His strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead" (Revelation 1:13-17).

This is what the Scriptures are saying when they speak of the sharing of our faith becoming effective *by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus*. The word "acknowledgment" means to *understand* every good thing we have in Christ. You and I have treasure in earthen vessels. *The very source of all life dwells in us*. We have Christ in us, the hope of glory. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and we are complete in Him. If we could comprehend what we have in the Savior, we would never lack joy, and we would never for a minute let apathy enter our hearts. We would radiate with love for God at what He has given us in Christ.

Paul spoke from experience when he expressed the fact of not knowing Jesus "after the flesh." We are not told what knowledge he had of Him in His flesh, but he certainly knew Jesus in His glory. The blinding light from Heaven took away his eyesight, on the road to Damascus. His fleshly eyes glimpsed light inaccessible. When he wrote to the Thessalonians, his mind wasn't clouded by a false image of the Son of God because he knew Him as the "King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, who only has immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable."

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He wrote that the Thessalonians shouldn't be troubled because "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power . . . " (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

As we see Jesus Christ as the Lord of Glory, we will not only work out our salvation with "fear and trembling," but the fear of God in us will begin to work for the salvation of those around us who are at present the heirs of eternal damnation.

This same vengeance with fire is spoken of by the prophet Isaiah in Chapter 66:

"For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and those slain by the sword shall be many" (Verses 15-16).

A friend once told me how his daughter jumped out of bed, and with a radiant face told how she had dreamed of the coming of the Lord. She said how she had heard the trumpet sounding and had seen Him in His Glory, flames were leaping from house roofs, and those who were inside were fleeing in terror. But this little girl woke up radiant, *because she was forgiven, she had nothing to fear*. She was one of

those who will "love His appearing." The Scriptures tell us that it "does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). The second the trumpet sounds, in one "twinkling of an eye" we shall be transformed into a body not subject to the terror that the ungodly will feel. We shall have boldness on that Great Day, but for those still in their sins, that Day will be a day of unspeakable terror! The Apostle Paul says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ... wherefore knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men."

Each of us should be able to say with the hymn writer:

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He has loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift Sword, His Truth is marching on."

What Must Our Sins be Like?

The prophet Isaiah tells us of our unregenerate state before God by saying that "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6). Note carefully that it is not our *sins* that are as filthy rags in His sight, *but our righteousnesses*. If that

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is the case, what must our *sins* be like in the perception of our Holy Creator? If that which is "highly esteemed" among men is an abomination in the sight of God, what must that look like which is detestable among men?

The Day of Vengeance is in God's heart, He will "tread them in His anger," and "trample them in fury." You and I only see the tiny tip of the tip of the bitterly cold iceberg of sin with the workings of the Mafia, prostitution, strip clubs, filthy movies, child pornography, drug pushing, corruption, greed, lust, torture, hatred, cursing, blasphemy and crime. In fact, by the time you take to finish this chapter, in the U.S. alone, more than seven people will have been either strangled, stabbed or shot to death. If the given statistics hold true there will also have been more than 50 robberies, 110 cars stolen and 360 burglaries! Each year in the U.S. over 4 million women are victims of domestic violence, and in the same time period 550,000 women are raped.

We see only the tip, but the Bible says, "The eye of the Lord is in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Proverbs 15:26 tells us that even the *thoughts* of the ungodly are an abomination to the Lord. Jeremiah says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." If we don't embark upon desperate evangelism, using every means God has given us to convince, induce, persuade and compel them to come in, God will

convince them on that Day when He comes "with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, and to convince all that are ungodly ..." *-but then it will be too late!*

David said in Psalms, "Their inward part is *very* wickedness," while Paul speaks of sin being "*exceedingly* sinful." He then gives God's view of humanity saying that "their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:13-18).

Passion For Vengeance

In Arizona in 1981, two men offered to help a lady in distress. She had locked herself out of her car and they very kindly helped her open the car window. Now there's a point in favor of the goodness of man. How could this woman repay the men? They suggested a six pack of beer. She went into the store, bought the beer, but when she came back they abducted her in her own car. Both the men raped the young woman, then tied her hands and feet and went to her apartment. They ransacked it, stole her valuables and found to their delight, that she had a credit card with \$8,000 in savings. Unfortunately for them, they were only able to withdraw \$250 per

day using the card, so it would take some time to get the whole \$8,000. They both concluded that they couldn't let her live. They waited until dark, then took her, still bound hand and foot, up a mountain. They raped her again, then threw her off a cliff. She landed half way down, and they could hear by her groans that she wasn't dead, so they threw her off twice more. Despite this, she was still alive so they hit her head with rocks until she was unconscious, then buried her alive.

If you are anything like me, you will grapple with tears, anger, shame, and a cry for justice for those men. This passion for *just vengeance* upon those wicked men is there despite our sinful nature. If the deeds of those men seem abominable even to us, the sinful offspring of Adam, how evil must they seem to a holy, perfect and just Creator.

Then humanity adds to its sins by saying within its wicked heart, "God has forgotten: He hides His face; He will never see it" (Psalm 10:11). But as surely as God is faithful to all His promises of blessing upon the obedient, so is He faithful to His promise of cursing upon the disobedient. He will fulfill His Word which He has magnified above His name. The Scriptures warn sinners that in accordance with their hardness and impenitent hearts they are treasuring up for themselves wrath "in the Day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one

according to his deeds . . . to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil ..." (Romans 2:5-9).

In the Second Book of Peter, we see that God made an example of the angels that sinned, casting them into Hell, delivering them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment. The same is the case with the Noahic flood and Sodom and Gomorrah—they were condemned, "making them an example for those that should live ungodly." Amidst the filth of Sodom, where dwelt men who were "wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly," was righteous Lot. This man "vexed" (anguished, pained) his "righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." Are we anguished by what we see in the world? Are we jealous for the honor of our God? Are we grieved beyond words to see His mercy despised and His holy Name blasphemed? At the same time do we cringe in fear *for* the ungodly who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, full of presumption and self-will, with no fear of God before their eyes?

Jeremiah had this same conflict when he cried,

"Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for ... my people. Oh that... I might leave my people and go from them! For they are all

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adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men" (Jeremiah 9:1-2).

Many Christians aren't vexed, because they don't "know" the terror of the Lord, therefore they don't seek to "persuade men." Or they are living in a monastery without walls, having lost contact with the world. Life consists of Sunday services, Wednesday Bible study and a few other social activities. They are living in a Christian comfort zone, where little contact is made with the ungodly world.

Directly after the command to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12), we are told:

"It is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Do all things (including God's will—to seek the lost) without murmurings and disputings, that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, (then we are told what *on earth* are we supposed to be doing) holding forth the Word of life, that I may rejoice in the Day of Christ ..." (verses 13-16).

We have been commissioned to, "*Go into all the world . . .*" (Mark 16:15). "*I do not pray that you should take them out of the world . . .*" (John 17:15). With these Scriptures in mind, I wonder how many publicans and harlots are our friends (that we

might reach them for Christ), or is our "world made up of Christians? Are we light among light, salt among salt? Do we seek God for men in fervent prayer, then seek men for God in zealous evangelism? Paul *charged* Timothy, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, to "preach the Word in season and out of season," and the previous verse tells us why:

"... the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom."

The awe of that Day should cause an urgency to burn in our hearts.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

STRIPPED TO HIS ARMOR

"Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:18).

As I flew over the city of Des Moines in Iowa, I could see snow on the ground, something fascinating for someone coming directly from the Southern Californian climate. As soon as I arrived at Teen Challenge in the city of Colfax, I sent a cold fax to Sue, saying it was a cool 31 degrees. Freezing though it was, I was ushered into a warm guest room. In fact, my room was so warm I woke in the night with an intense thirst. Fortunately, I had opened the first of the double windows and placed a bottle of sparkling, mineral water in the cooler air for such a time as this.

I reached out in the blackness of the night, and

unscrewed the lid. *Suddenly, I found myself beneath a fountain of cool mineral water, as it burst from the bottle.* The cold weather plus the movement of my hand picking up the bottle, had been enough to stir the contents to a frenzy. It was quite an outburst.

God sometimes puts His children out in the cold for a reason. Moses had great desire to be a deliverer, but God put him on the shelf for forty years. He knows that the pressure of desire is building within the vessel of those that love Him. All it will take is for Him to shake the Christian, just a little, then release the cap of that which is hindering the living waters from flowing out into this dark world.

Never be discouraged by the thought that God has put you on the shelf for no reason. If you love God and are called according to His purposes, then whatever is happening to you, is happening for your good (Romans 8:28). He is working in you to will and do of His good pleasure.

I once spoke at a church where the pastor was very zealous for the lost. A year later, I returned to the area to find out that the man's wife had run off with a lesbian who had been fellowshipping at a local church. She had also taken most of the house contents as well as his charge cards, running them to the limit and leaving him \$15,000 in debt. As if that wasn't enough, a few members of his church didn't like the fact that this had happened, and began

murmuring to a point where he was forced to resign from his office. He found himself out in the cold.

It seemed God had put him on the shelf, but within one year, God had taken him in His hand and released him back into ministry. He was part of a new work in another state. The time will come when God will fully release the restraint, when many will be showered in times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, because of the result of the pressure that dear brother went through. God only shakes the Christian for the furtherance of His purposes. The world suffers in vain, but we suffer for our own profit and for the profit of the world—if we are "exercised" by whatever experience God takes us through. When the devil seeks to sour our hearts by putting bitterness in our minds, faith will not let that happen. The man who trusts in God says, "Though He slay me, yet will I praise Him."

I once finished ministering, and longing for a place to rest, could see only one chair at the back of the church. It was blocking the entrance of the recording booth and had a sign draped over it saying, "Do not enter." Of course no one in his right mind would sit on a chair with a sign on it.

As I stood up after about five minutes of resting my weary body in the chair, a young man (very apologetically) said, "You have the words 'Do not enter' written on your back." The sign had been written in eye-liner and was now legibly embedded

in black on my white shirt.

One fiery dart that satan loves to discharge at the soldier of Christ, is the dart of bitterness. The pastor who found himself stripped of everything, still has on the armor of God. No one could take away his shield of faith—he could stand, and having done all, stand. However, it has been pointed out that there is no provision for the back of the Christian, so the enemy needs to know that he will find the shield of faith in the way of a direct frontal attack, and a 'Do not enter' notice if he tries to enter subtly through some back door. God left Joseph simmering in a prison for thirteen years. He was bound in chains, and it seemed he would have had every right to become bitter towards Potiphar and his sex-starved wife, his brothers, as well as towards God, *but faith wouldn't let that happen*. Bitterness didn't find an entry into his heart, even through the rear door.

Joseph's life has great lessons for the Christian. Not only is it a hidden "type" of the life of Jesus, but it carries within it instruction, direction, and encouragement.

I have often wondered if Joseph did the right thing in telling his brothers of his dreams. Even his father was upset on hearing of them. Human nature is such an unstable thing, it doesn't take much to uncover jealousy within the heart. Knowing my own heart, I am careful to whom I boast of some of the good things God does for me. I would hate to cause

another Christian to stumble in any way, because of unwise words on my part. But Joseph insisted on telling his brothers, and it stirred a unified jealous spirit that almost cost him his life.

Sometimes we have no choice. When we come to a knowledge of salvation, conscience forces us to speak that which we have seen and heard. To our friends and family, we sound as though we have had but idle dreams. They, like the brothers of Joseph become stirred by the god of this world, and because of the Gospel, direct hatred at us. God however, moves in the life of the Christian, as He did in the life of Joseph, and we find ourselves being lifted to places of responsibility. He found himself as a trusted servant in the household of Potiphar. Things were going good for Joseph, when one lusty lady enters the scene. This was a sinner's dream, contrived in the cunning minds of Hell's residents.

She personifies the seductions of sin as it whispers in the mind of the Christian "stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." *Don't listen to her voice!* Cry out to God to uncover her wickedness. Plead for Him to make her voice odious to your ears. Ask the Father to make the sweet taste of lust, bitter to your pallet.

Resist sin, and be steadfast in the faith, knowing that it is just the enemy seeking to infiltrate and weaken the ranks of God's army. Say with Joseph, to the bewitching voice of lust, "How could I do this

thing and sin against God!"

Look at the spirit that motivated Potiphar's wife. When Joseph didn't yield, she showed how much she really cared, unleashing her acidic heart when he rejected her advances. It was the same spirit that used Judas for its insidious purpose. So Joseph found himself in prison because he wanted to do the right thing. In a world that loves sin, those who stand for righteousness will suffer. In doing so, they may receive a frown from the world, but they have the smile of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Fighting Prejudice

A friend once called and asked if I would be interested in getting into a business selling "high tech" personal alarms. He sent me the literature, an alarm, and tapes showing the company's credibility. I was convinced that it could be a way for my eldest son to make a living, but to make sure, I decided to test the product myself. I put on some dressy clothes, a striking tie, and began to beat the sidewalk of our local boulevard.

The experience was horrible. Almost everyone, as soon as they saw I was selling a product, took that as a license to treat me as if I was a con-man. If I was buying something, then I deserved courtesy, but because I was selling, there was immediate

impatience, intolerance and prejudice. Almost every manager to whom I spoke had the presupposition that I was out to hoodwink them. The experience reminded me of the fact the most of us are very prejudiced. We judge people on how they look, the clothes they wear, the style of their hair, and even by the car they drive. Even as Christians, we can be prejudiced. I heard of a pastor of a large church, who sat down with his staff and said, "We are going to watch a video I disagree with" as he switched on our "Hell's Best Kept Secret" teaching. After the screening, he said, "I would just like to say, that I agree with everything on that video." His limited and secondhand knowledge had shaped prejudice in his heart. Once he understood the basis of the teaching, he was able to accept it as legitimate.

Unregenerate contemporary humanity is bent on prejudice when it comes to the things of God. Their limited knowledge leaves them with a prejudicial attitude. They have been programmed into thinking that we are fanatical, religious "fundamentalists." However, if they only knew what we have in Christ, if they could only have the light of understanding about the issues of eternity, they would listen with baited breath. This is why our first contact with an unsaved person is so important. We can't let them justify their prejudice. While we speak to them on a natural level, they should be feeling the warmth of a genuine sincere heart. Then, when they find that we are Christians, they should be saying within their

minds, *"This person is different."* These first few minutes are a time to establish basics in both speaking and listening.

The following are listed by a group called *Media Management* as the ten most annoying mistakes made while listening. For business, it can mean a loss of money, but in the Kingdom of God, it can mean that we are not as good a witness as we could be, so we should strive not to fall into these errors:

1. Lack of eye contact.
2. Disagreeing with everything said.
3. Holding side conversations.
4. Correcting grammar or word choices.
5. Answering before the question is finished.
6. Not responding.
7. Bad breath or sitting too close.
8. Completing speaker's sentences.
9. Coughing or clearing throat.
10. Interrupting.

Most of us don't listen very carefully. Take for example the camera crew who took a camera to the streets and asked a number of people what they would do if they found that their best friend was a "homo sapien." A number of people said, they *"would never speak to him again!"*

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Notice also that the first thing on the list is "eye contact." Of all the people on the earth who should be able to look the world in the eye, it is Christians, because we are speaking the Gospel truth. There is no ulterior motive—we are not selling anything, all we are "after," is the person's eternal well-being.

I'm a regular guest on an interesting talk-back radio program called "Religion on the Line." The two hour show has a Catholic priest, a Protestant minister, and a Rabbi as guests each week.

Once Sue and I arrived at the studio, and were let in by the security guard. As we signed the necessary forms, he asked, "How was church today?" I told him it was good, and asked if he was a Christian. He said he was one once, but had fallen away from his faith. I told him that the thing to get him back to the faith was a look at the Ten Commandments. I asked him if he had lied. He had, so I said, "What does that make you?" He hedged, by saying, "*A storyteller.*" I smiled and said, "Come on ... what does that make you?" He said, "A liar." He had also stolen, and was therefore a thief, but when I asked him if he had ever broken the Seventh Commandment by lusting after a woman, he said he had never done it. I didn't believe him, so when his eyes looked down in conviction, I put my hand on his to get back his eye contact and said, "*Now be honest.*" His eyes then sparkled, and he said, "*I'm gay.*" It was then that I lost eye contact. *I was holding his hand!*

The other annoyances on the Media Management list are reasonably obvious, *except number seven*. Ask any preacher who has had to endure a time of counselling at an altar call, and he will confirm that when Adam fell, so did his breath. I have had to counsel people while standing sideways as though I wanted them to speak into my ear, when I was really hiding my nose. I have even rubbed my nose while listening to people in an effort to protect the delicate instrument. It should be the *sinner* of whom it is written "Their throat is an open sepulchre," not the Christian. People should not think of Lazarus when the Christian opens his mouth. I remember sitting in a plane listening to a man give his life story. His breath made an open sepulchre seem like the sweet fragile scent of a rose. I kept eyeing the emergency door, and fully expected the other passengers in the plane to have pulled down the oxygen masks to get relief. This man was a walking insect repellent. When he bit into an apple, I thought there would be a burst of applause from the captain, the crew and all those on board. In my heart I was saying, "Thank you Lord, O thank you Lord."

Hi Folks, Give Me Your Money

It was early in the new year of 1993, and the mall in which Sue and I strolled was comparatively quiet after the busy Christmas rush. So when we entered a store, a young man said, "Hi folks, how are you doing?" The cynical thought entered my mind, "You

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really mean—"Hi folks, I couldn't care less how you're doing. All I want from you is your money." Then he said, "If you have any questions, feel free to ask them."

I waited for about ten seconds, strolled across to the counter and said, "I have a question. What is the meaning of life?" He didn't hesitate for a second, but said, "The meaning of life, is to live it to the fullest." I said, "That's what you *do* with life, *but what is its purpose?*" He was stumped, so I said, "If you are not a Christian, life is utterly futile, because death will take your life from you, no matter how full it is." He agreed saying, "That's true, death is the only sure thing in this life."

God has given all of us a will to live. The most dense of human beings knows that life is better than death, and I know from scripture that all of us are under the power of the fear of death, until we come to the Savior (Hebrews 2:15). The human heart longs for immortality, or at least longevity.

Robert A. Chesebrough, the Brooklyn chemist who invented vaseline, believed he had the answer for those who wanted to live a long life. He said the answer was to swallow one spoonful of vaseline each day. He died at the age of 96 in 1933 ... probably choked.

I told the man in the store that the only two things that are sure in life, are death and Judgment

Day, and gave him a penny with the Ten Commandments stamped onto it, saying that was the standard of judgment, that we've all broken the Law, and that we all need the Savior. He agreed, and we parted in good spirits. That three minute conversation put the "eternal" into a transitory stroll through the mall. I didn't go out especially to witness, I was just ready for any opportunity if it came along. The attitude of any soldier who wants to please him who enlisted him, should be one of vigilance.

The Found "Link."

A friend, who works as an animal control officer, came by my home to visit. As we were talking, he said he had an animal in the back of his truck that would be an excellent evangelical tool for me. My mind rushed through a jungle of animals in anticipation. Was it a snake, to illustrate the subtleties of the devil? Was it an elephant to portray the weight of God's Law? I hoped it would be a monkey, something I have wanted for years. Sue says we have had three children, and that should keep me happy, but a monkey would have so much potential for open-air preaching. I would dress him in blue shorts with suspenders, a red shirt, white socks and sneakers. I would train him to give out tracts to the crowd, spring boarding off him into Darwin's theory of evolution. I would name the chimp "Link," saying that I finally found what

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evolution says is missing.

As Steve opened up the side of his truck, suddenly I saw the animal he had in mind. *It was a skunk!* I jumped back, then ran inside to get Sue. Perhaps if I said I wanted a skunk, she would lean more easily towards a chimp. I used a similar principle to get our first bird. I went into a pet store and suggested we buy a big fat white rabbit. She said, "What do you want that for!" So I said, "How about a little bird then?" and she said, "Alright, just a little bird." If you want a dog, first propose getting a horse; a horse, an elephant; an elephant, a whale, etc.

When Sue came out to the truck with me, I saw something I hadn't seen before. *The skunk was stuffed.* It looked alive, but it was as dead as dead could be. I felt stupid, but quickly picked it up and ran to show my daughter Rachel, who was on the phone. She thought it was real, screamed almost lifting the roof off the house. It seemed the deceased skunk could raise as much, if not more of a stink, dead, than it did alive.

When Jesus lay in the tomb, He was dead. Death had laid its ice-cold hand upon His body. His skin was drained of color. His heart sat like a cold rock within His breast. His cold fingers lay still and stiff. Suddenly, deep within the heart of the Son of God came a beat ... one beat whose implications resounded unspeakable and blessed hope throughout

the whole earth. Another heart beat followed, then another. Within seconds, color began to return to the flesh of the Messiah. His stiffened fingers began to move, His chest raised as He breathed air into His still lungs. Life broke the steel bands of death from the body of the Son of the Living God. Just as four words from the mouth of the Creator had caused light to flood the universe in the beginning, so, in this new beginning, light had flooded the dark tomb and like a flash of lightning, filled the earth. *It was not possible that death could hold Him!*

Death, the stinking skunk that it was, is now dead, in fact, it is more than dead. Its very guts were torn from its body. Now, death is but a stuffed beast, and like Steve's skunk, can only scare those who lack the understanding that it is lifeless:

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law" (1 Corinthians 15:54-56).

The wages of sin is death. Jesus appeased the Law in full on the cross when He "redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." He paid the Court of Eternal Justice, now the prison doors have been swung open wide for those held captive by satan to do his will.

I was preaching at a fake funeral in Colorado. As I stood on a soapbox in front of six pall-bearers and a (living) corpse, which (who) was covered by a

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white sheet, about 150 people stood and listened to the good news that death had been conquered in Christ. Suddenly, the crowd began laughing. I turned around and saw a very small child sitting on the corpse! While most who watched the funeral stood wide-eyed in the face of death, this toddler rested himself on the corpse, as though it were nothing but another of life's everyday experiences.

Those who fully understand the victory wrought on the cross, and the triumph of the resurrection, refuse to fear death. They, like the child, see no threat. It is but an empty hand grenade, a defused bomb, a stuffed skunk. It is no threat to them, nor does it have any power over them. It is but a dark door with a golden handle that opens to the pure and brilliant light of eternal joy.

How tragic that the world doesn't know what we have found in Jesus Christ. We must work while we can use our energies. God forbid that life should pass us by while we are building a Kingdom that *can* be moved. If the Lord tarries, we will find that old age will hinder us from doing exploits for God that are a breeze to the young. It is fine for the elderly to be young at heart, but the heart needs a body that can move.

May He use our eyes to see the harvest, while we can still see. May He use our ears to hear the cries of the lost, while we can still hear. May He use our mouths while we can still speak, our hands to reach

out to the unsaved, and our feet to carry to them the Gospel of peace.

Graven By Art

I can recall speaking to a man who totally rejected the Bible as having any worth. Besides that, he was sure that it was not possible that any human being could understand its message. He told me that monks had been studying it for hundreds of years, and not even their learned minds could interpret its words, so how could any man "off the street" understand the Scriptures? When I informed him that was why he needed the Holy Spirit to lead him into all truth, he said he didn't believe in the Holy Spirit—"just in God."

As he puffed on his cigarette, he spoke of the sins of other Christians, used God's name in vain, and told me that he went to church every week and confessed his sins. Then he said that all we need to do was follow the Ten Commandments, something it was obvious he didn't do. If we do "follow" the Law, it acts as a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.

So, we went through the Law. He admitted that he had stolen ("just a comic" when he was young). He also acknowledged that he had lied (when he was young), but when I said that God considered lust to be the same as adultery, he recoiled. It was one sin he didn't confine to his youth. That touched a raw nerve. He said there is nothing wrong with lust... if

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"you don't dwell on it for too long." Now here is a strange thing. Lust is O.K. for a time, but the duration of period in which a man lusts, turns it from purity to iniquity. The god he believed in was obviously not the God of the Bible. When I asked him what his name was, he told me it was "Art," and suddenly it made sense. Here was another case of idolatry. His was another god, "graven by art and man's device."

Of course the Bible is a hard book to understand, until we are born of the Spirit. There are many passages in scripture that don't make any sense at all to the unregenerate. If a sinner is seeking salvation, he may read the words of Jesus to the rich young ruler and end up in error:

"If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me" (Matthew 19:21).

It seems clear—straight from the mouth of the Master. To get to Heaven all a man has to do is sell what he has, give to the poor and then "follow" Jesus. But then he turns to Ephesians 2:8-9 and reads:

"For by Grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

Those who are not born of the Spirit, and don't understand the difference between Law and Grace,

will understandably end up in the State of Confusion. The Chinese language sounds strange to me. Yet, a four year old Chinese child can understand it completely. Why? Because he has been born into a Chinese family. The Chinese language is not darkness, but light to him. The language of scripture will be nothing but babble to those who are not born into the family of God. The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, they are foolishness to him, because they are spiritually understood. He must be born of the Spirit, into the family of God, to understand spiritual things.

Nobody Understands

A pastor friend of mine often takes squadrons of soldiers to the front line of rock concerts to give out tracts. He designs literature with the group's lyrics on the front. He then uses them as a springboard to answer the questions on the inside, then through the Law into Grace.

In April of 1993, he took a team to a "Guns and Roses" concert, and handed out a tract with the lyrics from their hit "Dead Horse" on the front:

"Nobody understands, quite why we're here, we're searching for answers that never appear . . . "

He and his team walked the long lines of people boldly saying what the authorities at the concert were saying: "No alcohol, no drugs, no cans or

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bottles." As they did so, they gave out tracts.

When the pastor arrived home, he found a message on his answering machine. It was from Mr. Rose, and he was blooming mad. He introduced himself and then said:

"How dare you blankity-blanks give out your blankity-blank, blankity-blank at my blankity-blank concert. You have a blankity-blank nerve using my blankity-blank lyrics on your blankity-blank!" Click!

Had he dropped his four letter words, his message would have been about three seconds long.

The next day, the pastor found another message on his machine. This one was much longer, and it was from a young lady at the concert who had come to the Lord directly as a result of the tract. Her voice was soft and sincere as she spoke words of appreciation, that they cared enough to leave the safety of the barracks to go to the front lines of battle. I'm sure the pastor would gladly face the thorny rebuke of ten thousand nasty roses, if it meant the salvation of even a single soul.

In August of 1993, a firm in San Francisco released a homosexual video game called "Gay Blade," in which the player makes his way through 135 rooms of a castle, and vaporizes 100 bad guys in the process. The castle has within its walls, hidden dangers, such as "hideous Bible thumping lunatics." When the world hates us, we love them because they

are our enemies. When they reproach us because we belong to the Christ, we rejoice, because we are counted worthy to bear the brunt of their ignorance. They merely hate us because we testify of their deeds, that they are evil.

I once showed up in the local square to find that one of my preaching buddies was being hampered by peace protesters. They were holding a rally on the other side of the square and had come across to ask him to stop preaching. Their argument was that "we were all on the same side, both standing for peace." I gently told them that we preach peace *with* God while the peace movement preached peace *without* God.

I then told my friend to keep preaching. That upset the peace people, to a point where they persistently pushed, pulled and poked at the preacher. When they stopped him, I felt something erupt within me, and immediately began preaching about 20 feet away. They ran towards me to stop me speaking, and when they stopped me, my friend Wally burst into flames, and so it went on until they gave up.

If you have never felt the wind of persecution blow upon the fire of the Holy Spirit within you, you are missing out on something amazing. You don't know what power dwells in you until that fan fuels the flame and sparks a boldness in your spirit. We have tapped into the supernatural realm. The Bible

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tells us, "that when Saul made havoc of the Church," the disciples were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:3-4). Saul merely stirred the winds of persecution. When Paul was placed in prison, he wrote that "many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confidence in my bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear" (Philippians 1:14). Others took up the mantle of Saul of Tarsus, and now persecution against Paul stirred the fire in his brethren. He went on to write " . . . in nothing (be) terrified by your adversaries."

In 1993, I was invited to speak at Yale University. I was excited because of the opportunity to speak at a university with such a reputation, and, I learned, a godly heritage. I found out that 78% of the first graduates went into the ministry, that famous Christians of the last century, such as David Brainard and Jonathan Edwards, who preached America's most famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" were students there.

When we arrived, a zealous young man named Brian showed me around. He showed me the poster advertising homosexual activities, on the door of the chaplain of the divinity school. He pointed out that of the 240 students in the "divinity" school, only about 10% were Christians. It was so sad to see a place which had old drinking fountains with "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink," engraven

into them, and doors with Bible verses cut into the wood, so given to the devil. Posters advertised student orgies in the "Brainard underground," and others announced homosexual activities on campus, all with the chaplain's blessing. Divinity professors put them selves above scripture as they sat in cynical judgment over it, rather than letting scripture judge them.

As we looked at the heritage of the university, I noticed a party of children, all around 11 years old, standing in the grounds of the university. They seemed to be a tour party who were having a break from the tour, so I approached them with one of our I.Q. test tracts, then did some sleight-of-hand. Before I knew it, I was surrounded by 80 children, and preached to them for 10-15 minutes. When one of them recited most of the Ten Commandments by memory, I gave him a few dollars as a reward. This seemed to get the attention of the rest, who not only listened, but fought over tracts when I finished speaking to them.

That afternoon, I set up a soapbox in front of about 20 students who were lazing on the grass, studying. Most of them didn't appreciate my presence one bit, and a few began heckling with conviction enough to enlarge the crowd to about 80 students. I was thrilled because I had heard that, even though 96% of mainstream America believes in God, this is down to 65% in "ivy league"

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universities such as Yale.

When an atheistic heckler denied God's existence, I asked him if he had ever seen a building which didn't have a builder, a painting without a painter, a car without a maker. Had he ever seen anything that was made, which didn't have a maker. It is such simple reasoning, but as these thoughts entered his ears, it was as though a light came on in his mind, and he seemed then to listen with an open heart.

The next day, Brian took me into the heart of New York by train, and we spoke at Washington Square in Greenwich village. The place reminded me of the square in which I spoke for many years, but there were a lot more people, and a lot more drugs. When we preached, we had much opposition. One woman fumed because I said that abortion was wrong. When I asked her if her baby was born a month premature, if she would cut its throat herself if she didn't want it, she said she would. At least she was consistent.

As we were leaving the square, Brian said, "We will preach on the train going back through the Bronx." I thought, *"You've got to be kidding! The Bronx has a murderous reputation at the best of times. If people were offended when preached to in the open, from which they could leave, how much more angered would they be if they couldn't get out!"*

The train went through the Bronx, and it was packed to capacity. Brian broke the ice this time. He made his way into the middle of the carriage of 90 people, introduced himself and began preaching. Not one soul objected. They just sat there and listened. I felt so proud of this new friend of mine as he boldly warned them of Judgment Day, and preached the cross of Calvary. In fact, I became so encouraged, I tapped him on the shoulder and whispered, "Hurry up, I want to preach."

We both preached, gave out over 300 tracts, and felt so excited, we could hardly sleep that night.

When I told a friend in California that we had preached on the trains in New York, he widened his eyes and said, "What about the *conductor*?" I smiled and said, "Oh, we didn't have any music ... we just went straight into the preaching."

The Land of Uz

A man once challenged Charles Spurgeon to give him one scripture against infant baptism, and he would give one to Spurgeon which supported the practice. The man said, "Suffer the little children to come to Me." Spurgeon looked at the man and said, "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job ... (Job 1:1)." The man protested, "*That verse has nothing to do with infant baptism!*" To which the wise preacher answered, "... *And neither has yours.*"

There are certain doctrines that are built upon

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very feeble foundations. There are one or two scriptures to support a particular interpretation, but when it comes to our responsibility to reach out to the lost, there stands before us a great concrete infrastructure to build upon. The reason Jesus came to this earth was to save sinners from Eternal Justice. The solid steel-enforced framework of many foundational scriptures support our evangelical obligations.

When you break out from your securities and seek the lost, even if it's dropping tracts on seats at an airport, you are in the front line of the battle. We need each other, so link arms through the Spirit with your brethren throughout the world. Determine to take advantage of every minute of the day to reach this world while there is still time. When you are not witnessing, be in an attitude of prayer, praying that God will make you effective, that He will give you wisdom, and the motivation to break free from the fears that hinder you from reaching out to the world. Keep yourself always ready to share your faith, so that you will never be caught off-guard.

Years ago, someone told me that a new convert was about to have an abortion. When I inquired as to when, I found out that the operation was about to take place that very afternoon at two o'clock. It was already one o'clock as I sped into the hospital parking lot. I ran through the hospital and up to the second floor, praying that God would give me the

words, the wisdom, and the discretion to stop this young woman taking the life of her child.

When I entered her room I found her sitting on the bed. She had already had her pre-operative medication. I looked into her eyes and said the only thing that came to mind—*"Please ... don't do this thing."* She smiled warmly and said, *"It's alright. I'm not going through with it. I have just finished praying, 'God, if you don't want me to have an abortion, make Ray Comfort come in and speak to me.'"*

I left the hospital walking on air. God had just used me in the saving of a human life. He didn't use my words or my wisdom, he just used me. It gave me a warm feeling to know that God would take the time to do such a thing.

Yet, I never really realized what God had used me for until about two years later at a church picnic, when I saw a cute little girl playing by herself on the grass. As I bent down to her, I realized that this was the same child that was going to be aborted. It was then, as I looked into her little face, that I fully understood what God had used me for that day.

The most zealous of us hasn't any real depth of understanding as to what God is using us for when we are involved in evangelism. We have a measure of appreciation that He is using us to plant the seed of the Gospel in the hearts of those who are in the shadow of death. However, I don't think it will fully

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dawn upon us as to what He is using us for, until the Day when a vast sea of billions of humanity stand before the Judgment Throne of Almighty God. The Great Shepherd stands from the great white throne, and separates the sheep from the goats. Suddenly, we see someone to whom we passed a tract or someone we witnessed to, separated to everlasting life!

Perhaps then, and only then, will we fully comprehend what God is using us for, but it is my prayer that He will give us some measure of understanding now as to the privilege we have, in being entrusted with the Gospel of everlasting life.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PRINCIPALS FOR VICTORY

"Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12).

In August of 1992, *Reader's Digest* published an article called "How 'average' people excel." It related how 'fast-trackers,' people who succeed in school, often fizzle. Their main problem is that they are driven by their own inflated ego, and they set goals too high for themselves. They, more than anybody, understand how clever they are, so they are never happy with playing second fiddle to anyone. In other words, their pride is their own downfall. The article, written from a purely secular point of view, had some very relevant thoughts that we may apply to the Army of God. Here are the keys found by a

corporate consultant, who interviewed over 190 men and women that one would consider to be "ordinary" individuals who had achieved secular success:

1. Learn self-discipline. This is the key to being successful as a soldier. Of course, we don't measure success in dollars as the world does, we measure it in terms of our lives being pleasing to God. Self-discipline means discipline of self, and this in turn means discipline to Jesus. It means that we read the Word daily, and obey what it says. Self-discipline means self-denial. It means listening to the voice of our conscience, and the voice of the Spirit. Consider Jesus in this respect. His ministry was a complete denial of self, from the temptation in the wilderness, to Calvary itself. He denied His own will, and disciplined Himself to the will of the Father for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

2. Bring out the best in people. There is nothing more pathetic than a selfish person. The Christian has crucified selfishness, and now lives to love his neighbor as much as he loves himself. The dividends are rich. He who loves others will be loved himself, and he who brings out the best in others will bring out the best in himself. Jesus lived and died for others.

3. Build a knowledge base. Think of Jesus as He sat as a twelve year old at the feet of those who could give Him understanding of the Scriptures. He grew in grace and in the knowledge of the things of

the Kingdom of God. We are commanded, "giving all diligence, and to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge" To do so is to enrich the life of the Christian.

4. Develop special skills. Our skills are not in the natural realm. We seek skills that will save sinners from everlasting damnation. We long to be skillful by rightly dividing the Word of truth, a skillful workman that needs not be ashamed. We develop a dexterity that we might be sensitive to the voice of the Spirit, so that we might speak a word in season to those who are weary.

5. Keep promises. A Christian would rather die than not keep his word. He "swears to his own hurt" (Psalm 15:4). If he says he will do something, he will do it if it is at all possible. In doing so, he is merely following after righteousness, and simply doing what is upright.

6. Bounce back from defeat. You may lose a battle here and there, but remember who wins the war. I have had many conflicts that seemed to be failures; begun writing books that I have abandoned. I have printed tracts that I have thrown into the trash, floundered while fishing for men. I have wasted money on projects that have failed; have preached dry sermons, prayed pathetic prayers, and made just about every blunder one can make.

When our ministry first started back in 1974, we

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published a Christian paper called "Living Waters." On the back I ran a large advertisement headed with the words "Problems? Just call this number. You don't have to say a word ... just listen." The number was for a local *Dial-a-sermon*, and I thought it would be a blessing to those who found themselves needing comfort. Unfortunately, I forgot to include the area code and some poor woman in another part of the country began getting calls with heavy breathing on the line. People with problems called her and they didn't say a word. They just listened.

I heard once about a Christian who approached a young man who was selling *Playboy* magazines, and asked him what he was going to do on Judgment Day, when God held him accountable for every sale. *The man gave his life to the Savior.* The incident was a fresh encouragement to be bold.

Just after that, I was reading a newspaper in an airport in Hawaii, when a stranger walked by and asked, "Any good news?" I said, "Yes. If you repent of your sins and give your life to Jesus Christ, you will pass from death into life." *Do you know what happened?* Nothing . . . the guy was a Christian!

I once said to a church, "And this woman washed Jesus' hair with her feet. . . " !!???

I could write a book solely on flops, washouts, mess ups, botches, duds, bungles and failures, but who hasn't blown something in his life? Those who

blunder the least are usually those who attempt the least. Steven Pile, the head of the *Not Terribly Good Club of Great Britain* was recently forced to resign from his position when a book he wrote called, *The Book of Heroic failures*, became an instant best seller.

Gathering Sticks

A young man once asked if I thought he should go to a mission school. I asked him how many people he witnessed to each day, and found that he actually spoke to 6 or 7 people daily about the things of God. His business was carpet-cleaning, and that gave him a personal contact with sinners from various walks of life. We looked at his future as a student. He would go to a Christian training school and spend six months with no one but Christians. Then he would go out and do mission work . . . if he still had a mind to. A wise man once said, "Be careful when you are picking up sticks, that your fire doesn't go out."

If you don't witness and you feel you need training, go to a Bible school where you know they have a burden for the lost, so that you will end up with more zeal than when you went in. Or better still, get into a lifestyle where you rub shoulders with the world. I gained what knowledge I have through study and a number of years of open-air preaching. The latter was a case of sink or swim.

A friend of mine was a very proficient

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"garbiologist." He collected the garbage for a local company. He said it wasn't too difficult, because you just picked it up as you went along. The same applies with evangelism. You will pick it up as you go along. It really isn't hard to witness, *if you know what you want to achieve*. It isn't the big deal the devil makes you think it is. Just find someone who is open to Christian things, take them through God's Law, then the cross, repentance, then faith. There's the skeleton. It's just a matter of putting the flesh on as you go. As you make witnessing a regular thing, it will come to you more naturally. In fact, it will come to you *supernaturally*, because you will have the help of God. The best way to learn to swim is to get into the water, then once you figure out that it isn't that difficult, you will get back into the water with less fear.

For the Thinking Mind

I was sitting at Long Beach airport feeling quite happy with myself. Good music was being played on the sound system, two people were tapping their feet and one was whistling along with the music. I had been upgraded to first class (because of frequent flying), and was actually looking forward to boarding the plane. It means you get into the plane before the masses, and that takes the stress out of flying.

I had put "Ten Commandment pennies" into the change slots of the telephones, and had placed

Christian literature on a number of the seats, and what's more, I had avoided the dreaded cleaning lady.

More than once I have filled an airport with literature, and found to my dismay that the cleaning lady was cleaning up after me by putting all the tracts in the trash.

If you want to break out of the barracks, go to an airport. Where else in today's busy world can you find people sitting, doing nothing? We have one tract which is excellent for airports. It is called the *Book Mark*, and has plenty of "get-away time." It doesn't look at all like a Christian tract, *and gives you plenty of time to get away*. Its heading boosts the ego by saying, "INTELLIGENCE TEST . . . for the thinking mind." Below the heading are eight brain-teasers. Number seven asks a question about a man who had broken the Ten Commandments. When he made it to the gates of Heaven, he found that God was "just," and had to by His very nature, punish sin. How could God let him into Heaven and still be just? On side two, it gives all the answers, including an explanation of how God did it through the cross.

At larger city airports, you will find tens of thousands of people. What's more, many of them are from all around the world. *This is your opportunity to begin an International Evangelistic Ministry*. At Dallas airport for example, one airline has about 30 gates. Have someone drop you at gate one and pick you up

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an hour later at gate thirty. During that hour, you walk through, dropping these boredom-breakers on the empty seats as you go.

I have done it hundreds of times, and never once have I been reprimanded, because what I am doing is totally permissible by law as a constitutional right according to a recent court case:

"The high court said airport authorities may prohibit repeated solicitation of money by political and religious groups. But the court also ruled that such organizations have a First Amendment right to distribute their literature in airports." (*Wall Street Journal*, June 1992).

Maybe you have a library full of good Christian books. Take a handful, and leave one on the seat you've been sitting on. Just make sure you don't do this in an airport that is in a big mess, because the cleaning lady will come along and do her thing.

Are you grateful for Calvary? Then show God your gratitude. Give Him the "widow's mite" of your witness. The incident of the widow giving her last two coins to God, shows us that only the gift that costs, counts. God knows that for you to slip a tract onto a seat may be equivalent on a courage level, to some other Christian standing up and preaching. But you can do it. Don't listen to your fears. Say, "If God is for me, nothing can be against me—I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me." Then do it. Civil law is still on our side—you'll not be thrown

to the lions. Let the devil eat your dust.

Catching Fan

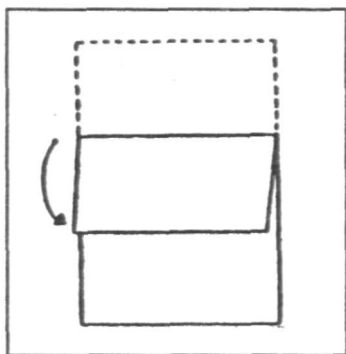
I am not a big fan of fishing. In fact, I don't like fishing, I like *catching*. But to catch, you have to fish. I love to see people come to the Savior, but that only comes if I continually fish for men and women.

I now want to show you a wonderful witnessing tool. For me to do this, you will need a blank piece of paper. So put this book down for a minute and go and get a piece . . . it will be well worth your while. Go on. It will need to be rectangular in shape, preferably without writing on it. I use this after I have finished witnessing to someone, and I find it excellent as a summation of the whole Law and Gospel message.

Now do *exactly* what I tell you (this may seem complex, but it is in essence very simple). Fold the paper, from the top, down one third. You should now have a square piece in your hand. Fold the left top corner into the middle and crease it down (see next page).

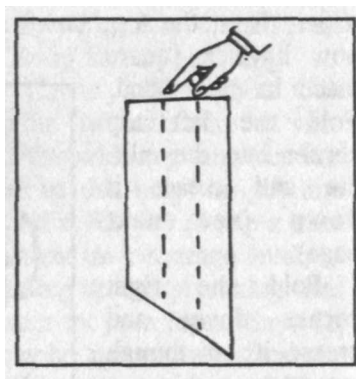
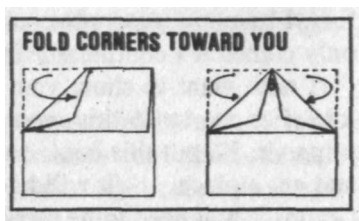
Fold the right corner down and crease it, as though you are making a paper plane. You should now have something that looks like a house with a pointed roof. Continue making a plane by folding the paper in half. Crease it down the center.

You should now have something that looks like a paper plane *before you fold the wings down*.



Now turn the point of the plane towards the ground, with the shorter edge to your left. Starting at the top left side, place your thumbs and forefingers a little more than a third across to the right, and carefully tear downwards in a straight line, until you have torn the piece off altogether. Place the torn piece on a table where it won't blow away. Then rip off another (little more than a third), vertically (rip it as straight as you can). Place this piece with the other, then put the remaining (long) piece on the table, away from the other two strips. Now open the two pieces, and carefully make them into letters. You will find two "L's," and the other pieces of paper will form the letters "E" and "H."

When you put them all together, you will have the word "HELL," (if you have been careful to do exactly as I say). The remaining long piece, when opened, will form a perfect cross.



Here is the story that goes with this:

"A Christian was once talking to an atheist and a 'church-goer.' The atheist said he didn't believe in Heaven, Hell, the cross, or in God (as you are telling this story, you begin folding the paper). The Christian warned him that he would have to face God whether he believed in Him or not.

"The church-goer said he believed everything the Bible said, but he hadn't repented as yet. While the

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Christian pleaded with them both, a truck came around the corner, up onto the sidewalk and killed the three of them.

"As they stood before the Judgment Throne of God, the ex-atheist looked down and saw a piece of paper in the Christian's hand. He said, 'That's a ticket to get into Heaven, *give it to me!*' The Christian said, 'I'll tell you what I will do. I will give a third of the ticket to each of you'" (this is where you tear off the two strips, and place the longer one away from them. Then you pick up the two pieces and say), "So they took their tickets, and gave them to God. The Lord said, 'Let's see where the tickets say you are to go.'"

As you open them, they spell the word "HELL." Then you say, "The Christian walked up to the Throne and gave his one third of the ticket to God, Who said, 'The only way to get in, is the way of the cross,' and you open the third piece, revealing the cross.

This is an excellent way to conclude a time of witnessing to someone, as it sums up visually what you have been saying. If they die in their sins, and face the Law, God will give them Eternal Justice and they will end up in Hell. But if they shelter in the cross, He will give them mercy, and everlasting life.

Leave It All

A number of years ago, a movie was made called, "The Fourth Wise Man." It was a fictitious story, centered at the time of Christ about a Magi who was hindered from travelling with the three wise men who took their gifts to Jesus. The man epitomized the spirit of the Law. When he and his servant came across a stricken stranger, they bathed his wounds, and when they had to leave, the Magi said to his servant, "Leave him with sufficient bread and water." When the servant protested, "*There is hardly any left,*" the Magi said, "Leave all of it then."

The act so spoke to my heart. The servant was saying that there was barely enough to keep *them* alive, and was no doubt hoping his master would say not to leave any, or at least to leave the minimum. But this man did to others as he would have them do to him, fulfilling the Law and the prophets. Such acts of kindness don't come naturally to us, but with the help of God, we can express our love for the lost in that spirit.

If you have the Spirit of Christ, you will have what the Scriptures call "the wisdom that is from above." This is how the Amplified Bible renders James 3:17:

"... the wisdom from above is first of all pure (undefiled); then it is peace-loving, courteous (considerate, gentle). It is willing to yield to reason, full of compassion and good fruits; it is wholehearted and straightforward, impartial and

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unfeigned—free from doubts, wavering and insincerity."

Don't be concerned that you aren't "gifted" as a speaker when it comes to reaching the lost. The Bible says of Moses, he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words, and deeds" (Acts 7:22), yet God didn't use him to deliver Israel until 40 years later. Instead, it took all that time of tending sheep to produce a meekness of character different from that which he had in Egypt. The Bible says, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Psalm 25:8-9). The wisdom that Moses gained from Egypt was not a wisdom from above. When he saw injustice, he took the law into his own hands and committed murder (Acts 7:24). God doesn't need the wisdom, or the mighty words and deeds of this world. He merely desires a pure, humble, peace-loving, compassionate soul to use as a mouth-piece for the Gospel. He wants us to be a lighthouse of His love. The moment we receive the Spirit of Christ, we receive the gift of those virtues. We don't need to tend sheep for 40 years, when we have the character of the Good Shepherd manifesting through us.

It is God's will for us to preach the word in season and out of season, so when I go out to witness and can't find someone to speak to, I sit down and pray that God will bring someone to me.

On one occasion I remember approaching three females, and as I got closer I noticed they were speaking in Spanish, so I sat down and prayed for someone to come to me, *knowing that I was in God's will.*

Sure enough, within 60 seconds, two young men sat right next to me. I overheard one of them say that they were there until 9:00 a.m., so I knew I had at least 30 minutes to speak to them.

One of them came under conviction when I spoke of his personal sins, and he glanced at his watch twice. I told him that he had until 9:00 a.m., so there was no need to worry about the time, and that it was guilt that was making him feel uncomfortable. That made him smile. Sometimes people don't realize why they react the way they do. I prayed with them both individually, and for God to heal an injured arm of one of the men, and they seemed very appreciative.

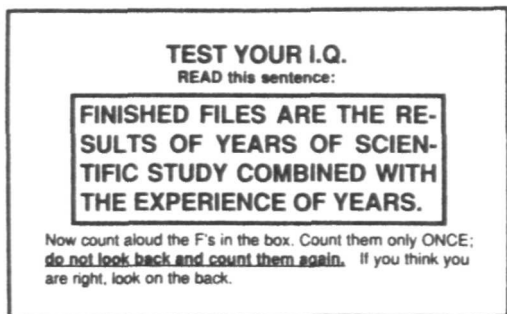
In an earlier chapter, I mentioned how I use "I.Q. tracts" when witnessing. These little cards make it so much easier for me.

Probably the most difficult thing about witnessing for most of us, is swinging from a conversation about something like the weather, to the subject of the things of God. At that point, our fear of rejection runs wild.

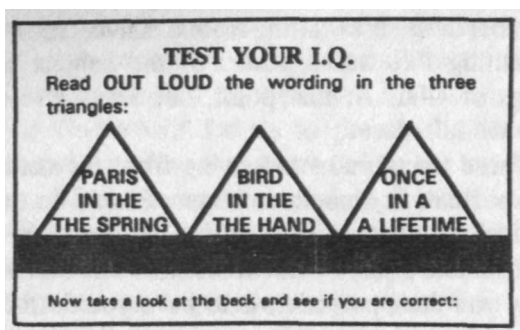
These tracts make the swing from the natural to

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the spiritual, as smooth as butter. People do the test on side one, then go straight into the questions about God, almost always without offense. The best way to show you their potential, is to have you do the tests yourself:

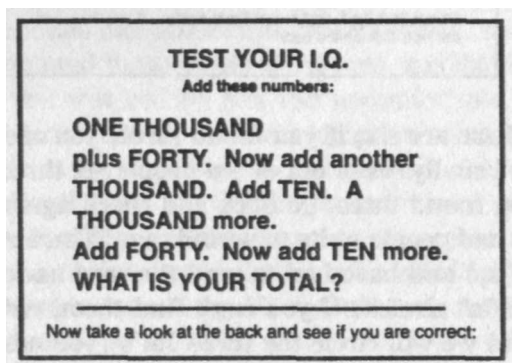


There are six; if you found three, you are normal. Usually seven out of ten people get three F's. If you found three, go back and check again. We have had people write to us and say, "There aren't six F's," and have had to send the card back with the "F's" circled. If you can't find them, write to us and we will circle the three "of's" you missed.



If you said, "Paris in the spring, Bird in the hand and Once in a lifetime," you got three wrong, try again. The word "the" and "a" are repeated. It's obvious, *once you see it*.

Here is the third test (begin with the top 1,000, then add 40, etc.):



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If you added the sum up the way you were told, you probably think the answer is 4,000. We mistakenly think 3,090 plus 10 is 4,000, when 3,090 plus 10 is actually 3,100.

Each of these tracts gives the answer on side two, then there are six questions about the things of God:

—Here is another I.Q. Test; answer Yes or No OUT LOUD:

- 1/ Is there a God?
- 2/ Does God care about right & wrong?
- 3/ Are God's standards the same as ours?
- 4/ Will God punish sin?
- 5/ Is there a Hell?
- 6/ Do you avoid Hell by living a good life?

The answers are, 1/ Yes. 2/ Yes. 3/ No. 4/ Yes. 5/ Yes. 6/ No. *You can't afford to be wrong*; find out the truth—ask God to forgive your sins, then trust Jesus Christ, who took your punishment by dying on the cross for you. Read the Bible daily and obey what you read ... God will never let you down.

How to Use the Card

Probably the most difficult thing about witnessing, is bringing up the subject of the things of God. The **Card** does that for you, inoffensively. Another difficulty, is knowing what to say, the **Card** will help guide you through the Gospel. Often people are self-confident and proud—the **Card** will almost always humble them—*don't leave home*

without it.

Often you don't know if the person you are speaking to is trusting in Grace or in self-righteousness—this card will find that out for you within two minutes of meeting him. In fact, it will also tell you his intimate beliefs about God, sin, Hell and judgment.

Since I was converted in 1972, I have given out 50,000—60,000 tracts (not to the same person), and have experimented in ways to get them into the hands of the unsaved. I've found that there is an effective and inoffensive way to get strangers to take a tract.

Keep the cards in your wallet or purse, then as you are getting one out (you will have their attention as you are giving them something out of your wallet—so it is of value), ask, *"Did you get one of these?"* This question has a two-fold effect. It stimulates curiosity, as well as making them feel that they are missing out on something (which they are).

As they take it, they will usually ask, "One of what?" Smile and say, *"It's an I.Q. test."* Most people will also smile when they hear this (something to do with the human ego); it is so refreshing to have someone smile when given a tract. Many will try it straight away. As they read it, build a bridge by gently pointing out the object. If they fail the test, be sensitive that they may feel embarrassed when you

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point out their error. Take the opportunity to relate to them, saying that the majority fail it. Then say, *"Now try the other side."*

Don't worry if the person passes the test on Side One; just say, *"You did well... now try the other side, it's far more important."*

So far you have had time to get to know the person (especially if they failed the test). Now comes the next benefit of this card. The majority of those who look at the second side, begin to "play the game" and actually do what the card says; they read OUT LOUD the answers to the six questions on Side Two—**1/ Is there a God?** They say, "Yes" or "No". **2/ Does God care about right and wrong?**, etc.

It is some consolation to know that in recent polls 96% of Americans believe in God; 82% believe in an afterlife, and approximately 60% believe in Hell. So, few are offended by these questions.

When they answer out loud, *you have an excellent opportunity to ask why they think such a thing, and thus get to witness to them.*

When someone says they think God doesn't care about right and wrong, most can be reasoned with by appealing to civil law. Almost everyone thinks murderers should be punished (even if they can't agree on its form). Then say that if man, with all his evils cares about right and wrong, how much more

will his Creator!

With this little card, in two or three minutes, you can build a bridge with a stranger, break down his confidence in his own judgments (eight out of ten times), find out his crucial beliefs, find out whether he is trusting in self-righteousness or Grace, as well as witness to him, inoffensively. When he answers the six questions, you can say, "You did well ... you got four out of six correct. The ones you slipped up on were number three, when you said that God's standards are the same as ours. The Bible says, 'His way is perfect'—'Who shall ascend the Hill of the Lord; He who has clean hands and a pure heart,' 'Blessed are the pure in heart'" etc.

Learn the spirituality of the Law. Study what they mean in the light of New Testament revelation. So digest the Commandments, that you can go through them one by one, opening up each one to show that God requires truth in the inward parts.

Then, once you have clearly presented the Law, say, "And the other one you slipped up on, was you said we avoid Hell by living a good life. The Bible tells us, 'It is not by works of righteousness that He saved us, but according to His mercy' (Titus 3:5)."

After you have thoroughly brought the knowledge of what sin is, using the Law of God, uphold the cross in all its glory. Other advantages of these cards is their low cost (\$3 for a hundred), they

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are easy to distribute, and are extremely convenient (you can easily carry twenty in your wallet or purse). Keep a stack with you because you will often be asked for more.

Don't feel as though you have to lead every person you witness to in a sinner's prayer. I pray with most people I witness to. If they are trembling, and saying something like, "What then should I do?" then I pray with them for salvation. If you lead someone in a prayer of repentance, and they haven't yet gained godly sorrow through conviction of the Holy Spirit, you may deliver them, but it will be a still-born, or a premature birth. If by chance they are genuine in their commitment, then you will have to incubate them and the odds are, like most premature babies that begin to grow, they will be sickly and weak. It is best to let them form in the womb of conviction, then in the timing of God, they will be born again, and merely need to be fed the sincere milk of the Word. When fruit is ripe for the picking, it should fall into your hand, and when someone is ready for the Savior, you shouldn't have to pry them away from the tree of the world. In fact, if someone is ready for salvation, you probably won't have to lead them in prayer, because the prayer will come from his own heart.

I once heard a respected pastor speak of being in an airport awaiting departure. He had trouble finding a seat, and after moving several times, found himself

sitting next to a man whose wife had just died. Tears welled in the man's eyes as he spoke of the meaninglessness of life. The pastor was able to witness to the man about God's love for him. He even prayed with him, but he didn't lead him in a "decision." His reason was that when a person is in such a broken state, you can get them to pray anything. He gave him literature, put him in contact with a pastor in his area, but he left the man's salvation in the Hands of the Lord. That takes faith in God. It takes courage because the inclination in most of us is to get a decision for Jesus, and cut another notch into our evangelical belt.

Did your parents ever make you kiss and hug your brother or sister to "make up," after a fight? Did it come from your heart, or did you grit your teeth, and make up for fear of wrath if you didn't? A sinner's repentant prayer should come from his own heart, and not because he feels compelled to because of wrath, but because he has sinned against the God of Heaven. It should come to his heart as the words came to the heart of the prodigal son (Luke 15:18). He should have "godly" sorrow, because he has transgressed the Law, and "repentance towards God," because he has "sinned against Heaven."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE URGENCY OF COMBAT

"I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is yet day; the night is coming when no man can work" (John 9:4).

It is obvious throughout scripture that God speaks to humanity through dreams. He spoke in this way to Joseph, Daniel and numbers of others, in fact, Joel Chapter 2 tells us that this will be one of the signs of the last days. I don't know if dreams I have had are from God, but I do know that some have attributed to my zeal for the lost.

I remember having a dream that I was standing at an outdoor restaurant. People were happily eating and drinking, when I distracted them by saying, "Excuse me, may I have your attention for a moment. Last week I came to this place and I was

fearful to tell you something. This week I want to tell you what I should have then ... unless you repent, you will perish!"

Some carried on eating, others looked angered, while others looked down under conviction.

Even though many Christians would rather it not be so, this is the simple message of the Gospel. Jesus told his listeners that if they didn't repent, they would perish. This is the message of John 3:16. The reason Jesus died, was so that those who believe "should not *perish*, but have everlasting life." God gave His only begotten Son, so that sinners wouldn't have to spend eternity in Hell.

Like Paul, we must reason of "sin, righteousness and judgment." Yet, this has been a glaring omission from the message of twentieth century evangelism. We have failed to warn our hearers to flee from the fury of God. Another gospel has been preached, and another harvest has been reaped, leaving the Church impregnated with many false converts.

John Wesley knew what it was to "save with fear." He said, "I desire to have both Heaven and Hell in my eye." In other words, he wasn't happy merely to get his ticket to Heaven without reaching out, *by all means*, to save those from the fire of the wrath of God. He caught a glimpse of the vision of John's words in the Book of Revelation when he said that the heavens "departed as a scroll when it is

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rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every slave, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:14-17).

The word "wrath" means that God has a violent passion for justice—our "righteous Lord loves righteousness." If, when we see injustice, something in us cries out against it, how much more does God crave Eternal Justice! The reason God anointed Jesus, was because He "loved righteousness and hated iniquity." Look at these verses that give us insight into God's character:

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might; nor let the rich man glory in his riches. But let him who glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, justice and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

If God gave us the wisdom of Solomon, we would have to give Him glory for the gift. If He

gave us the strength of Samson, we would have to give Him glory for the endowment. If God gifted us with riches, we couldn't boast of them, for they came by the goodness of God.

Our glorying should be confined to the fact, not that we "understand God," for no one can understand the incredible mind of the Lord, but that we understand that:

1. He is the "Lord." He is the Supreme Authority in the universe, that from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. Every man will give an account of every idle word to Him.

2. We understand that He not only exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness in the earth, but that He *delights* in these things. This is seen in no better place than on the cross of Calvary. This is where there was a meeting of lovingkindness and justice. This is where righteousness and peace kissed each other. This is why Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . ." It is in the cross that we see the fearful Justice of our Divine Creator, as His fury-filled fist came down upon the Lamb of God. It is on the same cross we see infinite lovingkindness displayed, as we understand the substitutionary sacrifice, that we might live eternally.

Many years ago, when I was a teenager at school, we had a music teacher who lacked a lot in the area

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of discipline. The poor man was also slightly deaf and consequently, when he was playing the piano, chaos broke loose behind him. During one of these lessons, I noticed a friend two rows from the front, trying to shake off a classmate who had grabbed his leg and was pulling him under the bench. I crawled under the benches in front of me and took hold of the culprit's leg, when I felt someone grab my leg. Without looking behind me, I used my free leg to kick off this leg-puller with a firm grip. It was then that I glanced behind me, *and saw to my horror that it was the Principal, who had come into the room to see what all the noise was about!*

The three of us were sent to his office. Before we were given our punishment, we had a ten minute wait. When the Principal finally arrived, he gave us two painful swats (on the area designed for the purpose) with a three foot piece of cane. But I must say that the fear we had while waiting for the cane, was just about as bad as the pain which came from the cane when it came.

With all the conviction I can muster, I can say without any qualms of conscience, that I would far rather receive 10,000 swats a day for 100 years, by the right hand of the most robust football player, than be in my sins on Judgment Day ... *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!*

When God gave His Law "so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, 'I exceedingly fear and

quake!" How fearful will it be when the wrath-filled God of Vengeance comes to punish those who have deliberately transgressed that Law?

Keith Green, wrote these sobering words:

"O God our Lord:
Who you gonna throw in the lake of fire,
O God our Lord?
Who you gonna throw when
the flames get higher,
O God our Lord?
The devil and the man with the dark desire,
O God our Lord!"

Do we care enough to pray? Do we care enough to preach . . . to warn, to witness? God's Justice will be so thorough, that every sinner will be "ground to powder" by the stone of the wrath of God. They will drink the wine of His wrath. The Psalmist cried, "Horror has taken hold on me because of the wicked who forsake Your Law." J. Oswald Sanders pleaded in prayer, "Give us souls, lest we die!" Jeremiah cried, "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart, my heart makes a noise in me, I cannot hold my peace, because you have heard. Oh my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war" (Jeremiah 4:19). Listen to the "sowing in tears" spirit behind these words of the Prince of Preachers:

"When I've shot and spent all my Gospel bullets and have none left and little effect seems to

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be made upon my hearers, I then get in the gun and shoot myself at them."

In other words, when he had preached the truth of God's Word, his burden was such that he opened his own heart and simply implored sinners to come to the Savior. In reference to his passionate preaching to the lost, the Apostle Paul cried, "Necessity is laid upon me!" He was saying a "continual, intense distress" was laid upon him. Joseph Alleine, a Puritan of the 16th century, wrote a book called "*Alarm to the Unconverted*," a book which greatly influenced C.H. Spurgeon and George Whitefield. In it, his zeal for the unconverted is very evident. Listen to his heart as he prepares to plead with the sinner:

"But from whence shall I fetch my argument? With what shall I win them? Oh, that I could tell! I would write to them in tears, I would weep out every argument, I would empty my veins for ink, I would petition them on my knees. Oh how thankful I would be if they would be prevailed with to repent and turn?"

Look at his burden—"*I would empty my veins for ink.*" How many of us would empty a *pen* of ink to warn a loved one or a friend to get right with God? Are we prepared to let God "lay necessity" upon us? Do we want the communication of our faith to become effectual?

A young girl once needed a blood transfusion. In

fact, if the doctors didn't find the right blood-type, she was in danger of losing her life. Her younger brother was found to be the only one with compatible blood. When the young boy was asked if he would give his blood to his sister, he paused for a moment, then said that it would be O.K. One would think he would have given permission *without* any hesitation.

As the blood began to drain from the little boy's arm, he looked up at the nurse and soberly asked, "*How long will it be until I die?*" He had hesitated because he thought he was giving his life for his sister.

Jesus gave His life's blood for us, and yet we hesitate to *live*, let alone pour out our life's blood for Him. How can we, in the light of Calvary's cross, shrink back for a moment from presenting our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to Him, *which is our reasonable service?*

We live in a day when the four most common words in the English language are "I, me, my and money." Sadly, that self-indulgent spirit has crept into the Church. But there is a stirring in the Body of Christ, and those that love Him are feeling His heartbeat in a new way. They want to experience a walk that is closer than they have now, they want to stay on the front lines of the warfare.

Forget the Kids

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Most, nowadays, are familiar with air travel. It is standard practice in most countries to have airline attendants stand in the aisle and draw your attention to the exits in the plane.

Then, in a calm voice they say something like, "If an oxygen mask should appear in front of you, place it over your mouth and nose. If you have children, attend to yourself first."

Why do the airlines say that? *Don't they care for children?*

The answer is simply because they know that if a parent has six young children, and he tries to put a mask over their faces, by the time he reaches the last child, he himself will probably be gasping for breath. They understand that the parent will be most effective *if he attends to himself first*.

In John 8:31-32, we see how a Christian can become effective:

"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed on 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."

There we have the Biblical definition of a "disciple"—he is one who has *disciplined* himself to continue in the word of Christ, and this results in freedom. This is a freedom from sin, death and Judgment, and freedom to reach out to others and be effective in our witness to them. Sadly, many

Christians are ineffective evangelically because they are still gasping for air—they have not attended to themselves first.

Stan's Dog

Many years ago, I had a friend who was quite a character. Stan placed a marijuana plant in his father's greenhouse, and his father unwittingly watered it, thrilled that at last his wayward son had come to his senses and taken an interest in botany. Stan also had a dog he called "Circles." It was so-named because it would walk forward two or three steps, and then do a complete circle, then another two or three steps forward, then another complete circle. It wasn't a trick, it was just the way the dog got around. I don't know if the canine is still alive, because he would cross the street the same way. Apparently, as a young pup it had been locked in a small shed for great lengths of time. It went around in circles, seeking a way out, and when it came out, it couldn't stop.

Many Christians are just like Circles. They continue to go around in circles—pew to altar to pew to altar to pew ... wearing out both the pastor and the carpet. If you are such a person, pay close attention, because I am going to share with you the biblical key to get you out of the shed, and onto the straight and narrow path you are supposed to be walking.

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Here is the key:

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3).

If we fulfill the stated requirements, the Bible promises we will be tall and strong, like a tree planted by rivers of water. Our roots will be deep, and we will therefore bring forth fruit in season (love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, faith, meekness and temperance), and whatsoever we do, will prosper—our vocation, our marriage, our evangelical endeavors.

I have saved myself hours in counselling time by simply asking the problem-laden, defeated, joyless, circles "Christian" one question, before he unloads his burdens on me. This is the question: "Do you read God's Word every day, *without fail*?" The usual answer is "sometimes" or "sort of" or "most days." The truth is they are not continuing in the Word of Christ, they don't know the truth, and they are not free. They are not meditating on the Word "day and night," so they are therefore not like a tree planted by water. Their roots are shallow, so when the winds of adversity blow, they topple over and need to seek

the pastor to prop them up. Neither does their fruit remain. They lose their peace and joy and begin to wither at the first sign of adversity, and whatever they do does not prosper.

These poor souls look at joyful Christians and say, "It's alright for them to be happy; they never have any problems." Yet, that isn't true. Ask around, you will find that all Christians have trials, but the ones who keep their joy are the ones who fulfill the requirements of Psalm 1—their fruit remains. They stand tall and strong during the storms, because their roots go deep into God's Word. They are not blown away by "every wind of doctrine."

God gave a similar promise to Joshua. If he kept the Law, if he would "meditate" on it "day and night," God said he would be "prosperous," and reaffirmed it with "and then you shall have good success" (Joshua 1:8). So for your own sake and for the sake of those around you who are still in their sins, discipline yourself daily to the Word. Put your Bible before your belly. Say to yourself, "No Bible, no breakfast; no read, no feed." The biblical priority is to put your spirit before your body (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

Jesus said to His disciples, "I have food to eat that you know not of," and that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Job summed up the necessity for feeding on the Word with, "I have not departed from the commandment

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of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth *more than my necessary food*" (Job 23:12, italics added).

Imagine walking along a street and seeing a child stumbling along, his stomach protruding through malnutrition, his eyes bulging, and his cheeks drawn in. You stop him and say, "Hey kid, are you O.K.? Are you eating your food?" He replies, "Sometimes . . . but I don't like eating vegetables, etc." You tell him sternly, *"If you don't eat you will die! I don't care whether you enjoy eating vegetables or not, eat them regularly!"*

It makes no difference whether the Christian enjoys the Word as he reads, or whether he finds it somewhat dry, it still benefits him. He is to "daily deny himself," follow Jesus, and "desire the sincere milk of the Word."

Two drunks walked along a wharf one dark night, climbed into a small boat, and determined to row to the other side of the lake. The first drunk rowed for about one and a half hours, sweat pouring from his brow, until he finally collapsed. The second drunk took the oars and rowed for three hours, until he collapsed, exhausted. When they awoke at sunrise, they found to their amazement that they had made only one mistake, *they were still tied to the wharf!*

Sadly, many professing Christians are still tied to the wharf of self-will. The burden of Christ is not

"easy and light," but one of labor and sorrow. To them, the Christian life is one of struggle, sweat and misery. Their problem is a lack of discipline. They are bone lazy, or worse, strangers to genuine repentance. If they would feed daily on the Word, they would find that it produces faith (Romans 10:17), and faith is what satan hates. Faith moves mountains. I have seen the most miserable of Christians rise up in victory, once they grasped the Psalm 1 principle of feeding daily on the Scriptures. The Bible is a supernatural book. When its pages are read with faith in the heart, that faith produces more faith, and from confidence issues joy, and from joy issues a "continual feast" for the soul so that he will live in victory over life's circumstances.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE ENEMY'S DEVICES

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Since the time of Christ, there has been continual opposition to the Gospel of Salvation. Jesus said, "You shall be hated of all men for My sake," while Isaiah said, "... he that departs from evil makes himself a prey"—not only a target for those who love darkness and hate the light, but for the anti-Christ spirit which rules the world (Ephesians 6:12, 2 Corinthians 4:4). From the time of Nero, when Christians were set on fire as torches to illuminate the darkness of his gardens, to the present day, satan has sought to come against the Gospel with every means possible.

As the world throws itself blindly into sin, the more it will hate righteousness. Humanity seethes

with hatred for the truth, and all it takes is a little stirring for that enmity to boil over. Many a Christian would have followed in the bloody steps of Stephen had not civil law restrained the ungodly.

A number of years ago during open-air preaching, an angry young man (who looked like the type who frequented tombs), picked up a large wooden cross, which a Christian had leaned up against my preaching-ladder, and used it as a hammer to smash it into a thousand pieces in a fit of demonic rage. I stood back and thanked God that the ladder was bearing the reproach, and not me.

A few days later, a well-dressed plump woman in her early thirties came out of the crowd, yelled at me in the most obscene language, slapped my face, then punched me in the mouth. A few weeks after that, a heavy dude, who said that he had "been sent into the local square to stop the preaching," made me want to do what Jesus said, and *flee* into another city when persecuted. I repented of fear, but the next time he was in the crowd, he had a can of gas in his hands. I remember thinking as he listened to me preach, "I want to be 'on fire' for God, *but not like this!*" More repentance.

The following day he stood in front of me again, and in a fit of rage, screamed out obscenities as I preached. This time I was not at all fearful. There were two reasons for this. The first was because God was with me, and the second (unknown to the

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man), *two policemen were standing directly behind him.* Suddenly, he stopped the obscenities and began to, in a deep powerful voice yell, "Get out of my way! Get out of my way! Get out of my way!" He bellowed this about twenty times, then the police made their move. It took them more than twenty minutes to arrest him and put him in the squad car. I watched fear come on the faces of the non-Christians, who could hear the animal screams coming from his mouth as demons manifested themselves through him.

Rarely is there freedom from opposition to the Gospel when it is preached in truth. I remember watching in unbelief, as a woman dressed in black, stood in front of my crowd as a self-proclaimed prophet to the nation. She had a wooden staff in one hand, and pulled a diamond ring off her finger and threw it at the crowd, saying that it was symbolic that God was divorcing the nation. Then she smashed a bottle on the ground, saying that He would destroy the nation for its iniquity. She claimed that she was alive 2,000 years ago, and helped Paul write the Epistles. She also said that as in the days of Noah, only eight would be saved . . . she was one of the eight, and she determined the other seven. She also maintained that my spirit visited her in the night. Four-letter filth words would spill out of her mouth as she brought God's reproofs to the nation, in perfect King James English of course.

These few incidents, plus a number of others have ingrained in me knowledge of the truth that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against hateful spirits, who "work in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). *Believe me, your struggle to break out of the barracks is more than a mere fear of man.* Jesus called satan the "father of lies," and the lies come thick and fast into the ears of the soldier who wants to carry out orders.

The Bible tells us that when "the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19). We are seeing the tide of occultic activity gush upon this world before our very eyes. Satan is walking about as a roaring lion a little faster than in times past, because his era is short. He is seeking whom he may devour, and at the moment he may devour many, because many are in his territory.

The subtlety of the spiritual occult realm is its guise of harmlessness. This was epitomized in the following cynical letter I received from the manager of a large book publisher:

"Mr. Comfort, it may be of interest to you that I specialize in writing books on the occult, and you would probably find some in your local library (occult source-book, other temples, other gods, inner visions, etc., etc). My experience of Christian evaluations of the occult is that they are invariably shallow and misinformed and worse than that, extremely intolerant. How the Hare Krishna,

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Mormons, J. W.'s, 'The Occult,' E.S.P. and T.M. can be classified together, let alone dismissed out of hand, is beyond me. Isn't Christ Himself a mediator who has E.S.P. and healing gifts? P.S. I once had a vision of Christ while on an LSD trip and it was very awe-inspiring. How do you explain that? Was I possessed by the devil?"

When I visited our local school many years ago to speak to the principle about the fact that I had heard they were teaching the occult, he confided in me that it did have a fascination, and that the school now "studied the occult domain each year at Halloween, as it studied Christianity at Christmas and Easter," (Halloween is an ancient Druid celebration of death, honoring the god of the dead).

He even shared how a ten year old had asked him about ectoplasm, which the dictionary says is the "viscous substance exuding from the body of a spiritualistic medium during a trance." My eldest boy came out of class the same day I spoke to the principal and said, "They're still doing it Dad ... today we learned about yoga and levitation." I took my kids out of the school that same day and put them into a Christian school.

All around us we are witnessing a fascination for the occult. Psychic hot-lines and other demonic activities are being endorsed by celebrities, while almost every newspaper and magazine carries horoscopes.

One magazine had a real deal for just two dollars:

"Yes! Here is the biggest bargain of the decade for the millions of men and women just like you who understand the importance of astrology and luck in your lives."

The advertisement continued to say that this Astro-luck package will bring the greatest love, joy and happiness in your life. Along with a special chart came a "Maya cross." This little symbol of good fortune was said to bring love and wealth, and was referred to as an "ancient talisman." It continued with the words, "obey that impulse ... order now," and asks the very relevant question, "Will this cross transform your life?"

The word "Maya" comes from Hindu philosophy and means "illusion." The word "illusion," according to the dictionary means "deception."

What's In a Trinket Anyway?

Some years ago, two teenage girls approached me to see if they could talk to me about the demonic realm. They were both non-Christians and didn't know how to express their concern. I arranged to speak with them the following day. To cut a long story short one of the girls manifested demons on the floor of my office. After she regained consciousness after a time of exorcising prayer, I counselled her to commit her life to Christ and also make a complete break of all occultic practices,

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which included getting rid of a small trinket which she had around her neck. Two weeks later, I received a phone call from her friend to say that she was still having blackouts. Once again all sorts of demonic manifestations came through the mouth of this quiet young girl as she lay in a blacked-out state on the floor.

As she lay there, I noticed she was gripping something around her neck so tightly that all the blood had drained out of her hand. I pulled back the fingers of her now white hand to find the trinket I had told her to get rid of. It looked like "Tinkerbell," out of Peter Pan, and was made of silver. I felt it was probably a goddess of fertility, or something similar. I pried it from her hand, took it to the other side of my office and hit it with a hammer. She was in a blacked-out state in the far corner of the room. Two of my friends were praying for her; I had my back to her, and yet every time I hit that trinket with the hammer, demons in her screamed. I must have hit it five or six times and as I hit, they screamed; it was like something out of a horror movie.

The first Book of Timothy 4:1 warns:

"Now the Spirit speaks expressly that, in latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

That is the age in which we are now living. I read an article recently where psychologists related a case of one man having 26 different personalities. This

newspaper stated that each personality had a complete and separate identity. One psychologist said it was "just like a scene from *The Exorcist*."

I was taking a young people's camp where a seventeen year old nice-looking youth asked for counsel. His complaint was that he had an inferiority complex. As I quietly prayed for him he blacked out, slumped onto the floor, back-arched, and screamed as demons began to "rent him sore." Using the authority of the name of Jesus I commanded the spirits to tell me the area of stronghold in the young man's life—"Bitterness!" came the answer.

When he regained consciousness, I counselled him to let go of any bitterness he held against anybody, justified or unjustified (2 Corinthians 2:10-11). I then asked him to tell me what areas of occult activity he had been involved in. He listed a number, including Ouija boards, LSD, satanic praise, drinking blood (under the influence of marijuana) and of course, rock music. The question arises as to what would cause a young man to drink blood for kicks. He was deeply into the ancient rock group AC/DC, and had been influenced by their album, "You Want Blood? You've Got It!" Other tracks on their album were, "Hell ain't such a bad place to be," "Rock and Roll Damnation" and "Sin City."

This incident happened in the eighties, and after it, I did an in-depth study of the "rock" world. Bear

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in mind that it has gone even further downhill since that time. Many of these groups are still popular, and their music will be around for many years, so let me share what I found with you. One very popular artist of that time was Alice Cooper, in real life known as "Vincent." Vincent, who is the son of a Baptist preacher, revealed in an interview in a secular magazine that he was once in a seance when a spirit manifested itself. It promised him that if he would allow it to inhabit his body, it would make him and his group world famous. Vincent then named himself and his group after the demon spirit "Alice Cooper."

Alice sang about necrophilia (the joys of having sex with a corpse). On stage, he jumped in and out of coffins, and even hung himself, and had the rope cut just before he was about to die. He also had a preoccupation with snakes. On one of his albums, he was pictured urinating on the back cover, with a smear of blood across the front cover. He sang, "So pray for him father, you need not bother! 'cause I am the fox and I go where I want. . . if Heaven ignores me, the devil adores me."

Another group that our young friend was into was Iron Maiden. They derived their name from a horrific medieval torture instrument, and called their third album (a million seller), "The Number of the Beast." Many other groups showed obvious links with the demonic world. The Plasmatics, who took

their name from blood plasma, had tracks "Butcher Baby," "Living Dead" and "New Hope For The Wretched." Judas Priest sang, "Sin After Sin," while Ozzie Osbourne was well-known for chewing the heads off bats and doves on stage. His albums were aptly named, "Diary of a Madman" and "Paranoid." Cossy Powell, originally known as The Sorcerers, sang their top hit "Dance With The Devil." Led Zeppelin, who have been heralded "a deity," didn't bother to hide the fact of demonic involvement:

"The mystery of the world's most exciting band was heightened by Jimmy Page's well-publicized flirtation with the occult and black magic ceremonies . . . the mysterious death of drummer John Bonham late in 1979, effectively drew their eleven year chapter to a close."

Jim Steimer, lead singer of Meat Loaf said, "When I go on stage . . . I get possessed!" KISS, who incidentally sold well over 30,000,000 of their albums said, "We are members of the satanic brotherhood of America first and musicians second!" As usual, with rock stars, the lead singer Gene Simmons revealed his likes and dislikes to the fans, "I've always been interested in what human flesh tastes like." Lead singer of the group, Ozzie Osbourne, was compelled to see the Exorcist 26 times! Blue Oyster Cult called one of their songs, "Don't Fear The Reaper," on which they sang of suicide, referred to Beelzebub (a name for the devil),

and stated the truth when they sing, "Our father is not in Heaven!" The Eagles released an album called "A Day In Hell," sang about "Witchie Woman," and had a track called, "They Just Can't Kill The Beast." They were all members of the first Church of Satan, in fact their biggest hit was about that church, and was called "Hotel California." The geriatric Rolling Stones, who signed the biggest recording contract in record history, released an album entitled, "The Satanic Majesties' Request" and sang, "Sympathy for the devil," while "Queen" sang, "Beelzebub has a demon set aside for me" . . . the list goes on and on. Jim Hendrix said back in the sixties, "Atmospheres are going to come through music because the music is in a spiritual thing of its own; you can hypnotise people with music and when you get them to the weakest point you can preach in the subconscious what you want to say. The music flows from the air so that's why I connect it with the spirit."

I preached once outdoors about occult-rock and was afterward approached by a non-Christian teenager. He said how he had been stoned while listening to a song called, "Stairway To Heaven." He was standing directly in front of the stereo listening, when suddenly he "fell backwards and went into a fit."

More than likely, at that point a spirit entered him.

The Dead Kennedys, on the front cover of their album called, "In God We Trust" had a picture of Jesus crucified on a dollar bill. Four letters words were common with their song called "Religious Vomit," referring to the then President of the United States, as being a "Born-again with a fascist craving." Catch the words of one of their songs with a message:

"God told me to skin you alive ...
I kill children ...
love to watch them die ...
I kill children ...
make their mommies cry.
Crush them under my car ...
I love to hear them scream ...
feed them poison candy ...
spoil their Halloween."

Around the time I was studying this music, I was driving in my car when I saw a group of people in the middle of the road. As I approached, it was obvious that a child had been knocked off his bike a few minutes earlier. I drove passed and saw a sight that I will never forget. The youth was dead because his head had been crushed under a car. I wept all the way home. It turned out that five doped youths had been trying to scare kids on bikes with their car and on this occasion they had gotten one. The spirit that permeates through many of those into this music, is written backwards on their t-shirts ... "REDRUM" ... MURDER.

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The fact that the battle is spiritual, was brought home to me by the following encouraging incident. A Christian friend pulled into a fast food store and heard a local Christian radio station on full volume. He remarked that it was good to hear it, to which the woman behind the counter replied, "I only have it on that station to keep the punk-rockers away. They don't come near this place when that station is playing."

If there is one thing that rock music has in common, it is the spirit of rebellion. The word rebellion is from a root word meaning "bitterness," and means "to be disobedient, to provoke and to rebel." Rebellion in the heart of man is an open invitation for demonic possession. The Scriptures warn that "an evil man seeks only rebellion; therefore, a cruel messenger shall be sent against him" (Proverbs 17:11). The word "against" comes from a Hebrew word which is always used in relation to a downward aspect.

This was evident in the life of King Saul who was rebuked by Samuel with the words, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" and followed that downward trend of being tormented by a demonic spirit.

Sin says, "Not Your will, but mine!" Psalm 10:4 tells us that "the wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God." It is not that the ungodly *cannot* find God, it is that he *will* not.

The rebellion of the will is clearly evident in the "I wills" of our natural father, before the fall:

"How you are fallen from Heaven, Oh Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mound of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Give no Place

A young punk-rocker once manifested demons at an altar after I had spoken at the church he had started attending. The strongholds in his life were, sex, vanity and rock music. I sat the youth down, gave him a drink of water and said, "I want you to pray about your sex life, your musical tastes and do a study on humility." The next evening I received a phone call from him saying that he had taped over all his rock cassettes with Christian music. He also decided to stop frequenting bars (as he had done in the past as a professing Christian), and he was also going to tell his girlfriend that he now loved God, and their sex-life was over.

He found complete freedom from the demonic realm *because he closed the door by an act of his own will*. Any Christian who has continued difficulties with demonic possession, is having them because

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somewhere there is an open door. The Bible says, "Give no place to the devil." If he "has place" it's because it is being given to him.

Many Christians live in a world of naivety when it comes to the spirit world. We once had a meal with a Christian family, and during the meal the mother got up from the table to turn up the volume on the television so that her son could listen to his favorite heavy rock music.

One of the most popular children's programs on television introduced the program with a group similar to KISS (the SS is shaped like the SS on the Nazi police uniform). The rock group on this program was called "Molech." Molech was the name of the Ammorite idol of the Old Testament, which sat upright with arms outstretched. The arms were heated until they were white hot, then children were placed into its arms as a sacrificial ritual. Drums were constantly played to drown out the screams of the child.

To encourage children into rock music is to place them into the white hot arms of Molech, and the beat and power behind the music will drown out the cries of the child as occultic powers envelop him and take him into the fires of Hell.

I received the following letter from a young girl:

"Some time ago, I had a rather frightening experience through listening to rock music (before

I was born-again). I've been a Christian since I was about ten years old (I am now fifteen), but I never walked in the light until now.

"My girlfriend and her boyfriend were in the dining room while I was in the lounge dancing to some rock music. While I was dancing something made me turn off the light. Suddenly, my body seemed possessed by some kind of spirit (something like the Holy Spirit, but instead of peace it made me terrified), but I was sort of fascinated. I danced for about one hour not knowing which direction I was facing, moving with the music. When the tape ended I was able to find my way to the switch and turn the light back on. My friends had come into the room and were watching me, I walked over to them and sat down. I couldn't even speak. My friend said to me, 'Don't look at me like that Tracy.' I managed to speak by now and asked, 'Like what?' She replied: 'You've got the devil in you!'"

When someone gives themselves over to heavy rock music, they don't get into the spirit. . . it gets into them. The word 'wiles' used in Ephesians 6:11, to describe "the wiles of the devil," comes from a Greek word 'methodieas' which is the word from which we derive our English word 'method.' One of satan's major methods of snaring this generation has been the international method of music. Maybe you are ignorant of this fact, but aged rocker David Bowie isn't. He said, "Rock and roll has always been the devil's music—you can't convince me it isn't."

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I heard about a young girl who saw a wire hanging from the top of her house. She grabbed the wire with one hand and was fascinated to find that as she moved its raw end across the concrete, sparks began to fly. She then gripped it with both hands and began to wave it back and forth across the concrete with sheer delight, as sparks flashed like sparkling fireworks. Unfortunately, her hand touched a piece of broken wire and a mass of electricity began to flow through her little body. She screamed, 'Mommy, Mommy . . . my *hands are on fire!*' Her mother rushed out of the house, but was flung away with the power when she touched her child. It was then that a passerby ran into the garage, grabbed an axe and cut the wire.

That action saved the little girl's life, but not before she had been severely burned. That story is a graphic illustration of the occult. Satan attracts the mind through fascination, but waits until he has your will—until he has both hands on the wire, before he pours on the heat. Those who escape with severe burns are fortunate compared to the many who don't. The only answer is to sever all connection with the sharp axe of renunciation. Paul speaks of this in 2 Corinthians 4:2: "We have renounced (disowned) the hidden things of dishonesty (Greek shame)."

We also need to realize the authority and the responsibility we have in Jesus Christ. Perhaps we are tempted to look at the Scripture which tells us

that when the enemy shall come in like a flood, "the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him," and think that it exonerates us from all responsibility. The Spirit of the Lord *will* lift up a standard against him, but through us. The Church is like a man who is searching for his glasses while he is still wearing them. We are looking for God to raise the standard, when God *in us* is that standard . . . we should be "salt" and "light."

What Should We Then Do?

There is no doubt that the enemy is coming in like a flood, but the question arises as to what we as God's people should do. First, I believe that we should 'sanctify the Lord God in our hearts,' and our homes. Do we have any idols sitting in our homes in the form of statues, pictures, paperweights, souvenir masks, or occultic books, tarot cards, etc? If you are not sure about a certain item, pray about it and if you have no peace, destroy it. The enemy has infiltrated and left ticking time bombs right in your territory, so don't wait if you are suspicious.

If you have been involved in any of the following practices and have never renounced them, do so from your heart and never open the door to them again.

If you have a fascination for the mystics, repent of it, for even the fascination means that the door is slightly open (even if it is only for you to peep

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through). Desire to look into the mystics is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:20) which, in the Christian must be reckoned dead. Those who *practice* such things will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven (verse 21), so don't let yourself be tempted.

Have you ever had your fortune told, followed horoscopes, been hypnotised, attended a seance, had involvement in spiritualism, been into heavy rock music, 'played' with a Ouija board, planchette or tarot cards, practiced levitation, chanted mantras, used E.S.P., consulted a medium, sought healing through a spiritualist or color therapy, used good luck charms—rabbit's foot, horseshoes, etc?

I was ministering at a camp when a girl in her late teens asked whether or not I thought she should get rid of a rabbit's foot key ring she had been given as a gift. I said that she should pray about it and come to her own decision about destroying it. I had made my mind obvious through the message I had given that morning.

She came back the same afternoon and told me that after praying about it she felt the Lord said that it was "O.K. to keep it." That night she manifested demons at the altar.

In another incident, I went to visit a woman who had been having oppressive problems and I was amazed to see a 4-5 foot carved idol in her living room. It was a gift from her husband, and she felt

that as a Christian she should do all that she could to keep peace in the home. I directed her attention to Deuteronomy 7:25-26:

"You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. Nor shall you bring an abomination in your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it; but you shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing."

Her attitude was a little short of what it should have been, in fact, she had nicknamed the thing "Charlie." She also manifested demons at an altar some time later.

Other things on the list which should be renounced are witchcraft, astroprojection, occultic children's games such as "Dungeons and Dragons," Masonic Lodge, numerology, wearing an Ankh cross (similar to the Christian cross but with a loop at the top), practicing yoga or practicing martial arts such as karate, etc., (some of these things are harmless to begin with), practicing automatic writing, taking LSD, or being involved with or practicing anything which is of the mystics. If you have prayed to idols or statues of Jesus or Mary, there also needs to be a total renunciation (Exodus 20:4-5).

This one is my personal conviction: I am also

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convinced that men wearing earrings has adverse spiritual connotations. They speak of rebellion and bondage, being very prevalent among homosexuals, punk-rockers, gypsies and pirates. Notice in Israel's rebellion of Exodus Chapter 32, that the people "broke off the golden earrings," which speaks of some sort of bondage to Egypt. A young man told me that he was about to preach the Gospel on a street corner, and God spoke to his heart and said, "You are not preaching My Gospel with that thing in your ear." Another Christian was saved out of a rebellious lifestyle, and upon conversion removed the earrings from his ear. Then he was drawn into a group who began murmuring about the pastor. Back in went the earrings. When he understood from scripture that he was not "murmuring against Moses, but against God," he repented, and immediately took the earrings out again. They were in themselves harmless, but were outward indicators of inward rebellion.

I have no right to tell another Christian that he shouldn't wear earrings; that's between him and God, but he should understand that jewelry carries command in the spiritual domain.

Listen to these words of a converted witch, relating about suicidal thoughts she had:

"Because I still wore the rings that had been given to me on the night of my initiation, I still had contact, and they (those in the witches coven) were

able to contact me through my mind."

Those Christians who feel that the International Peace Movement is a worthy cause to become involved in, should take the time to study the origin of the "peace symbol." According to the historian, Nestorius, it is an inverted and broken cross. Titus' legions bore it on their shields when they destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and it then became known as the "broken Jew." It has been used by Arab commandos of the Palestinian Liberation Front. Bolsheviks painted it on the doors of the church buildings they closed in the revolution, and it was branded on the bodies of Jews killed by communists during the Spanish Civil War.

If you have had any involvement in any of these things listed, you need to not only renounce involvement, but you need to destroy the object. Don't sell your rock albums, destroy them, preferably in fire (Acts 19:19, Deuteronomy 7:25).

We are involved in a war. The enemy is trying to filter through and weaken our ranks in the most subtle of ways. Some of the things I have mentioned in this chapter may seem trivial, but I would rather be vigilant to a point of examining *any* movement among the enemy, rather than being careless—the stakes are too high.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE

"No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier" (1 Timothy 2:4).

In the Book of Chronicles, we read of an unusual thing. The Scriptures tell us that Amaziah, King of Judah, did that which "was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart" (2 Chronicles 25:2). How could someone do something which is "right" in the sight of a perfect God, with an attitude that is less than perfect?

The word "perfect" in this case doesn't mean sinless perfection, but comes from a Hebrew word 'shalem,' meaning 'made ready.' It means serving God with a wholeheartedness, with a "Here I am Lord, send me" attitude. I certainly don't want Sue

doing that which is right in my sight "but not with a perfect heart." I don't want her to hand me my slippers saying, "Dinner is served sir," like a well-trained housemaid. No, like every husband, I want my wife to be devoted to me with her whole heart.

Sadly, much of the contemporary Church is in the state of doing that which is right, without the perfect heart God desires. We pray, fellowship, tithe, read the Word, yet so few are prepared to preach the Gospel to every creature, to be "fishers of men," to preach the Word in season and out of season . . . to report for duty and say, "Here I am Lord, send me."

This wholeheartedness is the key to the power of God being manifest in the Church. The Bible says that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chronicles 16:9). That's the same word—"perfect." Many soldiers are living in defeat because they are not serving God with a "perfect heart." The Lord is not showing Himself "strong" on their behalf. We need to be "willing in the day of (His) power."

Satan is terrified of God in the committed Christian. He knows the power that God gives to the fully consecrated saint.

Probably the most famous magician and escape artist to ever live, was Harry Houdini. Even though he defied death so many times, he didn't die trying to

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escape from some death-defying feat. A young man who had heard about Houdini's incredibly strong stomach muscles, approached him backstage and struck him a blow to the stomach. Unfortunately, Houdini was caught off-guard and received a ruptured appendix. Seven days later he died of peritonitis.

Satan trembles at the name of Jesus. He knows that Jesus Christ in us, is infinitely greater than he that is in the world. However, he also knows that the Christian can sometimes be caught backstage, and off-guard. That's why there are so many warnings in scripture about "watching" and being "sober and vigilant," because your adversary the devil walks about as a "roaring lion seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Each of us needs to have the strong muscle of a holy lifestyle pulled tight to resist the blows of the devil.

None of us want to be caught off-guard on the Day of Wrath. We need to trust in the Lord for our strength, to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

Fresh Water Surfing

For years I was hooked on surfing. I don't surf now for a number of reasons. There are too many sharks off the coast of Southern California seeking that delicious, dangling, salt-water delicacy, soft and succulent "surfer's leg." Besides, if I go for a

summer surf and get caught in the freeway traffic, I don't get back until winter. But I will definitely take it up during the shark-friendly millennium when we will have 1,000 years before God does away with the sea, and from then on it will be fresh-water surfing for eternity.

Before surfboards became smaller and lighter, we didn't even think of tying them to the leg, as they do nowadays. If you fell off, every instinct within you would tell you to seize the board, because if you didn't, you would have a long swim to the shore to retrieve it. I had no idea how strong this instinct was, until I tried water skiing.

I took off after the boat, and things were fine for about ten seconds. Suddenly, I fell, and found myself being dragged under the water for about thirty feet. My impulse was to hang onto the rope even though I was under the water. *Dummy!* I ended up with a head full of salt water.

When we come to Christ, our sinful nature doesn't want to let go of pet sins. Habitual sin is ingrained in our nature, but if we have any sense, we will let go of the rope, because sin will do nothing but drag us down.

A 20 year old man was on a snow mobile in Colfax, Iowa in the late seventies. He was having a ball, racing around on the glistening white snow. He swung the machine around and sped at about thirty

miles an hour between two wooden posts. *That was the last thing he did.* A thin, almost invisible wire between the posts, decapitated him.

Satan will let you have a ball. He wants you to instinctively hang on to your sins. He will let you race around and enjoy their pleasures for a season. His will is only to "kill, steal and destroy," and somewhere he has a wire strung at just the right height for your neck. All he needs is a little cooperation.

How To Succeed as a Thief

A popular magazine once ran an article by an ex-cat burglar. He didn't steal cats, he preyed on the homes of those of us who are ignorant of his ways. Most of us, because of a lack of knowledge, virtually put a sign up saying, "Thieves, I'm outta town, so come in and steal what you want."

This is how we do it. We have unlit rear entrances which are enshrouded by trees and hedges. They act as a magnet for the burglar. The ex-thief said that a loud air-conditioner was an open invitation. If people could sleep through its noise, they weren't going to hear him breaking into their home.

He would even masquerade as a newspaper-subscription salesman, knocking on doors, ready to do a phony sales pitch if anyone answered. Then he would leave a card on the door handle, and if no one

answered and it was still there the next day, it was a sure sign that the family was away.

A name on the mail box gives the burglar all the information he needs to find your phone number and call to see if you are home. Even alarms don't guarantee security. Often people put the alarm sticker on the front of their house to scare away would-be burglars. All the burglars do is write a letter to the company and say they are wanting to purchase an alarm system. They then study the literature to become familiar with it so they can easily disarm it. Exterior alarms can be filled with shaving cream to silence them, while most locks can be simply picked. Windows can be silently broken, by putting a paper covered with Vaseline on it, so that when they break, they do so silently.

He says that most people lay their house out like a candy store. They place all their jewelry, wallet, etc., in the bedroom or by the kitchen sink, and if he needs a car, the keys are on the end of the counter. The man's best advice to stop burglars: "Get two dogs. Make sure they bark." He said that even a house guarded by a Chihuahua is well protected, because people wake up when the dog barks.

He advises that if you hear a burglar in the house, not to confront him. If he has a gun, he will probably shoot you and even all the family, rather than go to prison. His advice, and the advice of the law, is to call the police.

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Satan knows what he is doing. He is an expert in his field. He sees many signs that tell him he is safe to make entrance. A dusty Bible is an open invitation. Lack of the light of good understanding is another open attraction. He wants us to be in the dark—to be "ignorant of his devices." He wants a sleeping Christian, someone not watching and praying, as Jesus told us to.

Don't confront the devil, call upon God for backup. If you have a problem with lust, realize that it is a weapon of darkness that will be the death of you. Call upon the Lord. Ask Him to disarm the devil. Tell Him that you don't want that creep creeping around in your property. He only comes in the dark, and you need to walk in the light to keep him away. Have the guard dog of a good conscience, and listen when he barks. He is there to protect you.

Dogmatic Resistance

Even before I was converted, I stumbled upon a major scriptural principle. I was riding my motorbike home from work, when a rather large and vicious German shepherd rushed out of a driveway and began to snap at my back tire. As I was about to pour the power on (it was a Honda 50) and leave the animal in the dust, I had a thought: "Wait a minute! *Greater is that which I am sitting on than that which is chasing me!*" I then stopped the bike, much to the bewilderment of the dog, turned it around and chased that animal up the street.

If satan is chasing you, slam on the brakes and say, "Greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world," then submit afresh to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. You have God's promise on that (James 4:17).

Nuts to You

Sue and I were once trying to pry resistant nuts from their shells. They would crack open, but were very difficult to get out from the inside of their casings. Suddenly, a bright idea struck me. I put one in the microwave oven for ten seconds. Then, when I cracked the nut, no longer did it cling to the shell, but came out without the slightest resistance.

If there is one thing that will bring the timid Christian out of his shell, it is the heat of persecution. That's all that happened when God allowed Saul to put the early Church in the heat of the microwave. Persecution put the fear of God in the hearts of those who were exercised by it. The puritan author, William Gurnall, the author of, *The Christian in Complete Armour* of which Spurgeon said, "Gurnall's work is peerless and priceless," said:

"We fear men so much, because we fear God so little. One fear causes another. When man's terror scares you, turn your thoughts to the wrath of God."

The Army of God executes deserters, cowards and traitors (Hebrews 10:26, Revelation 21:8).

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Trials also can have the effect of bringing us to our knees and seeking God's will rather than our own. In South Korea, a baseball team called the "Dolphins" began a training program with a difference. They would climb a high mountain, remove their shirts and stand bare-chested in the freezing wind. Then they would dig holes in the ice, and subject their bodies to freezing cold water. They said that it made the team hardy, and also promoted team unity. They went from being a laughing stock, to the top of the league. Now all the other teams have imitated their training program.

As much as we don't like the thought, blessings tend to take our eyes off God, and trials put them back on. Icy tribulation builds strength of character within the Christian, and the cold winds of persecution purify the Church bringing a sense of unity of purpose.

We need not wait for God's chastening hand; if we chasten ourselves, we need not be chastened. We must focus our hearts on God now. Without a genuine move of His Spirit in the near future, an entire generation will destroy itself.

In 1963, the U.S. Government took the Ten Commandments off the walls of the schools and prayer from the classroom, and the nation is reaping a whirlwind of destruction. When there is no wall of absolute authority, anarchy comes in like a flood. When a generation has no fear of God before their

eyes, then the laws which forbid murder have no influence. On any given day in the U.S., an estimated 100,000 guns and knives are smuggled into schools.

How on earth do we move the Hand of the God of Heaven? The answer is, and has always been twofold. We must first get on our knees and beseech God to save this generation, then ask Him to use us to take the *means* of salvation to the unsaved. He has chosen the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. He has entrusted us with the Word of reconciliation, and it is therefore up to us to break free from that which binds us.

Three front row infantrymen were Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. The King told them to bow down to his idol, but rather than sin against God, they refused. They knew that the Law said,

"I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those that hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My Commandments" (Exodus 20:1-6).

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The three godly men loved God and therefore kept His Commandments. Their choice was to compromise and keep in good with the king, or obey God wholeheartedly and be cast into the fiery furnace. These men knew what was acceptable. Like David when he faced Goliath, they didn't need to seek the mind of the Lord in this matter, because the Law had already given them knowledge of right from wrong. Look at what they said to the King when he threatened them with such a terrible death:

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up" (Daniel 3:16-18).

The warrior of Jesus Christ will not bow down to the golden image of mammon, with its promise of gratification, security and comfort. Even if the devil threatens to heat up the furnace of persecution and tribulation seven times, he will not bow down. He looks to the Word of God as his authority "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts."

He is a soldier of Christ and therefore thanks God that he has been counted worthy to suffer for the name of the Savior. He is as Moses who broke free from the gratification of Egypt, "choosing rather to

suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin."

In the natural realm, we cause muscle growth through resistance. If you want to grow physically, get into a swimming pool and hold a five gallon container filled with water at head level. To stay afloat, you will have to kick for dear life. The key in this exercise is to have the lid off the container, face it down and let the water drain out as you kick. A great consolation is that you know that as time passes, as you tire, the weight is going to get lighter, and that knowledge will spur you on.

As you step into the waters of personal evangelism, the weight of apprehension may seem unbearable, but as you pour yourself out for the Gospel, you will have the knowledge that God will relieve you of the weight. Each time you exercise yourself in this, you will strengthen yourself spiritually.

Hive of Activity

Pray that God would raise up more laborers, because there are so few. Sometime ago, I finished speaking at a church in Minneapolis, when the pastor of evangelism took hold of the microphone. He was an ex-cop, and his voice cracked with emotion as he spoke of an accident victim he once held in his arms. The critically injured man thrashed back and forth for a moment, sighed deeply, then

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passed into eternity. The pastor's voice was filled with emotion, because his own church had over a thousand members, and only five attended his evangelism class.

It was obvious that the army's hive of activity was in the barracks of everything but evangelism. He pleaded, saying, "What's wrong with you? *Don't you care that people in our city are going to Hell?* I can teach you to rid yourself of fear . . . " His was no proud boast. The prison doors of fear *can* be opened with very simple keys—a knowledge of God's will, ordered priorities, love that is not passive, gratitude for the cross, and the use of the Law before Grace.

The Voice of the Rescuer

On a warm spring day in New York, a fire broke out in a high rise building. When firemen arrived, they saw a man on a ledge on the 12th floor. Smoke billowed out from the building, blinding the terrified man and forcing him to the very edge. Death seemed to lick its lips.

Quickly, a fireman was lowered from above by a rope, and thankfully rescued him before he was forced to jump to his death. The delivered man said that it was a miracle that he was saved. He said that he was blind, but heard the voice of his rescuer, and from there clung to him for dear life.

How perfectly that sums up our salvation. We had climbed the stairs of the high rise of sin, and

found that the Law of sin and death forced us onto the ledge of futility. We stood blind, fearful, helpless and hopeless ... *until we heard the voice of our Savior.* We heard the joyful sound of the voice of the Son of God, as He reached out His holy hand and snatched us from death's dark door. *But there are still others on the ledge going through the terror we once experienced.* We cannot rest until we direct them into the hands of Jesus.

I thank God that He saved me while I was young, while I still have energy to reach out to the lost. I pray that God will make me to know the number of my days that I might "apply my heart to wisdom," and it's the epitome of wisdom to spend every ounce of energy and every moment of every day seeking, in some way, the salvation of souls.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE THREE-FOLD BATTLE

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Psalm 107:2).

The moment we put our faith in the Son of God, we step right into the middle of a threefold battle. We find that we are torn by the enemies of the world, the flesh and the devil. The flesh, whose appetite was fully satisfied with the pleasures of sin, is suddenly starved to a point of gnawing at the mind for want of food causing what the Scriptures call a "war in your members." Thoughts which once were acceptable, suddenly stir the alarm of conscience. Not long after my conversion, I became so concerned about this battle within my mind, I sought deliverance prayer. I was a little disappointed that nothing happened. It wasn't a demon, just the rotten aroma of my corrupt and sinful Adamic self. I

was now a new creature in Christ Jesus, old things had passed away, and all things had become new. The old nature stunk because it was dead in Christ, and now I had to bury it.

Just after our first child began to walk, he picked up a blanket and adopted it as his "cuddly." He would take that blanket wherever he went. In the usual child-like manner, he would put two fingers and part of his blanket into his mouth and make sucking noises. When it was washed and hung on the clothesline, he would stand beneath it and jump up to try and grab it. We felt that we had better try and break the habit before his wedding day, so we cut it in half and gave it to him. Then the next day, we secretly cut it in half again, and every few days, we would cut it in half, until the thing just became so small, it just disappeared.

That is what we are to do with the flesh. It is forever running around like a turkey with its head chopped off. It is dead, but it won't lie down without a little help from the whetted blade of the two-edged sword. The witless creature not only needs to have its head removed, it needs to be gutted, plucked, and its soft flesh carved on the wooden plate of Calvary's cross. That will put thanksgiving in our hearts.

The only access the enemy has to us is through the flesh, and if we deal with it once and for all, the world will have no attraction for us and the devil will have no foothold on us. It is vital to identify this

Judas in our heart. That old nature is nothing more than a cowardly traitor who will cry, "Master, Master," and then betray the Son of man with a kiss. We must so hang Judas by the neck until he "bursts asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gush out." If we do not deal with this enemy, he will be our downfall.

I find that I am forever approached by young men, and occasionally young women, who hang their heads in shame, and confess that they have a "lust" problem. The reaction is interesting when I say, "So do I." They are relieved to find that they are not alone in the battle against the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." If you don't have any "problem" with lust, then you've got problems. You have more than likely surrendered to it.

Sex-drive is God given, but lust is a flame that will try and generate the heat of unlawful passion as long as we are in this fallen body. In almost every case where scripture specifies distinctive sins, sexual sin is at the top of the list. Sin, especially sexual sin, draws us as a moth to a flame. Scripture speaks of being "hardened through the *deceitfulness* of sin." The Amplified Bible puts the same verse this way, "hardened through the trickery which the delusive glamour of his sin may play on him." Sin has a delusive glamour to it. The old saying, "as miserable as sin," just isn't true. The person who said it

probably also said, "Crime doesn't pay." Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than *enjoy* the pleasures of sin for a season. Sin is enjoyable. I have walked the streets of New York and have noticed that porn stores don't have to do too much advertising. Sin holds a deep-rooted charm for our sinful nature, but carries the sting of death with it.

We were once "deceived, serving different lusts and pleasures," but now, if we are truly converted, our eyes have been opened. We see sin for the sugar-coated venom that it is.

The Backslider In Heart

I find that most "backsliders" begin to reveal their true state, by failing to read the Word. To open the Bible when there is sin in the heart is too convicting. Often they will still fellowship, worship and pray, but that two-edged sword cuts too close to the flesh. Stephen gives us an interesting insight into the workings of a "backslider in heart," in Acts Chapter 8. As this soldier of Christ gives his farewell speech to those who are about to promote him to Headquarters, he spoke of Israel's backsliding in the wilderness, saying,

"But our fathers refused to obey Him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. They told Aaron, 'Make some gods who will lead the way for us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don't know that has

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happened to him.' That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in honor of what their hands had made."

Here we not only have three stages of Israel's backsliding, but we also have three signs of a "backslider in heart," the false convert. According to Bible typology, Egypt is a type of the world, and Moses is a type of Christ.

The first sign of a backslider in heart is "in their hearts" they turn back to Egypt. No one else may know—but they know, and God knows that deep within the heart is a longing to go back to the world. Like Lot's wife, they are longingly looking back. Scriptures warn that "fellowship with the world is enmity with God." It teaches that whoever "wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Therefore those who profess to be in the army of God, but have a desire to go back to the world, are not on our side. How can they be if God's Word says they are the enemy of God?

Second, they said, "As for this Moses fellow who led us out of Egypt—we don't know what has become of him!" The backslider in heart loses the reality of his walk with Jesus—"As for this Jesus who led us out of the world—we don't know what has become of Him." They leave what they said was their first love. To say, "I love you Jesus" sounds trite to them, yet the Bible warns, "If any man loves

not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be cursed."

Third, they make for themselves an idol. They create a god in their own image. They shape a deity to suit their own sins, then worship the work of their own hands. Their god becomes one who is void of reference to sin, righteousness and judgment. There is no need to flee from sin, because their god condones sin. Then it is only a matter of time until they slip down the slippery and sinful path they have chosen—he who longs for the world may not be in the world, but the world is still in him. Of them, the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

The Distinguishing Mark

What can be done to ensure that we are not part of the great company who fall away, or of the great mass who will cry "Lord, Lord," who will be lined up as deserters and shot from Heaven into Hell? The answer is in Galatians 6:14:

"But God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Revelation of Christ on the cross is the key. This truth is graphically illustrated in the following story:

A father and son once went on a camping trip. When they arrived at the site, the father pitched the tent and said, "Son, see that river; it's full of

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crocodiles. If you want to do any fishing, fish off the wharf." The son reluctantly agreed that he would stay on the wharf.

After three days of fishing, the son began to think about the excitement of fishing amidst the crocodiles in the safety of a boat. So, that is what he did. He obtained a boat, and in a sense of bravado, rowed out into the river.

He had only been fishing for a short time when a crocodile came alongside the small boat, hit it with its tail, and the terrified boy was thrown into the water. The father heard him scream, saw what had happened, and without hesitation dived into the crocodile-infested waters. He grabbed his beloved son and pulled him to the safety of the shore.

When the boy opened his eyes, he saw a grisly sight. A crocodile had draped its massive jaws around the father's legs, leaving him in bleeding shreds.

The following thought is unthinkable: Imagine if the son looked at his father lying there in agony, bleeding to death, and said, "Dad, I really appreciate what you just did for me, but I found it exciting out mere with the crocodiles—you wouldn't mind if I got another boat, would you?"

If the son could *think*, let alone *say* such a thing, the blind fool hasn't seen the sacrifice his father has just made for him!

Dear professing Christian, if you have any, *even hidden desire*, to go back into the sinful excitement of the world, you haven't seen the sacrifice of the Father!

If that son has seen what his father has just done for him, a sense of horror will consume him at the cost, the extreme, the length, the expense his father has just gone to, to save him. He would pour contempt upon the very drops of water that still cling to his flesh!

The true Christian has seen that God in the person of Jesus Christ, without hesitation, dived into the very jaws of Hell to save him from the folly of sin. A sense of horror consumes him at the cost, the extreme, the length, the expense his Father went to, to save him. He cries,

"And when I think,
that God His Son not sparing,
sent Him to die,
I scarce can take it in;
that on that cross,
my burdens gladly bearing,
He bled and died
to take away my sin."

He pours contempt upon the sinful desires that still cling to his flesh. The true convert is crushed by a sense of his own foolishness and yet at the same time, he has inexpressible gratitude for the "unspeakable gift" of the cross. He has seen Jesus

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Christ evidently set forth and crucified. He says with Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." After seeing the sacrifice of the Father, how could he ever go back to the exciting pleasures of sin! To do so, he would have to trample under foot the blood of Jesus Christ. He would have to count the sacrifice of Calvary as nothing.

Instead, he willfully crucifies himself to the world, and the world to himself.

He whispers with the hymnist:

"When I survey the wondrous cross,
on which the Prince of Glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride."

The world can attract him no longer. They that are Christ's, have crucified their affections and lusts.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

VICTORY AMIDST DEFEAT

"He teaches my hand to war, so that a bow of bronze is broken by my arms" (2 Samuel 22:35).

The army that does not train well will not fight well. Soldiers are not only trained in the use of their weapons, but they are trained that they might become strong. Deliberate resistance is put in front of every soldier. He finds himself facing obstacle courses. He weaves his way through all types of difficulties, bunkers, hazards, hindrances, snags, tripwires, hurdles, hedges and barriers. He is made to run with great weights upon his shoulders, march for miles, arise at the crack of dawn, and stand for long periods of time. He is forced to go against the grain. The objective is to create a strong, disciplined, finely-tuned, well-regulated, organized force of soldiers who will stop at nothing to achieve the

objective.

Muscle comes through resistance. The strong, muscular, conquering hero didn't get that way through easy living. To attain such a physical state, he had to train hard. Through many years of running, weight training and self-discipline, he brought himself to the peak of condition. The more resistance he put against his muscles, the more they developed.

God is seeking to bring you and I to the peak of condition. He is refining us through resistance. He desires to build in us the muscle of a strong and good character, not being caught up in the vanities of this futile life. He wants to teach us good judgment, self-discipline, perseverance, godliness and love. These are the muscles that impress God. These are the virtues of His Divine Nature, the qualities that will cause the army of God to be strong, delicately-tuned, and well-regulated to a point where we will obtain our objectives.

The soldier who truly understands the object of his superiors, will gladly submit himself to the discipline of the army. The true soldier of Christ, who sees the objective of his Superior, will joyfully submit himself to the discipline and trials of the Christian walk. In the light of the objective, the yoke of Jesus is easy and the burden is light. He has not been *drafted* into the army of God, but he has *willingly submitted himself to the yoke of Christ*. He

knows that whatever affliction, trial, or weight of resistance comes his way, comes only by the will of his Superior. God has allowed a particular trial, no matter how bad it may seem, for his good. He can fall into the great safety net of Romans 8:28 when everything else fails. Paul says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

Look at John Wesley's understanding of the disciplines of God:

"Receive every inward and outward trouble, every disappointment, pain, uneasiness, temptation, darkness and desolation with both hands, as to a true opportunity and blessed occasion of dying to self and entering into a fuller fellowship with thy self-denying suffering Savior."

Wesley knew that affliction works for, not against the Christian—"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, *is working for us* a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17, NKJV, italics added). Remember in tribulation, that every problem which comes our way can be a stepping stone, rather than a stumbling block. The Apostle Paul actually took pleasure in trials because he knew that they had the effect of bringing a closer commitment to the cause (2 Corinthians 12:10).

It has been rightly said that one distinguishing

mark of an unregenerate man is ingratitude. The soldier of Christ will not entangle himself with the affairs of this world, because he is continually motivated to please God, by gratitude for the cross. He has meat to eat that the world knows not of. The cross gives him a merry heart, and a continual feast, rations that keep him energized in the battle. The moment the cross is seen in truth, the flesh is crucified. Any zeal I have is fed from fuel from Calvary's hill. George Whitefield said, "I had a day in my life when I fully surrendered in consecration to the Lord and that day I said, 'I call Heaven and earth to witness that I give up myself entirely to be a martyr for Him who hung on the cross for me. I have thrown myself blindfolded and without reserve into His mighty hands!'" The troopers of the cross who have seen the commendation of the love of God, cannot help but fling themselves into the heat of the battle, constrained by the same irresistible force that drove Jesus to the cross.

Trials not only have the effect of driving us closer to God, but they also show us our point of growth as Christians. The soldier who fails an obstacle course, needs more training.

If it wasn't for my trust in God—my knowledge that He knows what He is doing with my life, I certainly would lose heart. It seems that the Christian life is one obstacle after another, yet I know that when I am tried, "I shall come forth as

gold." God is not only preparing a place for us, but us for that place.

An Unhelpful Friend

A man once noticed movement in a cocoon outside his bedroom window. It was obvious that a butterfly was struggling to get out, so he took a razor-blade, leaned out of the window and slit the side of the cocoon to help the creature. The butterfly struggled for the moment, then fell out onto the ground. It looked sickly and pale. After a little movement, it died. The man hadn't helped the butterfly, he had killed it. The very process of struggling in the cocoon should have pumped blood into the wings of the butterfly, giving it beauty, life and character. In the same way, all the trials and struggling which comes our way, are not to do us harm, but to do us good. They are bringing beauty and color to our character, which will be revealed the moment we break free from the cocoon of this life.

If we have faith in God we will be exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. This rejoicing may be a "sacrifice of praise," almost a matter of gritting your teeth and saying, "I don't know what's going on. Everything is working against me, but I will rejoice anyway, and give God thanks because He has said that all things are working together for my good."

If it is a financial problem, get hold of the

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prescriptionary Scripture and speak it out against your situation:

"My God shall supply all my needs, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus!"

This is not easy to do, but the more difficult the situation, the more you will have to trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding. The athlete doesn't buckle under the pressure, he resists it and in so doing, strengthens his muscle.

The Unwanted Fan

As I have mentioned earlier, for some time Sue and I had our own Christian bookstore. This was in the suburbs and proved ideal for my writing. Our busy day was Saturday, and during the week it was peaceful and quiet. God, in His faithfulness, had not only directed us into the ministry, but He had also confirmed my writing and speaking ministry. Our family had been overseas for about four weeks, and when we returned, my pastor asked if I would share with the congregation where I thought God was taking my ministry. I began to seek the Lord, and all I could get was Psalm 45:1: "My heart is overflowing with a good theme . . . my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." I dismissed it as my own mind. If any scripture was appropriate, that one was. I wanted to use both my pen and my tongue.

On the following Sunday, I stood in front of the

church, ready to share how I felt God was leading me to speak out and write for Him. The service opened in prayer, then went straight into worship. As the praise died down, a woman spoke out in prophecy, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." She had no idea what I had in my mind, but God knew. This was my first service in this church for four weeks, and the very scripture which had been on my heart all week had come through the gift of prophecy to confirm the direction I was taking! It was because of this clear leading, I had confidence that the bookstore was God's further provision for my writing ministry. It was ideal, so I expected smooth sailing.

After some time in the store, the premises next door became vacant. I prayed that a Christian would move in, and sure enough, within a week or so a young Christian gentleman moved next door to open a sandwich bar. The name of our store was Living Waters Book Store, and our window sign read, "Jesus said, he that believeth on Me, shall never thirst." My new neighbor in the sandwich bar suggested for his window, "Man shall not live by bread alone," and we both decided to pray that a Christian butcher would move in next door and have on his window, "Labor not for the meat that perishes."

We had the perfect little evangelical setup. It was smooth sailing, until one day my friend had a large

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fan installed and took the wind out of my sails. It effectively sucked out unwanted air on his side of the wall, but sent unbearable vibrations through our side. One could hardly hear the vibrations, but they could certainly be felt. They were the type of thing one would imagine would be used in torture. My neighbor kept the fan turned down to a minimum, but this hardly helped the situation. The most concentrated area of vibration was right at my writing desk!

I prayed about the situation repeatedly. I called in experts who told me that the fan was incorrectly mounted, so I had it correctly mounted. That cost me about \$100. All this time I wanted to keep my attitude right toward my Christian brother. He was not in a position financially to help with any costs for improvement, besides, even with the correct mounting, it didn't help. I moved my office to another area, but that didn't help much.

Every morning it was the same. I would open the door and step into that vibrating, pulsating, shaking, throbbing torture room. It would have the effect of pulling the muscles, especially in my throat, tense. On one day it was particularly bad. When I arrived home, I was a wreck.

The next day I opened the door and entered the store. I jumped for joy, rejoiced, gave thanks and nearly burst into tears as I entered another day in the torture chamber. I knew all the principles of trials

being for our good, but I could stand it no longer; *it was driving me insane*. I felt so trapped . . . so helpless ... there was absolutely nothing I could do! I was at the point of breaking down. If I stayed in that store for one more minute, I would lose my sanity. As far as I was concerned, it was God's business, so I would close up shop and go home.

I began to write a note to leave on the door, "We apologize for any inconvenience . . . " Suddenly the fan stopped, *and at that exact moment*, a woman stepped into the store and handed me \$1,000 to help our ministry! The timing was perfect. I held onto that money and said, "*You know Lord, that noise isn't so bad after all.*"

God knows exactly what we can take. He knows how to encourage us, and when to deliver us. He is strengthening and training us so that we can say, "It is God who arms me with strength ... You enlarged my path under me; so that my feet did not slip. I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them ... for You have armed me with strength for the battle."

If Moses Had A Boat

So often we blame the devil for adversity, but we must remember that God is sovereign, and that if the enemy does come against us, it is by His permission. This does not mean that we are to live in fatalistic passivism. As I have stated in previous chapters, when satan comes against us in any way, we are to

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submit to God, then resist the devil. It is in that trial that we are to exercise faith, patience and steadfastly resist the wiles of the enemy, being fully confident that the trial will work together for our good.

David had the utmost confidence in affliction: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes. I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness, You have afflicted me." (Psalm 119:71,75).

Often, as in my situation, we are brought to a point of total helplessness, and therefore utter dependence on God. God brought Moses to a point where he had to "stand still and see the deliverance of God." There was no alternative. If Moses had had a boat (a large one), there would have been no miracle. Daniel was placed into that same position of helplessness. He didn't have a whip or a chair to fight off the beasts. His only means of escape was by way of the supernatural. We are to come to a point where we will say "we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, who raises the dead."

We spoke earlier of the soldier who failed to pass the obstacle course needing more training. This is the test of pass or fail—*the measure of faith we have in God will be evidenced by the amount of joy we have in tribulation.*

Look at this powerful Scripture, "I am filled with comfort (that's my problem). I am exceedingly

joyful in all our tribulation" (2 Corinthians 7:4). These were not just boastful, empty words from Paul. When he and Silas lay bleeding in a cold Philippian jail, they sang hymns to God. He tells us why he rejoiced in tribulation in Romans Chapter 5, "... but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance character; and character, hope" (NKJV). The question arises, "How on earth do we get that sort of faith?"

Respect for the Pilot

Some years ago, I was traveling by plane with a rather large lady sitting next to me. As we were about to land I noticed that the poor woman had a look of terror in her eyes, so I leaned over and said that if she was afraid she could hold my hand. I had hardly finished speaking when her hand whipped across and held mine so tightly that it went white. I remember thinking, "Great. She's still in fear and now I'm in pain!"

Imagine if I said to that fear-filled female, "You don't need to be scared, I know the pilot of this plane. He's an incredible guy. He could land this plane blindfolded." Perhaps the woman would look at me and say, "Do you really know him?" Fear begins to leave her eyes. "Yes, I've known him for years. He has flown over 4,000 times and never even had one mishap, let alone a crash. Your fears are totally groundless." The more I speak of the ability

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of the pilot, the less fearful she becomes.

Can you see that *knowledge* allows her to choose faith, and reject fear? I am building respect for the pilot.

Soldier, are you becoming a little fearful? Let's talk for a few moments about the Captain of our salvation. Let's build up our respect for the One who directs our path. Respect for Him is commonly called "reverence" or "fear of the Lord." Proverbs 2:1-6 gives clues as to how we can obtain "fear of the Lord," which is the beginning of wisdom:

"My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my Commandments within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as hidden treasures then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

When we understand the greatness, the integrity, the majesty, the power, the preeminence, the nobility, the splendor, the grandeur, the supremacy and the ability of our God, then we will begin to fear Him. I love storms with thunder and lightning. They display a tiny portion of the power of our God. We are witnesses to the fact that creation displays the genius of the Creator. Look at this quote from the *Reader's Digest* and remember that it is speaking of the handiwork of God:

"In the order of the universe, the sun is an ordinary, typical medium-sized star. Yet its energy and violence almost defy imagination. It is a dense mass of glowing matter, a million times the volume of the earth and in a permanent state of nuclear activity. Every second, millions of tons of hydrogen are destroyed in explosions which start somewhere near the core, where the temperature is 13 million degrees Celsius. More energy than man has used since the dawn of civilization is radiated by this normal star in a second! The earth's entire oil, coal and wood reserves would fuel the sun's energy output to the earth alone for only a few days. Tongues of hydrogen flame leap from the sun's surface with the force of 1,000 million hydrogen bombs! They are forced up by the enormous thermonuclear explosion at the core of the sun where 564 million tons of hydrogen fuse each second to form helium. Matter at the core of the sun is so hot that a pinhead of it would give off enough heat to kill a man 160 million km away!"

God is infinitely greater than any of us can imagine. No wonder the Psalmist says, "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all His praise? Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable." The Prophet continues to give us light:

"All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing; and vanity. To whom then will you liken God or what likeness will you compare unto Him? To whom

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then will you liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold what hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power: not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding" (Isaiah 40:17-28, KJV).

When we catch a glimpse of the greatness of God, we will never fear the enemy.

There are some thoughts about God which I have to dismiss from my mind because they are too mind-boggling for me to hold onto. Let me give you an example. When I look at you, I am limited to seeing you from the front. When you are facing me I can't see the back of your head. But the Bible tells us that the "eye of the Lord is in *every* place," so from what direction does God see you? You say, "From above, because He is in Heaven." But if His eye is omnipresent, He will not be limited to seeing you from one position. When God sees you, He sees you all at one time, from above, behind, in front, underneath, each side, inside and outside! *What then do you look like to God?* "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it." The

Bible says, "His ways are past finding."

While the unregenerate have the "understanding darkened," we can receive "spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1:9). This is why the Psalmist exhorts us to, "Sing praises *with understanding*." How can we give God praise if we don't understand His infinite greatness? We, even as Christians, are still partially blind to the greatness of His power. We take so much for granted even in nature. How is it that the same sod and water produces the sweetness of an orange and the bitterness of a lemon? How can soil and water produce a beet and onion alongside each other? The substance of both come directly from the same water and sod! How can a brown cow, eat green grass, which turns into white milk, becomes yellow butter and is eaten by a man who has red hair!

My prayer is, "Open my eyes that I might continually see the genius of Your mind displayed in creation!" If we could walk in such a spirit of illumination, we would walk around awestruck! We would continually worship God. We would be filled with such faith, we would see no problem too great for our God. We would say, "Ah, Lord God! (as the revelation of His greatness astounds us), Behold You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You!"

Such knowledge of His power and ability would

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cause us to have faith that produces joy, even at the Red Sea, even in the Lion's den. We can look at the world with all its problems, sins and pains, and say, "One small breath of Almighty God's Spirit, and our nation can be saved. If the mere tip of the finger of God is for us, nothing can be against us. We can run toward the enemy saying, "Who are you that you should defy the armies of the Living God!" Be encouraged soldier, whatever trial you are going through at the present time, realize that it is God who is at work within you to will and do of His good pleasure. He is teaching your hands to war, so that a bow of bronze is broken by your arms. He has the ability and the wisdom to deliver you from it, or take you through it, so that when you have been tried you will come forth as gold.

Early in 1993, in Auckland, New Zealand, a small group of people moved into an old jewelry factory to conduct their church services. After cleaning the building they were left with a pile of dust, which someone had the good sense to take to a gold refinery. *It yielded \$8,500 in gold dust!* When the refinery asked if they could burn the carpet, the church group gave them a piece which was 12 feet square. It produced \$3,500 worth of gold. They also vacuumed \$350 worth of gold dust from the ceiling.

God is allowing the heat of trials only to produce in you that which is precious in His sight. Charles Spurgeon said, "Let satan do what he may, he only

speeds on the cause which he desires to hinder."

There is no way the enemy can defeat those soldiers who trust in God, their victory is their faith in Him. The soldier truly stands in a victorious spirit, who can say "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

Think of that for a moment. Most of us need to have peace of mind while we are eating, and yet the Psalmist said that God furnished a table for him right in the midst of the enemy. That victory, that level of triumph, comes directly proportionate to the amount of faith we have in God.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

STANDARD BATTLE PROCEDURE

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

God is calling for each soldier in His army to become personally involved in the battle, to win this world for Christ. No longer can we rely solely upon great preachers to do our fighting for us. Billy Graham said, "Mass crusades, to which I have committed my life will never finish the job; but one to one will."

Great financial risks are involved in holding large crusades. To speak of hundreds of thousands and even millions of dollars is not uncommon.

Another major hurdle is how to get the sinner away from his television set on a cold Sunday night. If I was a non-Christian, I would far rather stay at

home with my family in the warmth and comfort of my own home, in front of the T.V., than go and hear some preacher.

The answer is for each of us to be laborers right in our workplace, to rub shoulders with those in the harvest field. Listen to these wise words from a man with much experience, Dr. R. A. Torrey:

"I can give a prescription that will bring revival to any Church, community or city on earth:

1. Let a few Christians get thoroughly right with God. This is a prime essential. If it is not done, the plan will fail.

2. Let them give themselves to prayer for revival until God opens the heavens and comes down.

3. Let them put themselves to prayer for revival until God opens the Heavens. That is all. This is sure to bring revival. I have given it all around the world. It has been taken in many Churches and communities and in no instances has it ever failed."

I would add only one thing that may not have needed saying in R.A. Torrey's day. Once we have prayed, we need to put legs to our prayers and in obedience, take the Gospel to every creature.

God Honors Desire

I am often asked if I was specifically "called" to preach the Gospel. I was, and so has every other

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Christian been called. If we are following Jesus, it should be because He has called us to be "fishers of men." If we are not, it is probably because we are following at too great a distance and can neither see His example nor hear His voice. Those who follow close to the Master will know His voice, obey it, and witness of the salvation of God.

The first day I went to the local square to speak, a Christian came up to me and began to chat. He had no idea what I was about to do, and casually, "Hardly worth preaching the Gospel to this bunch!" How subtle the enemy is.

If you are going to do anything for the Kingdom of God, be ready for a sly attack which so often comes through a Christian brother or sister, the place least expected. Satan spoke directly through Peter in an attempt to stop Jesus doing the will of the Father, and it was David's elder brother who tried to discourage him from slaying Goliath.

A zealous Christian told me of a conversation he had with his own mother which totally discouraged him from seeking the lost. She was his own flesh and blood, and he listened to her speak nothing but discouragement for over an hour. She told him of his foolishness in wanting to preach when he hadn't even been through a seminary. Who was he to go around telling people about their need of Christ, when he wasn't even trained to be a minister! Those words of death went right into his heart and

discouraged him to a point where he lost his zeal, his direction, and his desire to do anything for the Kingdom of God. It was only when he gave himself to prayer that he realized satan's subtlety. He will stop at nothing to get you back into the barracks of your local church building, superglued to the pew worshipping Jesus and ignoring His will. He will use any mouthpiece available, and believe me, there are plenty of willing ones. Jesus said, "Watch!" He said, "What I say to you, I say to all, watch."

Satan will often withhold an attack until you are in a place of vulnerability. He will not strike when you are full of faith and power, but when you are tired, fasting, or carrying a problem on your shoulders.

He has no mercy. He will stomp on you when you are down, and dig his grimy heel into the back of your neck. He is the hater of your soul. Your downfall is his delight. Keep your shield held high and "watch!"

I love the word *encouragement*. Just seeing my friend boldly preach on the train in the Bronx filled my heart with courage. If you see the soldier in front of you firing his weapon and the enemy fleeing before his face, fear will flee from your face.

Robert Louis Stevenson said, "Keep your fears to yourself but share your courage with others." This was so clearly illustrated in the lives of Joshua and

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Caleb. They had a positive, hopeful, valiant courageous, optimistic spirit, often called "faith."

If we can't say something positive, we should take a leaf out of the book of Joshua and keep our mouths shut. The children of Israel were told not to speak as they walked around the walls of Jericho. What they were doing was foolish, opening themselves to the ridicule of the enemy. It would have been hard to say anything positive, but when they did say something, it brought the downfall of the enemy, not their brethren.

Recognize that if you are going to do something for the Lord, satan will be aiming his fiery darts at you.

Enemy Propaganda

The devil is the progenitor of falsehood. He is a compulsive liar. He is the master of deception, and a major tactic is to tell the Christian that to witness for Christ is difficult. He would have us believe that it would be less fearful to be a dentist for hungry ferocious lions, *before* the days of injections.

With all the years I have had preaching to hardened, anti-Christian, blasphemous, foul-mouthed sinners, one would think I have conquered fear, but I still have to fight the fear of man when it comes to personal witnessing. But when I speak "as I ought to speak," I have found that my fears were totally unfounded and realize that once again, I have

entertained enemy propaganda. Multitudes of Christians suffer from this disease—they know that they should be true and faithful in their witnessing, yet day after day passes by, and so do sinners on their way to Hell.

The fear of man in our lives is nothing more than a compromise with the enemy. We are listening to his perversions. To say that I am unable to witness is to say that God's promise of help is nothing but an empty lie. If I say, "I can't" when God's word says, "I can do *all* things through Christ who strengthens me," and I choose the former, I am choosing a lie, rather than believing the truth.

Ecclesiastical Locomotive

I make no apology for the length of the following quote from a sermon by that mighty soldier of the turn of the century, Billy Sunday:

"I believe that lack of efficient personal work is one of the failures of the Church today. The people of the Church are like squirrels in a cage. Lots of activity, but accomplishing nothing. It doesn't require a Christian life to sell oyster soup or run a bazaar or a rummage sale.

"Many churches report no new members on confession of faith. Why these meager results with this tremendous expenditure of energy and money? Why are so few people coming into the Kingdom? I will tell you—there is not a definite effort put forth to persuade a definite person to receive a

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definite Savior at a definite time, and that definite time is now.

"I tell you the Church of the future must have personal work and prayer. The trouble with some churches is that they think the preacher is a sort of ecclesiastical locomotive, who will snort and puff and pull the whole bunch through to glory.

"A politician will work harder to get a vote than the Church of God will work to have men brought to Christ. Watch some of the preachers go down the aisles. They drag along as if they had grindstones tied to their feet.

"No political campaign is won solely by a stump speaker or spell-binder on the platform. It is won by a man-to-man canvass.

"Personal work is the simplest and most effective form of work we can engage in. Andrew wins Peter. Peter wins three thousand at Pentecost. A man went into a boot and shoe store and talked to the clerk about Jesus Christ. He won the clerk to Christ. Do you know who that young man was? It was Dwight L. Moody, and he went out and won multitudes to Christ. The name of the man who won him was Kimball, and Kimball will get as much reward as Moody. Kimball worked to win Moody and Moody worked and won a multitude. Andrew wins Peter and Peter wins 3,000 at Pentecost. That is the way God works. Charles G. Finney, after learning the name of any man or woman, would invariably ask: 'Are you a Christian?' There is no one here who has not drag

enough to win somebody to Christ.

"Personal work is a difficult form of work, more difficult than preaching, singing, attending conventions, giving your goods to feed the poor. The devil will let you have an easy time until God asks you to do personal work. It is all right when you sit in the choir, but just as soon as you get out and work for God, the devil will be on your back and you will see all the flimsy excuses you can offer for not working for the Lord. If you want to play into the hands of the devil begin to offer your excuses.

"There are many people who want to win somebody for Jesus and they are waiting to be told how to do it. I believe there are hundreds and thousands of people who are willing to work and who know something must be done, but they are waiting for help; I mean men and women of ordinary ability. Many people are sick and tired and disgusted with just professing religion; they are tired of trotting to church and trotting home again. They sit in a pew and listen to a sermon; they are tired of that, not speaking to anybody and not engaging in personal work; they are getting tired of it and the church is dying because of it. People should wake up and win souls for Jesus Christ.

"I want to say to the deacons, stewards, vestrymen, prudential committees, that they should work, and the place to begin is at your own home. Sit down and write the names of five or ten friends,

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and many of them members of your own church and two or three of those not members of any church; yet you mingle with these people in the club, in business, in your home in a friendly way. You meet them every week, some of them every day, and you never speak to them on the subject of religion; you never bring it to their attention at all; you should be up and doing something for God and God's truth. There are always opportunities for a Christian to work for God. There is always a chance to speak to someone about God. Where you find one that won't care, you'll find 1,000 that will.

"If it is beneath your dignity to do personal work then you are above your Master. If you are not willing to do what He did, then don't call Him your Lord. The servant is not greater than the owner of the house. The chauffeur is not greater than the owner of the automobile. The servant on the railroad is not greater than the owners of the road.

"Certainly they are not greater than our Lord Jesus Christ.

"It requires an effort to win souls to Christ. There is no harder work and none brings greater results than winning souls.

"You will need courage. It is hard to do personal work and the devil will try to oppose you. You'll seek excuses to try and get out of it. Many people who attend the meetings regularly now will begin to stay at home when asked to do personal work. It will surprise you to know some lie to get

out of doing personal work.

"Personal work is the department of the church efficient to deal with the individual and not the masses. It is analogous to the sharp shooter in an army so dreaded by the opposing forces. The sharpshooter picks out the pivotal individual instead of shooting at the mass. The preacher shoots with a siege gun at long range. You can go to the individual and dispose of his difficulties. I shoot out there two or three hundred feet and you sit right beside people." (from, "Billy" Sunday by William T. Ellis)

We often disguise the fear of man so that his presence is less convicting. We call it "embarrassment," "shyness," or we "don't want to seem offensive." If we are "self-conscious" rather than God-conscious, we are not "free indeed."

When I was once asked to take a three day crusade at a university, I was told by a member of the committee that the Christian Union "had a good name in the university." I soon found out why. They preferred that we didn't use our literature, which exposed the demonic aspect of heavy rock music, touched on the abortion issue as well as stating the Scriptural attitude to homosexuality. I was told that homosexuality was a "touchy issue." I unwillingly submitted myself to their authority and had the three days of meetings. At the end of the third day, I asked the crowd of about 200 people how many they knew the Lord *and found that almost all of them were*

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Christians. I left that meeting determined never again to submit myself to such a committee.

A month earlier I was at another university, and this time there was no committee. A group of Christians had given out our literature, and by the time I appeared, the students were so angered, they were tearing down posters advertising my visit.

Just before I was due to go into the main hall, I was shown a letter written by the local chaplain. He stated that as university chaplain, he wanted it to be known that he had nothing to do with the invitation for me to speak at the university. He stated that he thought that I would turn people away from "true Christianity," then he listed a number of points of contention. My immediate thought was no one would turn up to the meeting. When I tried to find a "closet" to encourage myself in God, I couldn't even find one.

I was then called for, and ushered into the auditorium. To my delight, there were about 500 students packed into the room. For the next forty minutes I had the joy of preaching sin, righteousness and judgment, and can say that over the years I thought I'd seen an anti-Christian spirit, but I hadn't seen anything compared to that day. I had never seen such a unified spirit of hate. If there had been stones handy, I am sure I would have followed close on the heels of Stephen. There were homosexuals, lesbians, pro-abortionists, dope-freaks, all soaked in

the most blasphemous, foul language imaginable. Here were our future doctors, lawyers and politicians.

The next day at least 800 students (and one chaplain) packed into the hall, and I had another opportunity to preach God's Word to those precious people, and they were there because the young Christians had the guts to make an uncompromising stand for the Gospel. They shook off the shackles of fear of rejection. What a colorful contrast to committees of cowering, cringing Christians! The "fear of man brings a snare," and is a victory for the enemies of righteousness. But those who fear God enough to obey Him, will not only find that He opens doors for them, but they will also find an oil of joy above their fellows.

At another so-called learning institute, I told the Christian Union that I would be speaking on the subject of "The Perversion of Homosexuality."

Two days before the meeting, the person in charge called and said that the committee had told him that if I spoke on that particular subject, they would stop any financial grants from getting through to the Christian Union. We decided that we would go ahead as planned, and as far as we were concerned, *the whole lot of them could go to Heaven!*

Look at this further quotation from the publication about the ministry of Billy Sunday:

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"Mr. Sunday reached a powerful climax when he described the possibilities of the Judgment Day, and the efforts of the evil one to lead in to the dark, abysmal depths, the souls of men who have been popular in the world. To those who have accepted Christ, the Savior will appear on that Day as an advocate at the Heavenly throne and the saved ones can turn to the devil and say:

'Beat it, you old skin flint. I have you skinned to a frazzle. I have taken Jesus Christ and He's going to stand by me through all eternity.'"

It takes courage to bring up the subject of Judgment Day when witnessing or preaching, but we have the help of God, and if we really care we will warn the world.

What I normally do is share my own testimony by saying how, as a non-Christian, I judged my standard by the standard of men. I didn't realize how high God's standard was. I often tell a story of a little girl who remarked to her mother how clean some sheep looked against the green grass. Then, as snow began to fall, this same girl remarked how dirty the sheep looked against the white snow. I tell them that if they compare themselves with the standard of other people, they may look reasonably clean, but if they compare themselves with the snow-white righteousness of the Law of God, they will see themselves as unclean, desperately needing God's cleansing and forgiveness. It is essential to know how to use the Law effectively. Most

Christians today don't even know what the Ten Commandments are . . . do you? Can you say with the Psalmist, "Oh how I love Your Law, it is my meditation day and night"?

When I speak at different churches, I often make my way to the Sunday school and speak to the children before I minister in the main service. I say that I will give one dollar for each Commandment that any child can recite. Often I only have to part with one or two dollars. Yet, our children should be soaked in the knowledge of right and wrong, and the Law is God's direct ordinance of morality.

Do you understand why the Commandments were given?—as a mirror to show us our true state before Almighty God. In the story of the little girl, the snow gave her a standard by which she could measure what clean and unclean was. Until the snow fell, she was deceived as to what real purity was. If we don't let the snow of the Law of God fall upon the sinner, he will have no gage by which to measure himself. "All have sinned" does not tell them *how much* they have sinned; the Law does.

How weak and fickle much of our preaching is, compared to men of the past who knew how to use the weapon of the Law. Charles Spurgeon said:

"Sometimes we are inclined to think that a very great portion of modern revivalism has been more a curse than a blessing, because it has led thousands to a kind of peace before they have

known their misery; restoring the prodigal to the Father's house, and never making him say, 'Father, I have sinned.' How can he be healed who is not sick? or he be satisfied with the Bread of Life who is not hungry? The old-fashioned sense of sin is despised and consequently a religion is run up before the foundations are dug out. Everything in this age is shallow. Deep sea fishing is almost an extinct business so far as men's souls are concerned. The consequence is that men leap into religion and then leap out again. Unhumbled they came to the Church, unhumbled they remain in it, and unhumbled they go from it."

Jesus said the enemy is the one who sows tares among the wheat (Matthew 13:25). With today's Gospel, he doesn't need to, we do that for him. How aptly Spurgeon describes so many of our "converts."

So our job is to lay the righteousness of the Law clearly before the sinner. What we are attempting to do, with God's help, is show the sinner that he is destitute, without God (Ephesians 2:12), without Christ (Ephesians 2:12), without hope (Ephesians 2:12), without strength (Romans 5:6), and without excuse (Romans 1:20). We neither condemn nor condone, but we are seeking to convict then convert. To do this, learn the essence of the Law of God.

Reason of Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment

I sat down and looked around the scene. Three people were talking together and I didn't feel

comfortable approaching them to witness to them. As a passerby passed by, one of them asked, "Got a light?" and held up a cigarette. The passerby didn't have a light. The would-be cigarette smoker glanced at me, but decided not to ask for a light. Another passerby passed by matchless. As the young man looked at me, it suddenly struck me, "I've got a light, and I'm gonna let it shine," so I called him over. As he held out his cigarette, I said, "Let me show you this first," and gave him a tract, then spent some time giving this man light for his darkened soul. As I did so, I did some sleight-of-hand, which attracted another four men, who asked if I would do an encore. I did, then witnessed to them using the Law to bring light to them. One of them said, "That's really neat. I have never had anyone take the time to sit down and explain this to me." The Commandment is a lamp, and the Law is light (Proverbs 6:23).

The fields are white unto harvest, but if we will not pick up the sickle of the Law, we will not cut deep into it. If we continue using man-made methods, we will continue to reap stony-ground hearers. A quick study of scripture reveals that the Apostles did not pray the sinners prayer with every listener. Paul "reasoned" with Felix. He did not tell him that Jesus loved him. He reasoned of the three things that convict the world; of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Paul preached future punishment by the Law, and Felix "trembled." To fail to preach

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future punishment is to enlist potential deserters into the ranks of the Army of God. *Before I could walk with peace of mind with a soldier behind me wielding a bayonet-fixed, loaded rifle, I would want to know for certain that he was on my side.* His decision to enlist would not convince me, nor his uniform or his boastings. Before I put my faith in him, I want to know his spirit, his heart—does he love the country he is fighting for? Does he believe in the cause? Is he willing to die for it?

Listen to George Whitefield speak on this subject:

"I am glad you know when persons are justified. It is a lesson I have not yet learnt. There are so many stony-ground hearers, that receive the Word with joy, that I have determined to suspend my judgment till I know the tree by its fruits ... The way the Spirit of God takes, is like that we take in preparing the ground; do you think any farmer would have a crop of corn next year unless they plow now; and you may as well expect a crop of corn on unplowed ground, as a crop of grace, until the soul is convinced of its being undone without a Savior. That is the reason we have so many mushroom converts, so many people that are always happy! happy! happy! and never were miserable; Why? Because their stony ground is not plowed up; they have not got a conviction of the Law; they are stony-ground hearers; they hear the Word with joy, and in a time of temptation, which will soon come after a seeming or real conversion,

they fall away. They serve Christ as the young man served the Jews that laid hold of him, who, when he found he was likely to be a prisoner for following Christ, left his garments, and so some people leave their profession. That makes me so cautious now, which I was not 30 years ago, of dubbing converts so soon. I love now, to wait a little, and see if people bring forth fruit; for there are so many blossoms which March winds you know blow away, that I cannot believe they are converts till I see fruit brought forth. It will do converts no harm to keep them a little back; it will never do a sincere soul any harm."

While we rejoice over "decisions," Heaven reserves its rejoicing for *repentance* (Luke 15:10).

Don't Fear Fear

The thing that motivated Christian to search for salvation in *Pilgrim's Progress*, was fear of the judgment to come:

"In this plight, therefore, he went home, and restrained himself as long as he could, that his wife and children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because this his trouble increased. Wherefore at length he brake his mind to his wife and children and thus he began to talk to them. O my dear wife, said he, and you the children of my bowels, I, your dear friend, am in myself undone by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me; moreover, I am for certain informed that this our city will be burned with fire from

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heaven; in which fearful overthrow both myself, with thee my wife and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except (the which yet I see not) some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered.

"I saw also that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because (as I perceived) he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming to him, and asked, Wherefore dost thou cry?

"He answered, Sir, I perceive, by the book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that come to judgment; and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second.

"Then said Evangelist, why are you not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils? The man answered, Because I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall fall into Tophet. And, sir, if I be not fit to go to prison, I am not fit to go to judgment, and from thence to execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.

"Then said Evangelist, if this be thy condition, why standest thou still? He answered, Because I know not whither to go. Then he gave him a parchment roll and there was written within, Flee from the wrath to come."

We must not fear making reference to the Judgment! This is the climax of the ages. It is an

event that the very creation cries out for, from the blood of Abel, that calls for vengeance to the last injustice of this age. God loves justice ... and He will have it:

"Let the Heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all its fullness; Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the wood will rejoice before the Lord, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" (Psalm 96:11-13, italics added).

Judgment is the most "reasonable," rational, logical thing there can be. We need to appeal to the reason of the sinner. Judgment makes sense. Surely when God sees that 98% of all street crimes in New York never come to justice, He cares. Surely, the Creator of the sun, the moon, the stars, flowers, birds and trees has a sense of right and wrong. When God sees a man like Hitler slaughter literally millions of innocent people, is He stirred, or hasn't He as much sense of goodness as has man? Is it only man who deals out fines and imprisonment for crimes? The very reason mankind has a court system is because deep within his fallen nature, he still has a sense of right and wrong. It is there because he is made in the image of God.

Preaching Judgment by the Law is like a light shining upon the dark, unregenerate mind. It is

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powerful because it is reasonable! It will cause him to tremble, as did Felix. How we must warn them! How great will be the terror of that Day:

"God is a just Judge, and God is angry at the wicked every day. If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His Sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready" (Psalm 7:11-12).

God will bring every work to Judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil (Ecclesiastes 12:14). It is appointed to man, once to die, and after this the Judgment. Every idle word a man speaks, he will give an account thereof in the Day of Judgment. How can we, as lights to this generation, say that we are free from their blood if we don't warn them of the reality of Eternal Justice! How can we expect to receive the commendation, "Well done, you good and faithful servant" if we don't serve God faithfully? We have such an awesome responsibility. Someone sent me this poem, which says what I am trying to say:

*My friend, I stand in judgment now,
and feel that you 're to blame somehow.
On earth I walked with you by day,
and never did you show the way.
You knew the Savior in truth and glory,
But never did you tell the story.
My knowledge then was very dim.
You could have led me safe to Him.
Though we lived together, here on earth,
you never told me of the second birth.*

*And now I stand before eternal Hell,
because of Heaven's glory you did not tell!*

(Anon)

Break The Hard Heart

It was John Newton, the converted slave trader who wrote "Amazing Grace," who said, "My grand point in preaching, is to break the hard heart, and to heal the broken one." The Law breaks the hard heart and Grace heals the broken one. You can tell if someone is ready for Grace by the fact that their mouth will be stopped. They will not seek to justify themselves, instead they will acknowledge their guilt. If they can personally appropriate Psalm 51, then they are ready for Grace. If they have no sense of their sinfulness to a point of repentance, and you are able to "get a decision," you will probably deliver a premature, still-born baby.

The fruit of "Jesus loves you" evangelism was epitomized recently while preaching in the open air. I touched on the subject of homosexuality, when a young lady verbally defended it. She was in her mid-twenties, very attractive, long blond hair, tastefully made up, and impeccably dressed. However, I detected that the voice tone was slightly lower than one would have expected from such a lady, so I asked, "*Are you a guy?*" The voice answered, "Transsexual." Then it said sleazily, "*And I've asked Jesus into my heart, darling, and God loves me just the way I am.*"

The god of this world may love him just the way he is, but the God of Heaven says, "Let everyone that names the name of Christ, depart from iniquity."

Come and Hear The Good News

Imagine if the local police force decided to have an amnesty, in which all criminal charges would be dropped against those who had broken the law, if within a certain period of time they would present their weapons at the local police station. After the offer of amnesty, there would be a massive bust in which every criminal would be rounded up and charged for their crimes. How would the police tell the law-breakers of the good news of the amnesty?

After some discussion, they decide to put advertisements in the police column of the local newspaper. Their reasoning is that law-breakers read their column. The next move is to spend a great deal of finance to make the local police station attractive.

They have the prison bars chrome-plated, have the cells carpeted with luscious carpet, and piped music played throughout the cells. Notices are then put outside the station saying, "Come and hear the good news." They don't mention that they have information that will lead to the biggest bust in the history of the state. Mysteriously, few law-breakers are game enough to make their way down to the station to hear what this good news is about.

Of course, we know that the police are not

mindless enough to think that anyone is going to visit a police station when they are guilty of breaking the law, yet this is the mentality of modern evangelism. A church budding is the last place a sinner wants to frequent, so we have reasoned that we must make it more attractive to him, and *entice* him in to hear the "Good News."

Let's now see if we can learn from the police as they use a more realistic strategy. They do not remain within the budding, *but bring their message out to the public* in this manner:

THE PENALTY FOR POSSESSING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WEAPONS IS A FIVE YEAR IMPRISONMENT ... If you surrender your weapon within seven days we will not lay charges. REMEMBER, FIVE LONG YEARS—don't be foolish, take advantage of this amnesty now!

The police merely preach future punishment to law-breakers, and it gets results!

True conversion not only takes from the enemy, but adds to the ranks of the Army of The Lord ... a two-fold victory, something the enemy isn't too happy about. Think of how God dealt with Saul of Tarsus.

I'm Glad You Asked

I once asked God to use me on a particular day for the extension of His Kingdom, but I couldn't see how He could, as all I had planned was to stay at

home all that day and proof-read a new publication.

A neighbor had left her key with us, and asked if we could let a repair man into her home, and he arrived as I was praying.

As we chatted, we moved from the natural to the spiritual and I casually asked if he had been born-again. He stunned me with the reply, "I'm glad you asked that!" He then showed me a book he had been reading called "Hungering after God," which he borrowed from the public library. A few minutes later he accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God had heard my unbelieving prayer, and given me a Nicodemus, so don't get discouraged if you seem to be continually sowing, God will occasionally let you reap, if you are faithful. More than often, I am sowing in tears.

On a recent flight to Dallas, I sat next to a defense attorney who didn't think God would punish sin. I reasoned with him about the fact that if a judge in Miami turned a blind eye to the crimes of the Mafia, he would be a corrupt judge, and should be therefore brought of justice himself. Between 1978 and 1988, there were 63,000 unsolved murders in the United States. That means there are at least 63,000 murderers walking around in America who have got off free. If God turns a blind eye to what they have done then God is corrupt by nature and should be brought to justice himself. I think the man saw that his god was one made in his own image.

After talking for some time, I said, "Let me present my case." He agreed, so I took him through three of the Commandments, which he acknowledged he had transgressed. He still tried to justify himself and cited a case he had been involved in the previous day.

He said that the judge asked two teenage criminals if they were sorry for their crime. They said they were, so the judge was lenient with them. He then pointed out that if they weren't sorry, he would have given them a very stiff sentence. The attorney actually built a case against himself. I told him that he was a guilty criminal in God's sight, and that if he kept trying to justify himself, he would be found guilty and end up in Hell.

If he would be sorry, repent and put his faith in Jesus, God could show him mercy because of the work of the cross. I gave him a book, and we parted on very good terms.

I embarrass Sue whenever I tell her what I do when I fly. I can understand why. I usually get on a flight, wait until all the passengers have boarded, pull out two or three blankets and at least eight pillows from the overhead lockers, make a bed, then snooze. I have got to a point where my comfort is more important than what other passengers think of me.

After the Dallas flight, I waited down the back of

another plane, watching as an endless stream of passengers poured on board. I could see one row of three seats halfway down. While I waited, I talked with the flight attendant, who happened to be a Christian. Suddenly, a tall man with snowy-white hair stood up and spoke to her. She walked down the plane, came back and spoke to him. He then walked down the aisle and stole my potential bed! When the flight attendant realized that she had given away my seats, she apologized. It didn't really worry me, because I earlier surmised that if I didn't get a seat, God wanted me to witness to someone next to my designated seat.

I made my way back to my designated seat and found that someone had taken it. Controlled panic. I now had no seat! Suddenly, I saw one and plunked myself in it. The young man next to me was in his early twenties, and he didn't hesitate to begin a conversation with me. He was in the army, and said how he was tired of training. He wanted combat. When I asked him if he was afraid of getting killed, he said, "No." Why?—"Because of God." When I asked if he was a Christian, he said, "I'm a protestant." Further on in the conversation, he said how he had been on an earlier flight in a small plane and he was very scared. In fact, when telling me, he used the name of Jesus in blasphemy. I tucked that piece of ammunition away for later on in this battle that God had so evidently directed me to.

When we touched on Christian things later on in the conversation, he admitted he had broken a number of the Commandments. When I told him he had blasphemed the name of Jesus, he was very concerned. He knew he had done that in the past, but had determined never to do it again.

Rarely do I find sinners admitting their sins so readily. After we had been through the Law and the cross, spoken of justification by faith alone, he said that he was without excuse, that he would be a fool not to get right with God. He said that he had gained so much understanding through our conversation. That is the function of the Law—to be a schoolmaster, to bring the knowledge of sin, to prepare the heart for Grace.

Be alert to the tactic of the enemy to sidetrack with "red herrings," or "rabbit trails." Occasionally sinners have a genuine difficulty with, "Darwin's theory," "hypocrites in the Church," etc., but in most cases they are nothing but red herrings. We are called to be fishers of men, not herrings. Red herrings are the "hedges" Jesus told us to go to. Sinners make hedges, behind which they try to hide from God, as did Adam. The best way to get to a sinner from behind a hedge, is to beat it with the rod of the Law. Flush him out so that he stands naked before his Creator.

When he says, "I don't believe in Judgment Day," just say, "That doesn't matter, you will still perish if

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you don't repent." A bullet will kill you, even if you don't believe in bullets. God's Word is sharper than a two-edged sword, even if the sinner doesn't believe it:

"... he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully ... is not My Word like a fire? says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29)

Look for your divine directive. No battle is easy. If you go into a conflict armed with the Law, the enemy will discharge fiery darts of discouragement, and if you don't have your shield of faith held high, they will find their mark. Early in 1994, I sat next to a man aiming to witness to him, and found that he had the warmth of an iceberg. My aim was not yet on God's target, so I moved my sights to a woman who made Mr. Iceberg seem sociably hot. Then I sat next to another man whose head was horribly scarred, his eye was disfigured and his arm was in a sling. After I discharged the cannons of God's Law, with a wide eye he confided that he was in a motorbike accident and his parents informed him that while he was in a coma (though he didn't recall it), he said that God had told him that He didn't want him to come to Him yet. He was *very* open and was obviously God's appointment for me at that time.

There is nothing wrong with the weapons God has given to the Church. If the ten cannons of the Ten Commandments are covered in dust, that's our

fault not God's. Dust them off, polish them up, move them forward, and aim them down the throats of those whose mouths are opened in rebellion against the heavens. Light the fuse ... then watch their faces turn pale. Better is a little fear in the Day of Grace, which drives the sinner to the cross, than no fear until the Day of Wrath, which will drive the sinner into the Lake of Fire.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

CHARACTER OF THE ENEMY

"... that you may be able to successfully stand up against all the strategies and deceits of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

One of the most vital keys in a war, is to know your enemy—his strengths, his weaknesses, his weapons, etc. Thank God, the work has already been done in this area for us. We need not send out reconnaissance (a military examination of tract by detachment to locate enemy or ascertain strategic features). The Word of God exposes every strength, weapon and weakness of the enemy.

In this chapter, we will closely study the methods of the other side, that we might know how to attack and be ready to defend ourselves when attacks come. To understand the full nature of our enemy,

we will look at his name and his activities according to Scripture.

First, he is called an accuser and a slanderer:

"... for the accuser of our brethren, he who keeps bringing before our God charges against them day and night, has been cast out!" (Revelation 12:10, Amplified Bible)

This is clearly illustrated in Job 1:9-11:

"So satan answered the Lord and said, 'Does Job fear God for nothing?' Have you not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

Satan is an accuser by nature. The word "devil" means accuser. This was epitomized once just after I had finished preaching in the open air. For nearly two years, a young lady (who was so demoniacally controlled, I was able to use her as a spiritual barometer to gage the anointing), regularly heckled me. Ninety percent of the time she did nothing else but accuse. I had just disembarked from my ladder when a woman handed me a carnation. I felt stupid standing there holding it so I passed it to a beer-drinking, tattooed young lady who looked as though no one had ever given her flowers. The whole incident, from my receiving the flower, to passing it

on, took about ten seconds. As the first lady handed it to me, my heckling lady friend shouted, "Aha, receiving flowers from strange women!" Then as I passed the flower onto Miss Tattoos, she yelled "*Ungrateful!*" There was no way I could win. That incident epitomizes the accusations of the devil.

A phrase that you may have heard in Christian circles is, "pleading the blood." This is a legitimate and effective weapon against the accuser. In a sense we are standing in the eternal court of Almighty God. Satan is the prosecutor (accuser); God is the Judge; Jesus is the counsel for our defense (Advocate); and we are the accused. Satan points his accusing finger toward us and calls for retribution. What do we plead ... innocent or guilty? The answer is neither. We are neither innocent, for we have transgressed the Law of God, nor guilty, for the blood of Jesus has washed our sins away. So, we plead "the blood." What we are doing in pleading the blood is saying, "Satan, the blood of Christ hasn't just covered the evidence of our sins; it has completely washed them away—our sins no longer exist. Our case will be dismissed for a lack of evidence!" We are able to say, " . . . for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me."

As long as we remain free from sin, satan has no grounds to accuse—we need never even feel guilty:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after

the flesh, but after the spirit" (Romans 8:1).

If satan isn't busy accusing you to yourself, you can be sure that he's busy slandering your name elsewhere. Jesus said, "Blessed are you, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake."

I find it hard to keep up with the enemy's lies. Years ago I was involved in drug prevention work, and heard that I was "Mr. Big" in the drug world, that I've done six years in prison, that I smoke dope, that I own two properties, that I own a very expensive car and that I had terminal cancer. Our attitude to all these things is to "rejoice and be exceedingly glad;" satan only fires his bullets at soldiers who are a threat to him.

If you hear a rumor about a brother or sister, defuse it if you can. Say to the person who is passing the poison, that you will do your best to find out the truth. You don't want to be an instrument of satan to discredit a fellow soldier of Christ.

Satan is also the blinder of the minds of men:

"And even if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Notice that the Scriptures speak of the Gospel as

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being light, and the sinner as being in darkness. This darkness of the mind is also substantiated by Ephesians 4:17,18:

"... having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

This is why it is so vital to use the Law of God when witnessing to a sinner, "For by the Law is the knowledge of sin." Remember that Paul said, "I had not known sin, but by the Law." As the sinner begins to see himself in the light of the Law of God, it gives him something to measure himself by. He begins to understand what sin is. He will only call for mercy when he understands that he needs to call for mercy. Satan hates Christians grasping why God gave His Law. He knows that when they work with the Holy Spirit and use the Law to convince and convict men of sin, mere will more soldiers enlisted in the Army of God. The decision to follow Jesus is not made in blindness, nor from an emotive response, but from a clear understanding of the issues of salvation.

Those who preach judgment, but fail to use the Law to give the sinner something to measure himself by, will either produce a spurious conversion or one who lacks gratitude. If Hell alone is preached, those who come to a decision do so solely out of fear, and not out of repentance. He

flees from the wrath to come but deep in his heart he considers God unjust. He doesn't see himself worthy of Hell because he hasn't seen sin as being "exceedingly sinful," which comes only by the Commandment (Romans 7:13). This state of deception hides from him the true nature of Calvary's cross. He fails to see it as an expression of God's love for undeserving sinners.

Satan is also a counterfeiter. He has created a massive religious system which masquerades as God's representative on earth:

"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light. This is why it is vital for us to exercise godly discernment. We are to judge prophecy, test the spirit, walk in wisdom, watch for wolves, mark those who cause division in the ranks, and to look for fruit of genuine conversion.

In 1 Peter 5:8, we are told that our enemy the devil is as a roaring (noisy) lion. Here he is called an adversary. The Greek word used is "antidikos," which primarily means an appointment in a law suit (accuser):

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"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

Notice that we are told to be sober and vigilant. In other words, we are to stay attentive to the workings of the enemy. When God chose Gideon's army for him, He chose soldiers who knelt by the water and cupped their hands to drink. He did not choose those who took their eyes off the enemy to drink.

We are exhorted to resist him, steadfast in the faith, taking consolation that other Christians are involved in the very same battle we are involved in.

Another tactic of the enemy is to bring division into the ranks by creating false impressions, and bringing about misunderstandings (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10). The way to deal with this is to have good lines of communication with each other.

In 1 Timothy Chapter 3, Paul speaks of the enemy laying "snares." These land mines often lie hidden beneath the surface of the path upon which we walk. To tread on one can be extremely injurious and can even destroy one's ministry. Paul's words to Timothy are, "He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."

Some years ago, I fell right into one of these snares. Sue and I had been flown to do a series of meetings and speak in a number of schools in a certain district. In those days, I would use the subject of drug abuse as a springboard to the Gospel by making out a list of questions such as, "Have you ever used drugs?", "Do you think Christianity is a legitimate answer to the drug problem?" There were about fifteen questions in all.

At the end of the week, a newspaper reporter interviewed me as to what I had been doing during the week. I told him that I had visited five schools and spoken on the subject of drug abuse. I named the schools that had allowed me to speak to their students. At the end of the interview, the subject of the survey arose. The reporter suggested that we count how many students had actually experimented with marijuana. I was amazed to find that one in four had used the drug at one time or another. We parted, then Sue and I left for our flight home.

The day after arriving home, I received a long distance call from the area in which I had ministered. It was a radio reporter, who opened the conversation with "We would be interested in asking you a few questions ... you've made headlines up here!"

It turned out that the reporter had entitled his story, "ONE IN FOUR IN SCHOOLS USE DRUGS!" Anti-drug campaigner, Ray Comfort

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stated today that one in four students used marijuana . . . " *Then he named the schools I had visited.* The article gave the distinct impression that I had left the schools who let me speak, and betrayed their trust by going straight to the newspapers. The story was also run on network radio and nationwide television.

Over the next few days I received a stream of letters from principals and Christians who spoke of things such as prudence and ethics. I ended up writing a mass of letters of apology in an attempt to clean up the mess I had made.

Perhaps the most used weapon in the enemy's arsenal is depression. Sometimes depression can come because of circumstance, and sometimes we can find ourselves depressed for no apparent reason. Whatever the case, whether natural or spiritual, the depressed Christian is a weak Christian. The joy of the Lord is his strength and when there is no joy, there is no strength. There are times that most of us as David, talking to our soul and asking why it is cast down. We know that we should rejoice, yet the weight of depression seems to stop us. For such a condition, I believe I have a remedy.

More than likely, the "natural" circumstance, which has caused us to be in a state of despondency, has a "spiritual" origin. The Scriptures tell us that we "wrestle not against flesh and blood." Satan wants to render us ineffective.

Let's say that someone has told me that "Brother Smith" has been offended by me. It's nothing I've said or done, he just doesn't like me, yet because I work with him I have to rub shoulders with him every day.

Suddenly, I find that I am thinking negative thoughts about this man. In fact, I can't stop thinking about it. I seem to be trapped by my thought-life and say, "I will not think anymore about the situation; I forgive him for his attitude. I put the whole situation out of my mind!" Then before I know it, I am chewing the whole thing over again. The more I say, "I will not think about it," the more it plagues me. I become depressed and lose my joy, and the last thing I feel like, is doing battle.

If you have had such an experience, take heart and take heed, this remedy works. When the enemy hurls the grenade of depression at you, throw it back at him with one of your own. Turn a negative into a positive.

This is how to prepare the explosive. Take a pen and paper and write down what you hope to achieve in God. Write down everything you think God would like to see happen in your life. Then write down everything you think satan would not like to see happen in your Christian walk.

Now shape those things into a positive prayer/confession. This will be mine for Brother

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Smith's situation:

"Satan, every time you come at me with negative thoughts, I am going to pray this positive prayer. Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. No weapon that is formed against me shall prosper and every tongue that shall rise against me in judgment, I shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. I have the righteousness of Christ, and because God is for me, nothing can be against me! I can boldly approach the throne of Almighty God and ask what I will, knowing that it shall be done for me. Thank you Lord for Your faithfulness. Right now, I ask in Jesus' name, that You make me an effective soldier for the Kingdom of God. Grant me a richer anointing upon my ministry. Let signs and wonders follow the preaching of Your Word. Open doors that I might take ground for the Kingdom. Make me a prayer warrior. Grant me a greater burden for the lost. Fill me with Your love, give me wisdom, and let my life glorify You in every way. I ask You to forgive me for my bad attitude towards Brother Smith. I pray that You will richly bless him and his family please. Give me a special love for him. Show me what I can do to express my love for this brother. Thank you Lord that these things will surely come to pass because You have said, 'All things whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.' In Jesus Mighty Name I pray, Amen."

Type or write down that prayer of affirmation, and appropriate it to your particular situation. Have

it photocopied three or four times, and keep one in your pocket, one by your bed and one in your car or at work. Read it aloud, if possible, every time your negative thought comes. This will have the effect of satan reminding you to pray that prayer. Every time that negative thought comes, it will be like a bell ringing saying, "How about praying that prayer of positive confession?" Instead of wearing you down, he will be building you up. You will be turning a negative into a positive. This works, but you must be diligent. Even if you find yourself thinking negatives straight after you have prayed the prayer. Just say, "So it's going to be hand-to-hand combat is it!" Grit your teeth and pray it again, and again. Soon you won't have to look at the paper. You will find yourself automatically praying the second that negative thought comes. And by the way, expect an answer to that prayer.

In closing this chapter, let's briefly look at other names and titles of the enemy. He is called the god and prince of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4, John 12:31). He seeks to hinder the work of God (1 Thessalonians 2:18). He is a liar, the father thereof and the inspirer of lies (John 8:44, 1 Peter 5:8). He is a murderer and a devourer (1 Peter 5:8, John 8:44). He is the promoter of pride (Genesis 3:5, 1 Timothy 3:6). He is the ruler of darkness (Acts 26:18, 2 Corinthians 6:14, 1 John 2:9-11). He is the stimulator of lusts (Ephesians 2:2-3). He is the suppressor of the Word of God (Matthew 13:38-39),

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and he is the tempter (Luke 4:1-13).

Thank God for His Word! Can you imagine trying to fight the enemy without this War Manual to expose satan's strategies?

Let any attempts by the enemy to discourage you, encourage you. They are actually a compliment to your potential in God. Early in 1984, God directed me to withdraw from street preaching to encourage evangelical outreach within the Body of Christ. After nearly a year without the expression of open air evangelism, I felt that I was beginning to dry up, so I decided to spend lunchtimes on Thursdays back on my ladder. As I embarked upon my inaugural oratory, a woman in her mid-sixties approached me, reached up, grasped my arm and asked, "What does it say in Hebrews 12 about chastening?" I quoted the requested portion of Holy Writ. She then asked, "What comes after that?" I said that I didn't know. Then she, in an angry tone said, "If ye be without chastisement, *then ye are bastards!*" As she did so, she began to hit me furiously. I grabbed her arm and said, "If you keep hitting me like this, it will draw me a big crowd!" That disgusted her and she walked away . . . it was so good to be back.

CONCLUSION: "KILL, STEAL AND DESTROY"

"Lest satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11).

The Bible warns us that "in the latter times some will turn away from the faith, giving attention to deluding and seducing spirits and doctrines that demons teach." We are living in a day when scripture is being fulfilled before our very eyes. The discerning Christian is not ignorant of the enemy's devices, but it would seem that many a soldier of the cross is easily deceived.

Some time ago, I was waiting to minister to a gathering of about 300 youths, most of them Christians. Just before I was about to speak, the local youth group put on a drama. To create the atmosphere, they turned down the lights and played

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some heavy rock music. It worked. The air was electric. A spotlight flashed onto an obvious prostitute, a drug addict ... suddenly in the darkness a scream came from the congregation. More screaming. *This wasn't part of the drama.*

A young man who had been into the rock scene began to manifest demons. As the lights were switched on, the youth, in a demonic fit flung himself across a table of my publications then onto the floor, still screaming and writhing. The congregation began to sing, "There's power in the Blood." The Pastor, somewhat taken back by the incident asked what he should do. I suggested a lively chorus. In the meantime, I changed my message to the "power of rock music."

I was told some months later that many of the "Christians" there that day, had their jackets zipped up to hide rock music T-shirts.

Satan has many ways and means by which he is attacking this generation. As we have seen in earlier chapters, rock music is only one of them. The Bible warns us that the enemy is subtle and will often resort to camouflage. The dictionary meaning of camouflage is a "disguise of guns, ships, etc.; affected by obscuring outline with splashes of various colors; use of smoke screens, boughs, etc. for same purpose; means of throwing people off the scent."

If you have had any dealings with the occult; if you've been harboring bitterness; or you've been into Dungeons & Dragons, Ouija boards, seances, heavy metal rock music, L.S.D., color therapy, fortunetelling, horoscopes, hypnotism, E.S.P., psychic powers, levitation, good luck charms, astroprojection, Transcendental meditation, etc., you need to renounce it or them from the heart. That means you pray a prayer of abandonment. Pray something like this:

"Satan, I totally renounce you and (name the area of the occult you were into). I disclaim it! I don't want it in my life! In Jesus' name, I submit to God and resist you and all your works. I am cleansed by the blood of Jesus. I close the door to satan and open myself to be completely possessed by the Holy Spirit. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen."

If you find yourself counseling someone who has been into the occult, be wary of prolonged demonic manifestation. When I have someone at the altar begin to manifest demons, I pray against the spirit, in Jesus' name; command it to tell the area of stronghold, then have the person pray a prayer of renunciation. Often one can determine the area of strong-hold through a few questions before prayer, i.e. "Do you honor your parents, have you been into the occult?, etc." If there has been a resentment, bitterness or some area of sin to allow a foothold for the enemy, there may be a scream or some sort of manifestation, but don't get caught up for hours

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praying for or arguing with the spirits. They are seeking to wear you down. More than once, Jesus told demons, "Hold your peace, and come out of him!" Just get straight into the prayer of renunciation.

Some time ago, a clean-cut, well-dressed Malaysian student asked me why his hands contorted when he went to prayer. I asked him if he had been into Buddhism and he said that as a child he had bowed to his grandmother's altars. As I began to pray he immediately his hands twisted and contorted, then he began to choke.

I led him in a prayer of renunciation, renouncing Buddhism, and satan. The moment he prayed, his hands went back to normal and peace came to his mind, because *he* closed the door. You can pray for someone until you are blue in the face (literally), and it will do no good if that person will not submit to God. That submission is what makes the enemy flee.

Pray that God will give you some of his creativity. If a rock concert is coming to town, don't just pray against it, but run to it and use it as an opportunity to preach. Write a tract using the group's lyrics as a springboard. Take a team to witness and preach. Generate enthusiasm. The word enthusiasm comes from two Greek words, "en" and "Theos"—"in" "God." If we are in God, we should be bursting with vibrant enthusiasm. Write bar tracts

using a picture of a happy boozier on the front and use it as an entrance into the discourse of Jesus with the woman at the well, not forgetting to warn of the future judgment.

If you are a female, don't let this fact hold you back from being involved in evangelism. Not too many people realize that the first evangelists were women. They took the Good News of the resurrection to the unbelieving, fearful, cringing disciples, who were hiding behind locked doors. It was the wisdom of God to tell two women of the resurrection.

Satan Claws Or Santa Claus?

Whatever your attitude is to Christmas, why not use it as a springboard for the Gospel? Get hold of a flat-decked truck, a large Christian, a Santa Claus suit from a hire service, a large bag full of candy, some musical instruments, carol songbooks and a megaphone. On Christmas eve, or the proceeding days, park on street corners, sing carols, have Santa throw candy to kids and preach the Gospel through the megaphone using Christmas as a springboard.

The words of some of the carols are asking for comment:

"Mild He lay His glory by, born that man no more may die. Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth ..."

We have parked outside bars and watched

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delighted smiling beer drinkers come outside to hear carols at Christmas. It was fascinating to see the changes of expression as the subject moved from Christmas to Christ. I will never forget the sight of a red-faced gentleman struggling to lift a large container of alcohol into the trunk of his car, while trying to keep both hands cupped over his ears.

We also put together a tract, with Santa "Ho hoing" on the front, bringing out the meaning of the birth of Jesus.

While we are on the subject of tracts, look at ten reasons why we should use them:

1. A tract can get inside a house and stay there.
2. It always catches people in the right mood because it speaks to them only when they read it.
3. It sticks to what it has to say and never argues back.
4. It never flinches or shows cowardice.
5. It is never tempted to compromise.
6. It never gets tired, discouraged or gives up.
7. It is very economical.
8. It can present the Gospel when we don't have time to do so.
9. It works while we sleep.
10. It can be mailed to places we can't go.

(Adapted from, *Soul Winning with Tracts*, by Dr.
Curtis Hutson)

I totally believe in the ministry of tracts. In fact, if you ever find me in public without a tract, I will give you \$20. That offer keeps me laden with tracts, so that when I see someone waiting somewhere, I'm always armed with ammunition.

Spiritual CPR

In mid 1993, a 4-year-old girl became sick with what her parents thought was merely a virus. As time passed, she became so ill, they rushed her to the nearby hospital. By the time she arrived, she was clinically dead, so doctors and staff immediately began emergency procedures on her now ceased heart. After 20 minutes, a special emergency team of ten people were called in and began a procedure where they put so much pressure with CPR on the child's flexible rib cage, it would have crushed that of an adult. After an incredible 41 minutes, the little girl's heart began beating again, making this the longest time in modern history that someone survived heart cessation, without brain damage. The reason the doctors did not give up when others thought the child was dead, was simply because they could see that the child's pupil's were still responding to light, which meant that the brain was not yet dead.

The sinner is dead in his sins, twice plucked up

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by the roots. There is no light in him, but don't ever give up on witnessing to him. Make it second nature to apply the pressure of the Law upon the ceased heart of the sinner. Remember that "the Commandment is a lamp and the Law is light" (Proverbs 6:23), so watch the pupils to see if there is response to the light, and let that be an encouragement to you, even if it is a cupping of his hands over his ears. The Ten Commandments are an emergency team of ten, working together to bring the dead sinner to a point where he will breathe in the life of the Gospel.

As soldiers of the cross let's pull together the virtues of those who have fought before us. Let us have the initiative of Jonathan, who said to his armor bearer:

"Come, and let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."

Let us have the courage of David, who *ran* toward Goliath saying, "You come to me with a sword, a spear 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!"

We need the insight of Elisha who saw the chariots of fire round about him; the confidence of Joshua, who knew that God would not fail or forsake him. We can know that, "The eyes of the

Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect (wholeheartedly) toward Him." His angel encamps round about those that fear Him, to deliver them.

We have been called to active service, but in the past we have been more concerned about the *order of* service, than our *orders for* service. We have been given battle orders from Headquarters to seek out those who are enemies of God in their minds through wicked works. We are to persuade and compel them to desert their futile and godless cause. They must defect before the Great Day of Battle, when the ultimate weapon of Eternal Justice will be unleashed against sinful mankind. On that Day there will be no neutral ground ... they will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Our message is "Surrender or be slain! Become a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven or forever be banished from its gates by the King of Kings, into everlasting fire!"

We have been sent as an emissary of peace to diplomatically plead with the ungodly to lay down their weapons, but in a world that hates its Creator, we are forced to precede the offer of peace with the threat of war. We must therefore mobilize as a mighty, militant, aggressive army, spearheading attacks, and through the power of prayer, ransack the barracks of Hell. We must penetrate the territories of the devil with the flag of righteousness

and the trumpet of victory resounding.

Retreat is not an option. If we fall back in battle, it is merely to muster forces and gain our spirit. We know that our strengths are the enemy's weaknesses. He crumbles before the powers of holiness, righteousness, justice, virtue, morality and truth.

Unending celestial rations of Living Waters and the Bread of Heaven fuel our fighting spirit. Our prayer life energizes our evangelism. We know that we mustn't be casual in prayer, or we will be a casualty in war. We give no place to the devil.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. The very finger of God has issued us with the Ten Great Cannons of His Law. The ground troops lie low while the cannons blast over their heads into the soul of the enemy. There is no greater artillery in our arsenal to break the spirit of the adversary, to weaken his lines of defense, to send terror into his heart. Their very presence generates strong confidence among the troops. As each cannon is discharged, it sends a message of fear and trembling, and the smoke of the wrath of Almighty God.

"No fear" is our battle cry, and boldness our battering ram. If God is for us, *nothing* can be against us. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us, and though a host shall encamp against us,

we shall not be afraid.

Silence is the enemy we will not let into our ranks. The walls of Jericho have been encompassed, it is time to shout.

With honor, we will prevail. By the Grace of our God, we will triumph over evil, for when the smoke of battle clears, that is the struggle for which we contest. We fight the *good* fight of faith, so muster your courage, lift up hands that hang down and straighten feeble knees. Call on the reserve of your valor, and thoroughly grasp the gravity of the cause for which you do battle—for the salvation of the sons and daughters of Adam.

We are not alone. Throughout the world are a loyal infantry who are strategically placed by God, unseen through the fog of distance, but they are fighting along with us. Veteran soldiers who have died before us encompass us as a crowd of witnesses to applaud our every advance. Don't break ranks, but strive for the unity of the Gospel, following the Captain of the Lord of Hosts who is leading the charge. Through our God we shall do valiantly, for He it is who shall tread down our enemies. Hear the soul stirring sound of the trumpet of the Lord, and let the stirred soul fire our flaming sword. If the high praises of God are in our mouth, let also the two-edged Sword be in our hand and the cry "Give me liberty to preach, or give me death" in our mouths.

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We require men and women who will fling caution to the wind, who will lead an invasion of teeth-gritted, uncompromising, unyielding, relentless, cut-throat evangelism. We must assault the enemy with spiritual snipers, guerrillas, storm-troopers and gunners, counter-attacking on every side, and if our blood be split on the soil of this sinful world for the cause of the Gospel, so be it. If our Commander catches our tears in a bottle, how much more will He value our blood on the earth? Determine in your heart to give the supreme sacrifice.

We crave soldiers who will lunge at the enemy and let him feel the cold steel of the sharp and two-edged Sword. We want chivalrous, undaunted, valiant, noble warriors—loyalists, patriots, within our garrisons to "contend for the faith" and intimidate satan and his hellish hordes. We must have soul-thirsty soldiers, self-sacrificial "kamikaze" Christians, who are not afraid to bear in their bodies the battle scars of the Lord Jesus ... who will give themselves, without reserve, to radical, revolutionary, God-pleasing militant evangelism!

"A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation" (Psalm 91:7-9).

Kill, Steal and Destroy

* * *

We have many unique tracts, books, and tapes by Ray Comfort to help you be more effective in your witness. We have a special video series to set you or your church on fire for God — call for a price list, or purchase directly with your credit card. This book is available at very low bulk copy prices — call us for details.

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AMERICAN SURVEY

If you find it hard approaching people with the Gospel, then try this, it works! Pick up a phone book, begin calling at the "A's," and when someone answers, politely say:

"Hello, we are doing a survey to find out America's relationship to the Ten Commandments. The results will be published in a book ... would you be willing to answer a few questions?"

With a tender conscience, just give a "Yes" or "No" answer to the following:

1. Have you ever broken the First by failing to put God first in your life—always loving Him with all your heart, mind, soul and strength? YES NO
2. Have you ever broken the Second Commandment by making a god in your own image—had your own beliefs about God rather than the One revealed in the Bible? YES NO
3. Have you ever used God's name in vain? YES NO
4. Have you always kept the Sabbath holy? YES NO
5. Have you always honored (valued) your parents implicitly? YES NO
6. Have you murdered (the Bible says that if we

hate someone, we commit murder in our hearts) YES NO

7. Have you ever committed adultery (includes premarital sex and lust)? YES NO
8. Have you ever stolen (the value of the article is irrelevant)? YES NO
9. Have you lied (fibs, white lies, half truths, etc. including these questions)? YES NO
10. Have you ever coveted (desired things that belong to other people—car, husband, wife, etc.)? YES NO

Then say, "Thank you very much for participating in this survey. As a token of our appreciation, we would like to either send you a Gospel of John or a brochure called 'Are You Good Enough To Go To Heaven?' Which would you prefer?"

Politely ask the person's name (you have their address in the phone book). Be sensitive to any needs (some elderly people may like a visitor, others may want to ask questions or just talk, or even attend your church). Send them a personal invitation along with the brochure "Are You Good Enough To Go To Heaven." These tracts are available from us at \$3 a hundred (\$1 S/H), Gospel's of John are 35 cents each. If you find someone who thinks they are an atheist, or an agnostic, send them our "Atheist Test" tract at \$5 for 50 (\$1 S/H). When you have the results, send them to:

AMERICAN SURVEY,
c/o L.W. Publications,
P.O. Box 1172,
Bellflower, CA 90706.

May God bless you in your labors for Him.

MILITANT EVANGELISM

-- Ray Comfort

This book is a war manual. It will fully equip you to "fight the good fight of faith," showing you how to conquer, subdue, and vanquish the enemy. You will learn how to pull out the pin of self-will and place yourself as a hand-grenade in the hand of Almighty God. It will train you to prevail in prayer, triumph over fear, and kindle the flame of a fighting spirit in the most timid of soldiers. It will expose strategies of the enemy, show you how to get the devil off your back, give you keys to victory and vital principles of strategic warfare. Never before in the history of the Church has there been a greater need for the truths expounded in this book.



"If this book does for others what it did for me, we will certainly have revival!" -- Barbara Counihan



Ray Comfort cut his teeth on the front line of battle, preaching open-air over 3,000 times. His ministry experiences range from speaking at Yale University, to preaching on a train in the New York Bronx. These experiences combine to outfit you as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. His ministry has been commended by David Wilkerson and Leonard Ravenhill; he has

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