

Kingdom of God

Citizenship Training

Loving and Obeying the LORD in
CHRISTIAN CommUNITY

Your Supernatural Kingdom Lifestyle - Training TM

MY EKLESIA Inc.
Kingdom Building Communities

Kingdom of God – Citizenship Training

Loving and obeying the Lord in CHRISTIAN CommUNITY

Cover Photo “*River of life*” (Revelation 22:1-2)

Editor and author’s note:

Some of this book was edited from published materials referenced in the end notes in each chapter. The balance of material was written down and edited during a season of prayer and fasting through inspiration of the Bible and the Holy Spirit. Abiding in Christ, P. James Dettman

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Kingdom of God – Citizenship Training

Loving and obeying the Lord in CHRISTIAN CommUNITY
Your Supernatural Kingdom Lifestyle – Training ™

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Introduction

God created mankind for His plans, purposes and with a divine destiny.

Our personal purpose and destiny is founded on loving and obeying the Lord Jesus wholeheartedly,

*Jesus said to him, “You shall **love the LORD** your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. 1*

And in the overflow of receiving and returning the great love of the Lord, we are also to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” 2

Our corporate calling from the Lord is to make disciples of all nations.

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.¹⁹ Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. 3*

Jesus told His disciples, including those alive today, to pray for the kingdom to come.

*Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.¹⁰ **Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth** as it is in heaven. 4*

The Kingdom of God comes to where the will of God is done!

“If you love me, obey my commandments. 5

Jesus said to seek the kingdom of God first.

*seek **first the kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 6*

The earthly teachings of Jesus centered on the kingdom of God.

Jesus said to proclaim, “The kingdom of God is at hand.”

Jesus said, “Repent. **The kingdom of God is at hand.**”⁷ This means to change the way that you think, because this kingdom of God reality is at hand, is available to believers in part right now.

Every salvation, healing, deliverance, miracle, sign and wonder occurring right now are manifestations of the kingdom of God here now and coming in fullness when Jesus returns.

Living in the kingdom

We need to not just understand the kingdom of God, but learn now how to *live* in the kingdom under the glorious rule and reign of the King of kings and Lord of lords our Lord Jesus Christ.

Kingdom of God citizens live in loving obedience to the commandments of God and the principles of the ‘Constitution’ of the kingdom of God that the Lord Jesus recorded in His “Sermon on the Mount” in the Gospel of Matthew, chapters 5-7 and throughout the Bible.

True Christians are saved and redeemed when they are **born again** of the spirit and receive a new *life in Christ*.

*Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are **born again**, you cannot see the Kingdom of God. 8*

*I have come that they may have **life**, and that they may have it more abundantly. 9*

When we believe in the free gift of salvation, the great mercy of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ over your life, then you are called to offer your life as **living sacrifices** to the Lord to be used for His plans His purposes and His glory.

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a **living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 10*

We learn and are transformed into a **new creation** through the Word of God in the Bible and the Spirit to live in the presence of God with a **renewed mind** that agrees with the **mind of Christ**.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 11*

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. 12*
Romans 12:2

*we have the **mind of Christ**. 12*

Kingdom of God culture

When you move to live in a new country, you need to learn how to live under a new government, culture, lifestyle and laws. Christians are to be preparing to move from these failing world systems and to live as blessed, loving and obedient citizens of the kingdom of God under the glorious rule and reign of the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ. These citizens will live a ‘Sermon on the Mount’ lifestyle. We are to possess and occupy the land until the Lord returns.

Christian unity in the Spirit

God created mankind in His image to be members of His family united in spirit with Him and with other believers.

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For **brethren to dwell together in unity!*** [13](#)

*For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to **create in Himself one new man** from the two, thus making peace, [14](#)*

*endeavoring to keep the **unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. [15](#)*

*that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that **they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. [16](#)*

Spiritual Warfare

We were all born into an epic spiritual war between the enemy of our souls, the ruler of this present darkness, and the Lord the King of kings of the kingdom of God and light.

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. [17](#)

The enemy of our souls and his demons are actively trying to come to deceive us and to destroy our lives, children, families, communities and nations.

The safest and most power place to live is in the will of God.

*Therefore **submit to God**. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. [18](#)*

We live in the will of God by submitting to God, surrendering our lives and will to Him, by wholeheartedly loving and obeying Him.

*Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. ³⁰And you shall **love the LORD** your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. [19](#)*

*“If you **love me, obey my commandments.** [20](#)*

We each must freely choose who we will serve; either the failing world systems or the will and purposes of God. Choose wisely as your eternal life depends on your choices and actions.

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise and be against the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, whatever is trusted in). 21

Jesus showed us how to live in a right relationship with Father God by submitting to His will.

*So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, **the Son can do nothing by himself**. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. 22*

*He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet **I want your will to be done, not mine.**” 23*

God is preparing His Bride of Christ to be joined together with Him as an equally yoked an everlasting covenant of love, communion and partnership ruling with Him as kings and priests in His unshakable everlasting kingdom of God.

The Millennial Kingdom

The kingdom of God will be manifested on earth in fullness when Jesus returns to earth to rule and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords over all the nations of the world.

*Only ask, and **I will give you the nations** as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession. 24*

This book explores what the Word of God has given to us to understand, and learn how to become loving obedient kingdom of God citizens while transforming our communities.

Love the Lord. This is the key that opens the door to the King and His kingdom of God.

As you read this book and apply these teaching by Jesus, remind yourself often,

“God loves me. I love God, therefore I am successful!

And by the grace of God and the power of His Holy Spirit I can obey and be blessed by God”

Enter into the kingdom of God that the Lord has prepared for those who love and obey Him.

*That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what **God has prepared for those who love him.**”¹⁰ But¹ it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God’s deep secrets. 25*

Your blessed and glorious walk with the Lord

Jesus promised:

... *“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”* 26

... **I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**” Amen. 27

Walking out your salvation and transformation is a process that takes time. All of your life is a journey into an everlasting covenant relationship of love, fellowship, communion and partnership with the Lord Jesus Christ as His Bride of Christ and as your Bridegroom King. He will rule and reign over all of heaven and the nations of the earth in the restored and fulfilled kingdom of God. We are all given a freewill choice to chose to pursue this relationship with the Lord...or not. Choose wisely and enjoy the journey of living and loving in the family, the community of the kingdom of God.

The Lord is actively restoring His kingdom of God on earth through the prayers and works of the faithful members of His Body of Christ.

... *He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,* ²¹ *whom heaven must receive until the times of **restoration of all things**, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.* 28

Prepare to live as a blessed citizen of the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

Pray, Listen and Obey the Lord. Learn how to walk and talk with Jesus as a blessed citizen of His everlasting unshakable kingdom of God.

Introduction – End Notes:

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Matthew 22:37-382. Matthew 22:39-403. Matthew 28:18-204. Matthew 6:10 NKJV5. John 14:15 NLT6. Matthew 6:33 NKJV7. Matthew 3:28. John 3:3 NLT9. John 10:10b10. Romans 12:1	<ol style="list-style-type: none">11. 2 Corinthians 5:1712. 1 Corinthians 2:16b13. Psalm 133:114. Ephesians 2:14-1515. Ephesians 4:2-616. John 17:2117. John 10:10a18. James 4:8-919. Mark 29-3020. John 14:15 NLT	<ol style="list-style-type: none">21. Matthew 6:24 AMP22. John 5:19 NLT23. Matthew 26:39 NLT24. Psalm 2:8 NLT25. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 NLT26. Hebrews 13:527. Matthew 28:2028. Acts 3:20-21
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CHAPTER 1

Good News of the Kingdom

Grace, Glory, and Global Reconciliation

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

*“And this **gospel of the kingdom** will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”* ¹

Matthew, chapters 24-25 contains Jesus’ premiere teaching on the end-times. In these scriptures, Jesus emphasized that there would be a time of both **unprecedented shaking** and also **unprecedented deception** just before His return to earth. However, Jesus also promised that, in the midst of this coming great trouble, the body of Christ would also experience **unprecedented victory and glory**. The message of the “**gospel of the kingdom**” would fill the earth just before the end. We see the response to this *gospel of the kingdom* message in Revelation 7 and 14, which is an **unprecedented harvest of souls** responding to the “**good news**” of the kingdom in the time of the greatest “bad news” and “false news” in all of history.

The Holy Spirit is awakening hearts across the earth to be “gospel of the kingdom” preachers that understand the heart of the Father, are empowered by the beauty of Jesus as the Great King, and are therefore able to preach this message with boldness, clarity, humility, and authority that enables the truth to both withstand great deception and help hearts flourish and grow strong in a time of great trouble. **Every believer alive will preach this message at the end of the age.**

Throughout redemptive history God has consistently proclaimed the undoing of the effects of the curse upon the human race and the land we dwell within. The fall of man impacted the individual before God, his society and nation, and nature itself. The whole earth was corrupted by the fall of man in the garden.

God’s desire has been, from the beginning of man’s story, the **redemption** of mankind and the **restoration** of the earth. Many ministries today focus on the aspect of the “good news” that involves the **redemption of mankind**. God’s agenda goes beyond the salvation of the individual, and the human race, and includes the **restoration of the whole world** into the place He intended for it to be from the beginning of creation.

The dream of God’s heart is that, “*The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and **all flesh will see it together**; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*” Isaiah 40:5 God desires to fill the whole earth with His glory, His power, presence, and personality. He longs to dwell with a people that fully express His power, presence, and personality from the place of a deep and intimate relationship with Him. God’s dream and plan is for His will and His kingdom to be expressed **without hindrance** and with **full agreement with human beings** on the earth as it is in heaven right now.

The gospel of the kingdom is the “good news” of *the coming fullness of a kingdom that will be used in the restoration and the reconciliation of all things and all men.* God’s agenda is:

“...having made known the mystery of His will, according to the good pleasure which He purposed within Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him. 2

God’s end-time agenda is to invade human beings, and then every nation of the earth, with the full measure of His glory, power, and love. He is going to reconcile *all men to Himself*, then *all men with one another*, and finally *all creation, the whole of the cosmos, with Himself*. The fullness of heaven is going to be joined with the fullness of the earth. Of the increase of His kingdom and His peace “*there will be no end*” 3

Jesus will sit upon the throne of Israel **as the fully human Son of God**, and establish His throne and kingdom with judgment and justice. The way that God fills the earth with the “supernatural” heavenly realm is through “natural” means in the earthly realm.

This “supernaturally natural” means by which Jesus will return and rule over the nations of the earth is both the ultimate expression of “the good news” and also the source of great conflict, shaking, and deception that will fill the earth just before His return.

The God who is distressed by the nations, who has a controversy with the nations related to their rebellion and rejection of His rule, does not solve His distress by miraculously and instantaneously causing the rebellious to simply disappear or be removed. The breaking in and coming of His kingdom in fullness is a long, slow process that began as a “mustard seed” nearly 2,000 years ago but is growing into a mighty tree at Christ’s return. The Father has chosen to “take His time” in growing His kingdom on the earth through the human race. He has chosen time and His transforming **process** over instant and immediate judgment.

This process culminates just before the *end* of this age, with filling of the earth with the message of **the good news of His kingdom**. The proclamation of the good news of His kingdom means “judgment and justice” *against* the wicked and unjust and *for* the poor and the oppressed of the earth. Daniel 7 gives us the picture of what happens on the earth after the Psalm 2 message is proclaimed. False kingdoms, false promises, and false hope arise to bolster the wicked and the unrighteous to take their stand against the Lord and His chosen King. The result is what scripture calls, “**The Day of the Lord**”.

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE FREE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS:

John the Baptist and Jesus were the first “*Gospel of the Kingdom*” preachers, proclaiming the good news that the long-awaited kingdom of glory and righteousness was “*at hand*”. The message that accompanied the “good news” was the call to *repent*. 4

Both John the Baptist and Jesus understood the fundamental problem of the human race: the holiness of God and full weight of how glorious He is. Both men understood the degree of glory

The Father longs to bring His people into. This is the difficulty of the Father's great plan: how can He take a sin-filled, disqualified people and make them a glory-filled people, qualified and able to commune with Him in His astonishing holiness?

The glory of the gospel is the truth of how God qualifies His people to be brought into His kingdom and His family, through the blood of His Son. As we turn from our loyalty to the sinful and rebellious culture and things of this world, we turn to Jesus and give all of our loyalty to Him by the power of His Holy Spirit working within us.

The "good news" is that a kingdom has invaded, is taking over the whole in the fullness of His holiness, beauty, and love, AND that all men are now able to be full members of this glorious kingdom because our King loves mercy and loves **us**.

We have been made saints by His undeserved favor on our lives, able to receive and possess the kingdom of God because *He has loved us and washed us from our sins by His own blood* (Revelation 1:5) AND *He has made us kings and priests to His God and Father* (Revelation 1:6). We who were disqualified from being a part of God's kingdom because of sin and rebellion have been fully accepted and given His full affection according to His free gift of righteousness. We have been made *worthy* by His redeeming grace and love. We who were disqualified to govern His kingdom have been made *able* by His transforming grace and love.

The kingdom is invading the earth *right now*, and it is a kingdom that cannot co-exist with, make peace with, or surrender to sin and death in any way. There is no compatibility with sin and death and the holiness and glory of God. A kingdom of love, servant-heartedness, humility, tenderness, mercy, and joy is completely incompatible with kingdoms of fear, self-centeredness, arrogance, brutality, and exploitation that the wicked and rebellious build for themselves. This is what Paul called, "*the course of this world*" ⁵ that we all once walked in agreement with.

God chose to invade the earth with His kingdom slowly, over time, so that He could show mercy to all of us by offering to set the full measure of His love upon us, and placing the full measure of His Spirit within us. He made believers full, beloved, valued members of His family and empowers us to be full citizens of His kingdom. He is an invading King who chose to confront a people entirely foreign to Him in every way with His unyielding love and mercy! He then qualified us to receive the full measure of His glory within us! This astonishing love declares the truth about the kind of King He is and empowers us to love Him in return with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength with absolutely no condemnation or rejection of any kind, ever again.

THE DAY OF THE LORD IS UNPRECEDENTED GLORY AND UNPRECEDENTED SHAKING

The great controversy of the nations is this: the Son of God who has been chosen to rule over all the nations has extended His love and mercy to all men, but many men refuse to yield to His love and Lordship. God will forgive the most vile, the most wicked of men and receive them and join His life with theirs and their life to His, even a child trafficker, an abuser, the most perverse and broken oppressor of the poor and helpless. His heart towards them is one of mercy and His desire is to lavish them with *the riches of His grace*, or power to love Him on His terms. However, He

will not extend the kind of mercy that excuses their wicked behavior and allows them to continue practicing darkness without repenting turning from sin. All men must yield to His love on His terms, which means renouncing wickedness and falling in love with righteousness and holiness. We cannot have two opposite loyalties in the primary pursuit of our heart and life.

Many desire the end of human trafficking, oppression and exploitation of others. Consider what that means. What does it mean for abortion to never happen again on planet earth? How much has to change within the human heart to transform a society that completely? What has to be removed, forever, to see the earth filled with the full measure of the glory of the Lord? What happens if human traffickers, oppressors, dictators, and criminals will **not repent** and **not cease** their night and day commitment to injustice for personal gain?

The full message of the gospel of the kingdom must include the truth about the **Day of the Lord**. This is the time in history in which God will confront sin, oppression, and exploitation of the poor and the helpless across the whole earth. There is a day coming that Hebrews spoke about:

*“...but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.’ Now this, ‘Yet once more,’ indicates the removal of things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since **we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken**, let us have grace, by which we must serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 6*

John the Baptist preached the gospel of the kingdom including the Day of the Lord:

“Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’ Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” 7

Paul tells us in Romans 1:16-18 that **both the righteousness of God and the wrath of God** have been revealed through the cross and resurrection of Christ. The righteousness of God is revealed “from faith,” within those who believe, but the wrath of God is revealed “from heaven” upon those who reject. The message of the cross is both a message of mercy **and** a message of justice. We are spared by mercy if we repent, or we are removed by wrath if we refuse.

“Judgment and justice” are foundations of the throne and the kingdom, and those who preach the gospel of the kingdom will be a people who love mercy and justice. Justice is the removal of things that are in disagreement with God’s righteousness, His “rightness,” and the preservation of things that express God’s righteousness. The global proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom will be an **anointed justice movement** proclaiming the coming of a King who will set all things right with the world. “In His name, all oppression shall cease!”

The message of the wrath of God is the message of how **far Jesus will go for love**. He will go to whatever lengths are necessary to remove anything that stands against or oppresses the full

expression of His love and family in every tribe, tongue, and nation. God will restore and reconcile individuals to Himself, and do the same for families, cities and nations. He will restore nature and beautify the earth. He will establish a government of righteousness, peace, and perfect justice with leadership that is completely trustworthy in every way. This is gloriously **good news!** Jesus' love and humility will be expressed in every sphere of society and in every heart.

The coming Day of the Lord

There is a coming Day in which God will confront the nations of the earth and bring a full end to their controversy with Him, His leadership, and His Son. He will shake them in His mercy in the hopes that they will relent, repent, and receive His indescribable love and purity. The great shock of the end of the age is that, when God confronts the nations with His great power, men will be afraid, **8** then they will be angry, **9** and then they will gather for war against Him! **10**,

Become Prepared

Prepare for the heights of glory, power, and shaking that are coming. Prepare for the lengths that Jesus will go in order to establish His way of life and love across the whole earth. Prepare for the heights of wickedness, rebellion, and deception and the lengths that men will go to in order to preserve their own way of life. The Lord, in His great love for nations, is calling weak, broken, simple people who He loves deeply to preach the whole great story of His love for the earth. **11**

***The kingdom comes where the will of God is done!* Actively declare and demonstrate that *the kingdom of God is at hand* now in and around those who are set apart, consecrated to the Lord and humbly and faithfully obey and serve the King of kings.**

Chapter 1 – End Notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 24:14 2. Ephesians 1:9-10 3. Isaiah 9:7 4. cf. Matthew 3:2; Luke 3:3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Ephesians 2:2 6. Hebrews 12:26-28 7. Luke 3:7-9 8. Revelation 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Revelation 9 10. Revelation 16, Joel 3, Zechariah 12
<p>11. Edited from: ONETHING CONFERENCE 2014 – DAVID SLIKER <i>The Gospel of the Kingdom: Grace, Glory, and Global Reconciliation</i> International House of Prayer of Kansas City ihopkc.org</p>		

CHAPTER 2

Kingdom of God – The King

The King of the kingdom of God is like no other king in all of history, and He rules and reigns over His kingdom.

His name is Jesus, which means “*God saves.*” He is also called the Christ which means the “*anointed One.*” The One that God the Father appointed anointed and gave the authority to rule and reign over all the nations of the earth.

Jesus described Himself as *meek and lowly*. ¹ Meek is not weak, but actually great strength under control. He is lowly because He does not lord Himself over His people.

Jesus is the **Son of David**. Heir to the throne which God promised will last forever.

He is the **Son of God**, God in flesh and blood who was tempted in every way without sinning.

He is the **Son of Man** who showed mankind how to live in the right relationship with God the Father. He said, “*the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.*” ²

He lived without sinning, completely surrendered to the will of God the Father and was obedient even to die on the cross. This qualified Him to be the perfect sacrifice for all the sins of mankind. This also made Him worthy and authority to be the judge of all mankind. Jesus also came as a servant to all. He said, *the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*” ³

Who is this King Jesus? He is...

King of kings, Lord of lords ⁴

Bridegroom ⁵

Great Shepherd ⁶

Commander of the Lord’s army ⁷

Consuming Fire ⁸

Gift of God ⁹

Great High Priest ¹⁰

Husband ¹¹

Immanuel ¹²

Judge [13](#)

Lamb of God [14](#)

Life [15](#)

Light [16](#)

Lord [17](#)

Love [18](#)

Master [19](#)

Prince of Peace [20](#)

Redeemer [21](#)

Rock [22](#)

Savior [23](#)

Servant [24](#)

Source [25](#)

Sovereign [26](#)

The Beginning and the End [27](#)

The First Born from the Dead [28](#)

The Last Adam [29](#)

The Truth [30](#)

The Way [31](#)

The Word [32](#)

This is our KING! Jesus the King of all the Nations

This awesome Lord Jesus Christ, our King is who we wholeheartedly love, obey and serve.

GOD GAVE THE DOMINION OF THE EARTH TO THE HUMAN RACE

God gave the dominion, the authority over the earth to Adam as a representative of the human race as an eternal stewardship. To reverse this decision would be injustice and failure to keep His Word.

*God said to them, "Have **dominion** over...every living thing that moves on the earth." [33](#)*

By sinning, Adam forfeited his authority over the earth to Satan. 34 Then Satan became the god of this world. 35 Jesus as a Man, called the last Adam, 36 came to earth to win the dominion of the earth back from Satan.

*The devil...showed Him **all the kingdoms** of the world...⁶and said..., "All this authority I will give You...for this has been **delivered to me**, and I give it to whomever I wish." 37
Whose minds the **god of this age** [Satan] has blinded, who do not believe. 38*

Daniel saw a vision of God as the Ancient of Days giving one Man authority over all the nations.

*One like the **Son of Man**...came to the Ancient of Days...¹⁴**To Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all...nations, and languages should serve Him.** 39*

The Father decreed that Jesus as the son of David be given all the nations as His inheritance. This includes all their governments, property, money, resources, and possessions on earth.

*I [the Father] will give You the **nations for Your inheritance**... 40
Whom He [the Father] has appointed **heir of all things**... 41*

Jesus as a Man will be recognized by all on earth as the King over all the earth.

*And the LORD shall be **King over all the earth.** 42
On His robe...a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.** 43*

Jesus will take over all the nations *only* on the basis of truth, humility, and righteousness. 44 He will dispense the resources with wisdom, justice, and generosity to cause love to increase. Jesus alone is our assurance that love will never diminish on the earth.

*In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of **truth, humility and righteousness**...45*

The Father promised to make Jesus preeminent in all things and determined that all things were created for Jesus' glory and would be under His leadership.

*He is the head of the Body...that in **all things He may have the preeminence.** 46
All things were created through Him and **for Him.** 47*

THE GRAND DRAMA IN HEAVEN: JESUS RECEIVES THE SCROLL 48

Revelation 5 is one of the grand chapters in Scripture that magnifies Jesus. The Father draws back the veil to give us insight into Jesus' destiny on the earth as a Man. John recorded his vision of the Father giving the title deed of the earth to Jesus 49 resulting in Jesus receiving total authority over all society in the Millennium. He will own all the cities, property, money, banks, natural resources, oil and water rights, intellectual property, etc. of all the earth.

*I saw in the right hand of Him [the Father] who sat on the throne a **scroll**...sealed with seven seals. ²I saw a strong angel proclaiming..., "Who is **worthy** to open the scroll and to loose its seals?"...³One of the elders said, "...The **Lion** of the tribe of Judah...has prevailed to **open the scroll** and to loose its seven seals." ⁶In the midst of the throne... stood a **Lamb** as though...slain. ⁷He **took the scroll** out of the right hand of Him...on the throne. 50*

- The scroll (v. 1) speaks of the title deed of the earth and God's plan to cleanse the earth of evil 51 and to replace all its national governments. 52 By taking the scroll (v. 7), Jesus accepts the responsibility to cleanse and then rule the earth.
- To loose the seven seals (v. 5) means that Jesus will release the judgments described in the book of Revelation 53 so as to cleanse the earth of sin and unrighteousness.
- An angel asked what man is worthy to own the whole world and lead all its governments after He cleanses it (v. 2)? What man has the wisdom, humility, and power to do this?
- John saw a Jewish Man from the tribe of Judah (v. 5) who had the boldness of a roaring lion and yet the meekness of a slain Lamb (v. 6).

The living creatures (angelic) and the elders (human) represent the government of heaven. They expressed their agreement with the Father's decree to give the leadership of the earth to Jesus.

*When He [Jesus] had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb...⁹They sang a **new song**, saying: "**You are worthy** to take the scroll, and to **open its seals** [release God's judgments]; for **You were slain**, and have redeemed us to God [You proved Your leadership and love] by **Your blood** out of every tribe...and nation, ¹⁰and have made us kings and priests to God; and we shall reign on the earth." 54*

You were slain: Jesus proved His worthiness to rule over all because when He possessed all the privileges of God in His pre-existent glory, He laid them down by becoming human (forever) and dying to pay for our sin by taking the wrath of God. He did this to cleanse His people and the earth from sin and then includes the saints in His earthly reign because of His love and humility.

- Jesus had to become **human forever** in order to qualify as a sacrifice for humans.
- Jesus had to live in **perfect holiness** to qualify to bear God's wrath for humans. 55
- Jesus had to live **dependent** on the anointing of the Spirit like a mere man. Jesus has never ever been less than God, but after His incarnation He lived on earth as if "never more than a man." For 33 years, each miracle that Jesus did was the result of waiting on the Father in prayer and obedience to release the Spirit through Him. 56

The Father gave Jesus an unprecedented measure of favor in seven spheres of leadership over the earth. Jesus “receives” this from the Father and the response of people on the millennial earth.

*The voice of many angels...¹²saying..., "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive **power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing.**" 57*

During the Millennium, Jesus will receive all the **power** (governmental authority); **riches** (money and natural resources); **wisdom** (intellectual ability and property); **strength** (physical strength, including the labor force and human resources); **glory** (praise, and love); **honor** (all will esteem Him with their obedience); and **blessing** (agreement with His policies with unified cooperation).

Power (political): Jesus will have the governmental authority over all nations. He will replace every evil government with new leaders and laws and will restore every sphere of life; political, economic, educational, agricultural, media, technology, environmental, social institutions.

Riches (financial): all the money and natural resources on earth will be under Jesus’ leadership.

Wisdom (intellectual): Jesus has all the wisdom to bring every sphere of life to the fullness of the Father’s original intention. He will give leadership over all the “intellectual property” forever.

Strength (physical): Jesus has supernatural physical strength in His resurrected body. He will never weary of His work. All benefits of the labor force and human resources on the millennial earth will be submitted to Him and serve His plan to establish love and righteousness on earth. The nations will gladly offer the fruit of their strength to Him. They will love Jesus with all their strength or resources including their time, money, words, energy, and influence. 58

Glory (relational): All the people on earth will glory in Jesus by giving their love, adulation, and praise to Him with great delight. He will be the magnificent obsession of all the nations. He will be preeminent in their minds, affections and conversations. The fame of His name will cover the earth. The saints will boast or glory in His leadership as Paul gloried in Christ. 59 Children glory in their father 60 and God’s people glory in His name. 61

Honor (by obedience): All will honor Jesus with their obedience in practical ways. To honor in this sense is to obey and serve His agenda for the nations. Paul spoke of honoring parents with respectful obedience towards them. 62 Jesus will be the most obeyed, respected, and listened to person on earth. He will be the most talked about and emulated role model on earth.

Blessing (cooperative): All will bless or agree with His policies and plans and fully cooperate with His leadership in every sphere of society. Such enthusiastic cooperation will result in the most unified and joyful work force in history. Jesus will be the most powerful, wealthy, wise, loved, supported, praised, obeyed, respected, listened to, and talked about Man on the earth. He will be seen as having the dominion over all the land, people, money, governments, human resources, angels, etc. He has the power and right to control them. Thus, we know that He is able to fulfill all of His promises to each of us forever.

RESPONDING TO THE TRUTHS OF REVELATION 5:11-12

The Father called Jesus to intercede for His inheritance in possessing all the nations. ⁶³ In the Millennium, Jesus will rule the nations in part by interceding for the full possession or transformation of all nations. We intercede now for the release of His leadership on the earth by *knowing that what He releases in fullness after His return will be released in part in this age.*

*Ask of Me, I will give You the nations for Your **inheritance**...for Your **possession.*** ⁶⁴

The Father has commissioned Jesus to rule *in the midst of His enemies* in this age. Jesus rules at His Father's right hand by releasing His rod of strength through His obedient praying Church.

*The LORD [the Father] said to my Lord [Jesus], "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." ²The LORD shall send **the rod** of Your [Jesus'] strength out of Zion. **Rule in the midst of Your enemies!*** ⁶⁵

All nations will openly see Jesus' beauty in the Millennium as He takes over all the earth. We see His beauty even now as we understand His inheritance and work with Him for its release.

*Your eyes will **see the King in His beauty**...* ⁶⁶

*In that day the Branch of the Lord [Jesus] shall be **beautiful and glorious.*** ⁶⁷

JESUS IS WORTHY: OUR GREAT CONFESSION NOW AND FOREVER

All the saints sing that Jesus is deserving and capable to open the seals of judgment to cleanse the earth and to lead the nations forever as its supreme leader and that serving Him is worth it.

*They sang a new song, saying: "**You are worthy** to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain..."¹⁰And have made us kings and priests...and we shall reign on the earth." ¹¹I heard the voice of many angels...¹²saying, "**Worthy is the Lamb**...to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"* ⁶⁸

Declaring Jesus' incredible worth in three practical ways:

- **Jesus deserves it:** Jesus is worthy of being the supreme leader over all the earth forever. He has proven Himself by making every one of His choices in love and righteousness.

- ***Jesus is capable:*** He is the only man with the ability to drive evil off the earth and replace all the governments so as to establish love and righteousness forever on the earth.
- ***Jesus is worth it:*** We declare that Jesus is worthy of the highest exaltation over all and of our unqualified trust and sacrificial obedience. The devil seeks to stir up self pity in us by telling us that we are getting a bad deal from God and that it is no longer worth the trouble to seek God with diligence. The devil says, “Give up because it is too hard.”

Declare that Jesus is worthy of being the supreme leader over all the created order. Declare that Jesus is worthy of our unqualified faith and trust in His good leadership.

Declare that Jesus is worthy of our sacrificial obedience in our diligent pursuit of Him. ⁶⁹

Chapter 2 – End Notes:

1. Matthew 11:28 AMP 2. Matthew 5:19 3. Matthew 20:28 NKJV 4. Revelation 19:16 5. Isaiah 62:56 6. Hebrews 13:20 7. Joshua 5:15 8. Hebrews 12:29 9. John 4:10 10. Hebrews 4:14 11. Isaiah 54:5 12. Isaiah 7:14 13. Isaiah 33:22 14. John 1:36 15. John 14:6 16. Psalm 27:1 17. John 13:13 18. 1 John 4:8 19. Luke 5:5 20. Isaiah 9:6 21. Job 19:25 22. 1 Corinthians 10:4 23. Luke 2:11	24. Isaiah 42:1 25. Hebrews 5:9 26. 1 Timothy 6:15 27. Revelation 1:8 28. Revelation 1:5 29. 1 Corinthians 15:45 30. John 14:6 31. John 14:6 32. John 1:1 33. Genesis 1:28 34. Luke 4:6 35. 2 Corinthians 4:4 36. 1 Corinthians 15:45 37. Luke 4:5-6 38. 2 Corinthians 4:4 39. Daniel 7:13-14 40. Psalm 2:8 41. Hebrews 1:2 42. Zechariah 14:9 43. Revelation 19:16 44. Psalm 45:4; Isaiah 11:3-5; 42:1-4 45. Psalm 45:4, NIV	46. Colossians 1:18 47. Colossians 1:16 48. Revelation 5:7 49. Revelation 5:1-8 50. Revelation 5:1-7 51. Revelation 6-19 52. Revelation 20:4-6 53. Revelation 6-19 54. Revelation 5:8-10 55. 2 Corinthians 5:21 56. John 5:19 57. Revelation 5:11-12 58. Mark 12:30 59. Philippians 3:3 NIV 60. Proverbs 17:6 61. Psalm 105:3; 43:4 62. Ephesians 6:1-2 63. Psalm 2:8 64. Psalm 2:8 65. Psalm 110:1-2 66. Isaiah 33:17 67. Isaiah 4:2 68. Revelation 5:9-12
69. Edited from: Jesus, the King of the Nations Revelation 5 Part 9 of the series Jesus Our Magnificent Obsession Part 1 – Mike Bickle mikebickle.org		

CHAPTER 3

Kingdom of God – Foundation of Love

The kingdom of God is founded on Love

God is the true definition of love.

*But anyone who does not love does not know God, for **God is love.*** 1

God demonstrates His great love and mercy for mankind

*For **God so loved the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.* 2

*But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* 3

The love of God never fails!

Love never fails. [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]. 4

Jesus said that the First and Greatest Commandment to mankind is:

*...You shall **love the Lord** your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (intellect). ³⁸ This is the great (most important, principal) and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall **love your neighbor** as [you do] yourself. ⁴⁰ These two commandment sum up and upon them depend all the Law and the Prophets.* 5

Jesus said, “If you [really] **love Me**, you will keep (**obey**) **My commands.** 6

*I give you a new commandment: that you should **love one another.** Just as I have **loved** disciples, if you **love one another** [if you keep on showing **love** among yourselves], you, so you too should **love one another.** By this shall all [men] know that you are My.* 7

Kingdom of God communities are known by the love that we have for each other.

Our obedient love for God and others is the ultimate weapon against the works of the enemy.

The Lord wants us to love His people as He loves them.

ABIDING IN LOVE

This is the Ultimate Reality of the Kingdom of God

The Holy Spirit's first agenda is to establish the First Commandment in first place in the Church. Jesus referred to Deuteronomy 6:5 and then defined loving God as the First commandment, thus identifying it as the highest priority to God and the first calling in our life and for every ministry.

Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment." 8

The command to love God with all our heart does not begin with us. It is one expression of the ultimate reality of the kingdom that existed long before the creation of the world, namely God's heart that burned with perfect love within the fellowship of the three persons of the Trinity.

God is love—wholehearted love. 9 The very being of God is wholehearted love. Wholehearted love is first in God's personality and it is first in the relationships of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. From eternity past, God has loved God with all of His heart, mind, and strength. God the Father loved the Son. God the Son loved the Spirit. God the Spirit loved the Father and the Son. God is fully satisfied in the deep fellowship within the Godhead.

We must see the first commandment in its *eternal context* of the fellowship in the Godhead instead of it being merely one aspect of kingdom ethics. He wants us to respond in wholehearted love because it is *who He is* and *who He created us to be*. We were created in His image for wholehearted love. It is the core reality of our relationship with God and the essence of salvation.

There is nothing more important than God's desires. His infinite power and great wisdom are employed to carry out His desires—they are used to establish His plan to fill the earth with love.

The love burning in God's heart has at least five distinct expressions that are deeply interrelated.

- **God's love for God:** Each person in the Trinity intensely loves the others with all their heart.
- **God's love for His people:** He loves His people with all of His heart, mind, and strength. He loves the redeemed with the same intensity that He loves within the fellowship of the Trinity.
- **Our love for God:** God's very own love is imparted to His people by the Spirit. 10
- **Our love for ourselves:** We love ourselves in God's love and for God's sake.
- **Our love for others:** We love others in the overflow of experiencing God's love. 11

These five expressions of love can be described as the ***fellowship of the burning heart***.

Our greatest destiny is to participate in the burning love within the fellowship of the Trinity.

Abide in love: God loves us with the same intensity that God loves God. 12 We are to abide in or *stay focused on* living in His love in its various expressions.

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love." 13

The truth of the ***abiding in love*** is developed in John 13-17. These chapters give us insight into Jesus' life of abiding in God and the nature of God, His kingdom, and our relationship to Him.

GOD'S LOVE FOR GOD

The first expression of perfect love is found in the relationships within the Trinity. The Son loves the Father [14](#) and the Father loves the Son. [15](#) Their love is the foundation of all the love experienced in the kingdom of God.

The Holy Trinity: There is one God who forever dwells in three distinct persons who are coequal as divine persons. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each fully possess all of God's attributes. Each person is different from the others in function and authority in their relationship and work. Each person's work is unified, fully engaged with, and interdependent on the others' work.

In John 13-17, Jesus taught on the union of the three persons in the Trinity—the Father lives in the Son, and the Son in the Father. [16](#) Thus, the three persons are one in heart, thought, and action, so that the one God acts as one and as three.

10“Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me...The Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me...” 17

Their relationships: The union in the Godhead reveals the nature, quality, and intensity of their love and relationships.

- These relationships are the *model* and *source* whereby we relate to God and each other. They give us a picture of what perfect love is, and of how God relates to God, how He relates to us, and how we relate to Him and others.
- Each person of the Trinity enjoys and fully engages in the relationship with the others. Jesus has joy and enthusiasm in His love for the Father. He is moved in loving the Father and in being loved by the Father. He is exhilarated by His relationship and conversations with the Father and is never disinterested or bored in them.

Their work: The three persons are each fully involved with every work of God—creation, the incarnation, healing miracles, the atonement, the resurrection. [18](#)

“...believe the works, that you may know...the Father is in Me, and I in Him.” 19

I lay it [His life] down of Myself...and I have power to take it again. 20

God's eternal nature is humility. Jesus delights to use His authority to honor the Father. [21](#) The Spirit delights in glorifying the Father and the Son. [22](#) Jesus is forever the greatest Man and, thus, the greatest servant. [23](#) He will relate to us forever with humility and a servant's heart. [24](#)

The Spirit desires to teach us these glorious truths. The Spirit will teach us to the degree that we ask Him. [25](#) He usually waits until we begin the conversation. As we study the way that God loves God, we are empowered to love and glorify Him.

The glorious truth of the union within the Trinity affects how we read the Scripture. We can gain insight into this grand reality by meditating on the details in the Scripture of how each person in

the Godhead relates to the others. When reading the Gospels, think on how the Father and the Spirit were deeply involved with joy in each of the works that Jesus did.

As we read the Gospels, we should pause to **thank God** for the details of how the Trinity worked together and to **ask for more insight**. We ask the Spirit to show us what each divine person **did** and **felt** and how **we are to respond**. Reading the Scripture in this way can be like a treasure hunt into the beauty of God that fascinates and exhilarates our heart.

The details of their relationship give us insight into Jesus' beauty, supremacy, and worth. It also gives us insight into the way that He loves us and how He wants us to love Him and others.

Our primary life goal and priority needs to be focused on beholding God's love.

This includes understanding, experiencing, and imparting the truth of His love to others. By seeing the quality of this love, we are more empowered to resist temptation, endure persecution, and press into God in the midst of various trials without drawing back.

Behold what manner [quality] of love the Father has bestowed on us... 26

We are to make this the primary preoccupation of our life before, during, and after revival. We do not need to wait for revival to deeply engage in this reality.

GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE

Jesus declared that He loves the redeemed in the same way or intensity that His Father loves Him. 27 He said that the Father also loves the redeemed with this same intensity. 28 Father, Son, and Spirit love the redeemed with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength.

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love." 29

Love, by definition, demands an expression—to be shared and multiplied. God wanted others to experience the joy of their experience of perfect love. God created human beings to participate in this glorious fellowship because **He is love**. God does not lack anything. He has no need. He did not create humans because He was lonely or discontent or lacked something emotionally.

OUR LOVE FOR GOD

The Spirit's first agenda is to establish the first commandment in first place in the Church. 30 Because of how He feels about us, He wants us to respond to Him with all our love. He created us in His likeness with a capacity to participate in this fellowship of love. God's very own love is imparted to His people by the Holy Spirit. 31 We love Him because He first loved us. 32 We are empowered to love by first receiving His love.

Jesus defined loving God as being deeply rooted in a spirit of obedience. 33 ***There is no such thing as loving God without seeking to obey His Word.*** *"If you love Me, keep My commandments..." 34*

OUR LOVE FOR OURSELVES

The redeemed are to love themselves in God's love and for God's sake. We love ourselves through the lens of the revelation of Jesus, His cross, and our great worth to Him. When we see ourselves and our destiny in God's love, it empowers us to love ourselves by His Spirit. Jesus delights in who we are in His love. He enjoys us enjoying His love for us.

“And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” 35

Bernard of Clairvaux called it *loving ourselves for His sake*—that is, to be jealous to be all that He called us to be for His sake. Jesus does not want us to walk in false humility that minimizes how much *He enjoys loving us* and how He wants us to *enjoy being loved by Him*. We magnify Jesus as we love ourselves in agreement with His love for us and honor His “investment” in us. He is glorified in us as we rejoice in His will, which includes *His enjoyment* of releasing His love in and through us. “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him” 36

A profound transformation occurs in us as we accept His love for us. We love ourselves in His love without despising our appearance, gifting, or ministry assignment, regardless how small or difficult it is. Self-hatred results in a deep sense of rejection that damages our ability to love and receive love.

OUR LOVE FOR OTHERS

We are to love others in the love of God. We do this as we see how God loves us and how He loves others, even those who mistreat us. Our love for others is an expression of our love for God. 37 We'll delight in one another as God loves us. 38

“...and the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” 39

We feel deep emotions of zealous love when someone comes against a person we love deeply. We love fellow believers who mistreat us because God loves them just as He loves God. 40 We participate in the fellowship of the burning heart by walking in love for others. Jesus wants us to enter into how He feels about other people. There is a bigger story going on.

SALVATION: EXPERIENCING DEEP RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD 41

Jesus revealed that the essence of eternal life is to know God—this speaks of experiential knowledge; it is more than intellectual information. Salvation is an invitation to participate in deep fellowship with the Godhead. 42 It is the *why* behind the *what* of creation and redemption. Salvation is so much more than escaping hell.

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ.” 43

Make it your primary life vision to participate deeply in the ultimate reality of the kingdom, which is the ***fellowship of the burning heart***. We see examples of those who lived with a burning heart of love. Examples of this include the disciples on the road to Emmaus 44 and John

the Baptist who was burning lamp, 45 and who prophesied of a baptism of fire 46 as seen at Pentecost 47 and eventually will empower all His people. 48

God created us in His image to be joined into His deep loving fellowship and to know Him. That is why He created us to live forever with Him!

And this is eternal life: [it means] to know (to perceive, recognize, become acquainted with, and understand) You, the only true and real God, and [likewise] to know Him, Jesus [as the] Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah), Whom You have sent. 49, 50

Love the Lord. This is the key to the door of the kingdom of God!

Love is the ultimate expression and weapon of God. As you learn to sacrificially and obediently love God and others then you and those around you will be powerfully transformed into kingdom of God citizens

Chapter 3 – End Notes:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 John 4:8 NLT 2. John 3:16-17 NKJV 3. Romans 5:8 NKJV 4. 1 Corinthians 13:8 AMP 5. Matthew 22:37-40 AMP 6. John 14:15 AMP 7. John 13:34-35 AMP 8. Matthew 22:37-38 9. 1 John 4:16 10. Romans 5:5 11. 1 John 4:19 12. John 15:9; 17:23 13. John 15:9 14. John 14:31 15. John 3:35; 5:20; 15:9; 17:23 16. John 13:32, 34; 14:10-12, 20; 17:11, 21-23 17. John 14:10-11 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. John 10:18 19. John 10:38 20. John 10:18 21. John 5:23; 8:49-54; 12:26; 13:31-32; 14:12; 17:1, 4-5, 22, 24; 18:19 22. John 16:13-15 23. Matthew 23:11 24. Luke 12:37 25. John 14:16 26. 1 John. 3:1 27. John 15:9 28. John 17:23 29. John 15:9 30. Matthew 22:37-38 31. Romans 5:5 32. 1 John 4:19 33. John 14:15, 21, 23; Deuteronomy 6:1-9 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 34. John 14:15 35. Matthew 22:39 36. John Piper 37. 1 John 4:7-12 38. John 15:12 39. Matthew 22:39 40. John 15:9; 17:23 41. John 17:3 42. 1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 John 1:3 43. John 17:3 44. Luke 24:32 45. John 5:35 46. Luke 3:16 47. Acts 2:3 48. Isaiah 62:1 49. Ephesians 1: 9-10 AMP
<p>50. Edited from: <i>Abiding in Love: Experiencing the Heart of God</i> <i>Session 1 Abiding in Love: The Ultimate Reality of the Kingdom</i></p>		

CHAPTER 4

Kingdom of God - is like, and is...

The King and His kingdom of God

JESUS FOCUSED HIS MESSAGE ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In the Gospel of Matthew this is called the kingdom of heaven.

*So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. **Your kingdom come.** Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 1*

Jesus declared that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus was the temple of God, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit on earth. Jesus, as a real man, was the filled with the Holy Spirit who manifested the healings, signs and wonders of the kingdom.

*...Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" 2*

*Jesus came to Galilee, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,**¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the **kingdom of God is at hand.** Repent, and believe in the gospel." 3*

Jesus went about preaching the **good news of the kingdom of God**, and demonstrating the power of the Spirit by *healing all kinds of sickness.*

*Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the **gospel of the kingdom**, and **healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.** 4*

*Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the **gospel of the kingdom**, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 5*

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE...

Jesus taught parables, stories to illustrate what the kingdom of God is like.

A mustard seed – starts as a very small seed that grows into a large strong tree.

*Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The **kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed**, which a man took and sowed in his field, 6*

Yeast – starts small and grows slowly to fill the whole loaf.

*Another parable He spoke to them: "The **kingdom of heaven is like leaven**, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." 7*

Hidden treasure – that is so very valuable, when it is found is worth all you have to possess it.

*“Again, the **kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden** in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 8*

Priceless pearl – that is sought after and is worth all you have to possess it.

*“Again, the **kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls,** 9*

A dragnet – that gathers all kinds of creatures to be sorted out, to either be kept or cast out.

*“Again, the **kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet** that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 10*

An instructed scribe – a writer or recorder who can draw on old or new resources of knowledge.

Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.” 11

A man who is very generous with his vast resources to those who serve him

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 12

A King who arranges a marriage for His Son – and invites all, so that his house will be filled.

*“The **kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,** 13*

Ten virgins – 5 who were wise and 5 who were foolish.

*“Then the **kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins** who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 14*

A king who rewards faithful stewardship – who invest wisely for him

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 16

Seed sown in the field of the world – where an enemy also sows bad seed mixed in.

*Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The **kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;** 17*

The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 18

The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 19

Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! 20

A Contemporary parable: The kingdom of God is like the Internet and World Wide Web

The internet is defined as: an electronic communications network that connects computer networks and organizational computer facilities around the world.

The World Wide Web is a part of the Internet accessed through a graphical user interface and containing documents often connected by hyperlinks - called also *Web*. Wireless connections now give access to this network and web all around the world. The internet is a vast worldwide resource of information and visual images and instruction.

The key to connect to this vast network and World Wide Web is to have a properly designed *receiver* and communication devise.

Over time the receivers and communication devises have been improved and refined to receive more information more clearly and faster in most locations around the world.

As each new refinement is made in the technology to access and use this network, people line up to buy the new products because they are eager for more of what they believe they will gain from accessing and using these resources and applications.

There is a great array of information and visual images posted on the internet. Some is true, but much is not true. The internet is also used for various criminal activities, misinformation, human trafficking and pornography.

Social media and virtual communities are displacing natural communities as many people spend hours of their lives *surfing the net* and interacting with others virtually.

Virtual realities created in videos & games lead people to spend more time in fruitless fantasies.

Is all this truthful, fruitful, profitable and of any eternal kingdom value? Does a counterfeit have any real value?

The Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is a powerful eternal spiritual reality that is all around us all the time.

God is called omnipresent which means that He and His true kingdom reality is always present around us and available to those who willingly prepare to *receive* and express it.

Those who truly believe can *receive* the *life* from the King and His kingdom.

*...we are **receiving a kingdom** which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 21*

The key to connecting to the true source of *life* in the kingdom of God is to have a believer, a *receiver*, properly tuned to hear and communicate with God through His Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, *I have come that they may have **life**, and that they may have it more abundantly. 22*

God places His Spirit in those who freely chose to believe in Him and His Son Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and are *born again* of His Spirit.

*Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 23*

The kingdom of God gives those who *receive* and obey the Holy Spirit access to connect to the power and wisdom that created and maintains heaven, the earth and all of creation!

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS...

JESUS HAD ONE CENTRAL MESSAGE – THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Jesus told His disciples to pray, *Your **kingdom come** and Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 24*

He also told them to, ***seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 25***

What is the Kingdom of God?

Jesus taught 12 things that the **kingdom of God is** and He taught 18 times about ***inheriting the kingdom of God.***

The kingdom of God is our *destiny*. Contend for inheriting the kingdom of God.

The King is the most influence person. Without a king there is no kingdom.

1. First the **kingdom of God** is the **rule and reign of God**. The King of kings has authority and dominion over all the earth.

*The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." ² The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. **Rule** in the midst of Your enemies! ³ Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; 26*

The marriage supper of the Lamb is coming soon when the prepared Bride of Christ will join in an everlasting covenant of love, communion and partnership with the King.

2. The kingdom of God is an **everlasting** kingdom. The King is faithful to all His promises. All His covenants are everlasting. The covenants are to restore the kingdom of God to earth. The fall of the kingdom of God on earth came in the Garden of Eden. The covenants with Abraham, Jacob and David are all to restore the kingdom. Jesus was born to be the King.

*Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that **I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.** 27*

3. The kingdom of God is **unshakable**. You are also unshakeable if you're in the kingdom.

*...we are receiving a **kingdom** which **cannot be shaken**, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 28*

4. The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but **righteousness** and **peace** and **joy in the Holy Spirit.** 29

5. The kingdom of God is **spiritual**. It is not presently invisible except through the righteous acts of the saints of God.

*...**flesh and blood** cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 30*

6. The kingdom of God is **power** in the **Holy Spirit**.

*...you shall receive **power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, in ... Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." 31*

7. The kingdom of God is **near** or **at hand**. Jesus says 6 times in the Gospels that the kingdom is **near** or **at hand**.

*...John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² and saying, "Repent, for **the kingdom of heaven is at hand!**" 32*

John the Baptist came to prepare the way for the King, before Jesus' ministry was to begin.

*... there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but **he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.**" 33*

This shows the significance of those who are inheriting the kingdom of God.

Jesus came preaching the same message as John.

*From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, **for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**”* 34

Jesus told His disciples to go, preach and proclaim the kingdom of God is at hand.

*...as you go, preach, saying, ‘**The kingdom of heaven is at hand.**’* 8 *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.* 35

Jesus said to believe the good news of the kingdom. Jesus said speak peace, shalom to the house

whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ 6 *And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you.* 7 *And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house.* 8 *Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you.* 9 *And **heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’*** 10 *But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the **kingdom of God has come near you.**’* 36

This scripture is used in the **house church movement** around the world. A man who receives peace in his house receives the King and all those in his house. These home churches are growing fast around the world as they proclaim this scripture.

The gospel of the **kingdom of God will be preached as** a testimony to all nations before the end of the age.

*And this **gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world** as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.* 37

This will be a sign that the last generation should prepare for the return of the King. Invest in the last generation. God is always in the present and multigenerational.

*...when you see these things happening, know that the **kingdom of God is near.*** 38

Jesus taught His disciples for forty days about the kingdom before He returned to heaven. This was in answer to the disciple’s question, “When will the kingdom be restored to Israel?”

*...Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them **during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*** 39

heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The **kingdom** of God has come **near** to you.’ 40

8. The kingdom of God is not observed, it **is with you**.

“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ ... For indeed, the **kingdom of God is within you**.” 41

9. The kingdom of God is where the mind of God is manifest; the **wisdom of God**, the mind of the King.

For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But **we have the mind of Christ**. 42

10. The kingdom of God is where the **glory of the King shines** on the face of the King and His people.

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the **glory** of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image **from glory to glory**, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 43

Arise, shine; For your light has come! And **the glory of the LORD is risen upon you**. ² For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And **His glory will be seen upon you**. ³ The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising. 44

For Yours is the **kingdom** and the **power** and the **glory** forever. 45

11. The Kingdom comes in the Holy Spirit, in you. It will come in fullness when the King comes back on the throne of David. The kingdom of God is being restored on the earth.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in **heaven**. 46

1. The kingdom of God is our **inheritance**, it is our **destiny** as believers. There are 18 scriptures on who **will** inherit the kingdom of God, and there are 12 scriptures on who **will not** inherit the kingdom of God. **Our inheritance is the kingdom of God**.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 47

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and **conveyed us into the kingdom** of the Son of His love, 48

“But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. ²⁹ And **I bestow upon you a kingdom**, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 49

*For this you know, that **no** fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any **inheritance** in the **kingdom** of Christ and God. 50*

The kingdom and children

*“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become **as little children**, you will by no means enter the **kingdom** of heaven. 51*

Kingdom of God is open to those with child like faith in the Father who loves them and provides for them. Our treasures stored in heaven never fails. Preach kingdom of God more. Understand what the kingdom of God is. The kingdom of God is the opposite of the present world systems. Study, seek and inherit the kingdom. Restore the message of the kingdom of God

Contend for the kingdom of God, contend for your Destiny, contend for your inheritance in an unshakeable kingdom.

Keep praying in faith, *“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven!” 52*
This is the prayer given to us by Jesus our King. 53

The kingdom of God comes where the will of God is done! Manifest the kingdom of God through your loving obedience to the Lord and His will.

Chapter 4 – End notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Luke 11:2 2. Matthew 4:17 3. Mark 1:14-15 4. Matthew 4:23 5. Matthew 9:35 6. Matthew 13:31 7. Matthew 13:33 8. Matthew 13:44 9. Matthew 13:45 10. Matthew 13:47 11. Matthew 13:52 12. Matthew 20:1 13. Matthew 22:2 14. Matthew 25:1 15. Matthew 25:14 16. Matthew 25:34 17. Matthew 13:24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Matthew 13:38 19. Matthew 13:41 20. Matthew 13:43 21. Hebrews 12:2 22. John 10:10b 23. John 3:3 24. Matthew 6:10 25. Matthew 6:33 26. Psalm 110:1-3 27. John 18:37 28. Hebrews 12:28 29. Romans 14:17 30. 1 Corinthians 15:50 31. Acts 1:8 32. Matthew 3:1-2 33. Luke 7:28 34. Matthew 4:17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35. Matthew 10:7-8 36. Luke 10:5-11 37. Matthew 24:14 38. Luke 21:31 39. Acts 1:1-3 40. Luke 10:9 41. Luke 17:20 -21 42. 1 Corinthians 2:16 43. 2 Corinthians 3:18 44. Isaiah 60:1-3 45. Matthew 6:13 46. Matthew 6:10 47. Matthew 25:34 48. Colossians 1:13 49. Luke 22:28-29 50. Ephesians 5:5 51. Matthew 18:3 52. Matthew 6:10
<p>53. Edited for the message “The Kingdom of God is... by Tom Hess at Africamp 2015 January 18, 2015</p>		

CHAPTER 5

Kingdom of God – Constitution in the Sermon on the Mount

PURSUING A KINGDOM OF GOD LIFESTYLE (Matthew 5-7)

CORE VALUES OF THE KINGDOM

The Sermon on the Mount teaching by Jesus is the *constitution* of the kingdom of God. It is Jesus' most comprehensive statement on a believer's role in cooperating with the grace of God and is the "litmus test" to measure our spiritual development and ministry impact. In this teaching, Jesus calls His people to perfect obedience of His commandments and to make this their primary goal in life. We do this by seeking to walk in all the *light* that the Spirit gives us. Pursuing obedience is not the same as attaining it.

You shall be perfect [walk in all the light you receive] as your Father...is perfect. 1

Jesus calls us to live out the eight beatitudes 2 as we pursue 100% obedience. 3

The 8 beatitudes are:

- Being poor in spirit
- Spiritual mourning
- Walking in meekness
- Hungering for righteousness
- Showing mercy
- Embracing purity
- Being a peacemaker
- Enduring persecution.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4

Overview: In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls us to live out the **8 beatitudes 5** as we pursue **100% obedience, 6** as we **resist 6 temptations, 7** and **pursue 5 kingdom activities 8** that position our hearts to freely receive more grace. We do all this with confidence in His **rewards**, both temporal and eternal. 9 His **provision. 10** We do this **without criticism** of others who pursue God with less intensity or who oppose us 11 while we **seek Jesus to intervene** in our relationships, 12 and yet without drawing back from our **wholehearted pursuit** of God 13 as we **discern** false grace messages. 14 We do all of this knowing that our obedience will be **tested. 15** By walking in these truths, Jesus said that we will impact society 16 and will be great in His eyes, 17 receive treasures in heaven 18 and will live in this age with our hearts exhilarated in His grace. 19

The Beatitudes are like 8 beautiful flowers in the “garden of your heart” that God wants to fully blossom. They define love, godliness, and spiritual maturity and describe the kingdom lifestyle. Implied in all of God’s commands is the promise of the grace enabling to walk out the command.

These 8 flowers must be cultivated as we “weed our garden” by *resisting 6 temptations* related to our natural lusts 20 and as we nurture and “water our garden” by *pursuing 5 activities*. 21

- **The 6 temptations:** anger, immorality, disregarding the marriage covenant, making false commitments, demanding personal rights, and living with a spirit of retaliation. 22
- **The 5 kingdom activities:** prayer, fasting, giving, serving, and blessing enemies 23 are spiritual disciplines that position our heart before God to freely receive more grace.

THE EIGHT BEATITUDES: BRIEF DEFINITIONS 24

Being poor in spirit “theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” 25 is to acknowledge that we are in great need of help to sustain our wholeheartedness. We are to understand that we are in a serious dilemma and need a breakthrough in our heart and ministry and in the Church and society.

Mourning for breakthrough “for they shall be comforted,” 26 is to be desperate enough to be extreme in pursuing a breakthrough for our heart, ministry, church, or for justice in society.

Walking in meekness “shall inherit the earth,” 27 is to walk in the fasted lifestyle, or to have a servant spirit in the use of our natural strengths or resources (time, money, reputation, etc.). Meekness or humility speaks of using our resources or authority with a servant spirit in serving others without regard for receiving any gain from them.

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness “for they shall be filled,” 28 is to have sustained faithfulness in seeking God with a whole heart for the breakthrough of His kingdom in our lives and in others. It speaks of being consistent through the changing seasons, without drawing back in disappointment or in being offended at the way people treat us or respond to us.

Relating to others with mercy “for they shall obtain mercy,” 29 is to treat others with a tender spirit when they fail spiritually or attack, resist, or disappoint us. We are to show them mercy, just as we receive God’s mercy in our many shortcomings. 30 It also speaks of being compassionate and seeking to help people who suffer injustice.

Being pure in heart “they shall see God,” 31 is to seek to walk in purity in our thoughts, no bitterness or immorality, and in our motives like helping people truly for their benefit.

Becoming a peacemaker “called sons of God,” 32 speaks of the grace to bring peace or healing to broken relationships in the home, marketplace, Church, or in society.

Enduring persecution “theirs is the kingdom,” 33 is to bear the counterattack for plundering Satan’s kingdom because we operate in power and stand for righteousness.

Jesus invites “*whoever,*” includes everyone, to be great in His kingdom by walking in the Beatitudes.

Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments...shall be called least in the kingdom...whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom. 34

Anyone with a good eye will have a vibrant heart that is full of light. The lamp of the body, that brings light to our inner man, is the eye of our heart. “The body” means our whole person.

The lamp [source of light] of the body is the eye [of the heart]. If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 35,36

A ‘Sermon on the Mount’ life style is one that is lived in loving obedience to the holy and righteous teachings of Jesus.

Truly living an obedient loving life as a follower of Christ is very counter-cultural and challenging, but it is infinitely superior to the alternative!

Chapter 5 – End Notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 5:48 2. Matthew 5:3-12 3. Matthew 5:48 4. Matthew 5:3-10 5. Matthew 5:3-12 6. Matthew 5:48 7. Matthew 5:21-48 8. Matthew 6:1-18 9. Matthew 6:19-24 10. Matthew 6:24-33 11. Matthew 7:1-6 12. Matthew 7:7-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Matthew 7:13-14 14. Matthew 7:15-20 15. Matthew 7:21-27 16. Matthew 5:13-16 17. Matthew 5:19 18. Matthew 6:19–20 19. Matthew 6:22-23 20. Matthew 5:21-48 21. Matthew 6:1-18 22. Matthew 5:21-48 23. Matthew 6:1-18 24. Matthew 5:3-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Matthew 5:3 26. Matthew 5:4 27. Matthew 5:5 28. Matthew 5:6 29. Matthew 5:7 30. Psalm 130:3-4 31. Matthew 5:8 32. Matthew 5:9 33. Matthew 5:10-12 34. Matthew 5:19 35. Matthew 6:22-23
<p>36. Edited from: <i>Pursuing a Kingdom Lifestyle</i> (Matthew 5-7)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.1

SERMON ON THE MOUNT – CORE VALUES OF THE KINGDOM

The Sermon on the Mount is considered as the “constitution” of the kingdom of God. It is Jesus’ most comprehensive statement about a believer’s role in cooperating with the grace of God and is the “test” to accurately measure our spiritual development and ministry impact.

Jesus calls His people to make it their primary life goal to walk in perfect obedience by seeking to walk in all the light that the Spirit gives them. Pursuing this is not the same as attaining it.

***You shall be perfect** [walk in all the light you receive] **as your Father...is perfect.** 1*

Jesus calls us to live the eight Beatitudes 2 as we pursue 100 percent obedience. 3 The Beatitudes are like 8 beautiful flowers in the “garden of our heart” that God wants to fully blossom. They define love, godliness, and spiritual maturity and describe the kingdom of God lifestyle. Implied in all of God’s commands is the promise of the enabling to walk out the command.

*Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the **meek**, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are **persecuted** for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4*

These 8 flowers must be cultivated as we “weed our garden” by **resisting 6 common temptations** 5 and as we “water our garden” by **pursuing 5 kingdom activities.** 6

SALT AND LIGHT: OUR CALL TO MAKE AN IMPACT 7

Jesus referred to two metaphors of salt, that flavors and preserves and light, direction and life, in describing the impact of people who seek to live out the 8 Beatitudes. 8 They emphasize the impact that God’s people will have on individuals and on society.

***You are the salt of the earth... 14 You are the light of the world.** A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they **light a lamp** and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand... 16 Let your light so **shine before men**, that they may see...and glorify your Father. 9*

Jesus said that He did not come to destroy, nullify or minimize, God’s purposes, promises, or moral commandments as seen in the Old Testament Law and Prophets. 10 He came so that the fullness of all that God originally promised and commanded would be expressed on the earth in the lives of His people. One day the earth will be filled with the glory of God as all the nations love Him and walk in love, righteousness, justice, and truth.

*Do not think that I came to **destroy** the Law or the Prophets...but to **fulfill it**...¹⁸I say to you...one jot or one tittle will **by no means** pass from the law **till all is fulfilled**. 11*

THE INVITATION TO BE GREAT: SUSTAINING OUR ZEAL IN GOD 12

Jesus invites anyone and everyone to be great in His kingdom by walking in the Beatitudes.

*Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments...shall be called least in the kingdom...whoever **does and teaches** them, he shall be **called great** in the kingdom. 13*

We cannot repent of, turn away from, the desire for greatness because God created our spirit with this longing. We repent for seeking it in a wrong way. Without the understanding of being on a journey to greatness, the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle is more difficult to sustain. God invites us to greatness without regard for outward achievements or the size of our ministry. It is based on the development of our heart in love, purity, and humility, and in understanding the Word.

RESISTING 6 TEMPTATIONS: *WEEDING OUR GARDEN* 14

Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to make a way to fully express God's original intent. Jesus highlighted six areas in which we wage war against sin in our hearts. They are:

- **anger**, the spirit of murder, 15
- **adultery**, the spirit of immorality, 16
- **disregarding the sanctity of marriage**, disloyalty in relationships, 17
- **false commitments**, the spirit of manipulation to promote ourselves, 18
- **retaliation** for personal inconveniences, the spirit of revenge 19
- **inactivity** when mistreated, refusing active love, 20

These principles are practical ways of showing God's love by being salt and light. We progressively understand the practical outworking of resisting these six temptations. As we seek to obey them, we discover in practical ways *what they don't mean* as well as *what they do mean*. Jesus ends this teaching with the call to be perfect or mature in our obedience to God.

*Therefore you shall be **perfect**, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. 21*

PURSUING 5 KINGDOM ACTIVITIES: '*WATERING OUR GARDEN*' 22

5 activities position our heart to receive more grace and strength as we consistently:

- **Serve**, charitable deeds. 23
- **Give** giving service and/or money. 24

- **Pray** 25
- **Bless our adversaries**, in the fullness of forgiveness. 26
- **Fast** 27

These are spiritual disciplines that position our heart before God to receive more grace.

*That your charitable deed [giving service or money] may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly...⁶**Pray** to your Father...and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly...¹⁴**Forgive** men their trespasses...¹⁷**When you fast...** wash your face, ¹⁸so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ¹⁹Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...²⁰**Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...** 28*

Godly activities do not earn us God’s love, but place our cold hearts before the “bonfire of God’s presence.” He gives more to our heart but does not love us more as we embrace these disciplines. Spiritual disciplines such as serving, giving, blessing, and praying the Word with fasting are ordained by God as a necessary way to posture our heart to freely receive more grace. 29

*He gives **more grace**...God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 30*

These five areas are expressions of “voluntary weakness” because we invest our natural strengths, our time, money, energy and reputation into kingdom purposes. The normal use of our strengths is to use them to increase our personal comfort, wealth, and honor. But in a fasted lifestyle, we bring our natural strengths to God, trusting Him to return our strength to us in a way that enriches our personal circumstances and transforms us with meekness.

*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is **made perfect in weakness** [voluntary weakness]...I boast in my infirmities, that the **power of Christ may rest on me.** 31*

PURSUING JESUS WITH CONFIDENCE IN HIS REWARDS AND PROVISION 32

Scripture requires that we seek Jesus with confidence in His responsiveness to us. 33

*Without faith [confidence in God] it is impossible to please Him, ... he who comes to God **must believe** that He is and that **He is a rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him. 34*

Jesus addressed the necessity of pursuing wholehearted love and obedience to God with **confidence**—especially related to our finances and possessions. 35 He calls us to have confidence in **His rewards**, both eternal and temporal; 36 and in **His provisions.** 37

*Your Father who sees [charitable deeds] in secret will Himself **reward you openly**...⁶Your Father who sees [you praying] in secret will reward you openly...¹⁸Your Father who sees [you fasting]...will **reward you openly.** ¹⁹Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...²⁰but lay up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**...²⁴No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other...You cannot serve God and mammon. 38*

How we pursue Jesus as related to finances is vital in sustaining grace to walk out the Beatitudes. God's provision for us is necessary. Jesus calls us to escape the slavery to the fear of not having enough. Fear hinders our progress in walking out the Beatitudes in practical ways.

***Do not worry** about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink...³¹**Do not worry**, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?"...³²Your heavenly Father **knows** that you need all these things. ³³**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.** ³⁹*

God promises that anyone with a good eye will have a vibrant heart that is full of light. Having a good eye means that our primary life vision is to obey and teach the 8 Beatitudes, refusing the six temptations ⁴⁰ and pursuing the five kingdom activities. ⁴¹ The lamp that brings light to our heart is the "eye of our heart" and the body is our whole person.

*The lamp [source of light] of the body is the eye [of the heart]. If your eye is **good**, your whole body will be **full of light**. ²³But if your eye is **bad**, your whole body will be full of darkness. If the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! ⁴²*

LOVING JESUS IN THE FACE OF NEW RELATIONAL CHALLENGES ⁴³

Seeking to walk out the kingdom of God lifestyle described in Matthew 5-6 will create challenges that result in new relational dynamics. Some will be positive and some negative. New relationships will be established as old ones are changed, sometimes improved and other times damaged. We must not be critical of others who pursue God with less intensity ⁴⁴ or who oppose us. ⁴⁵ We must seek Jesus to intervene in our relationships, ⁴⁶ yet without drawing back from our wholehearted pursuit of God ⁴⁷ and as we discern false grace messages. ⁴⁸

***Judge not**, that you be not judged. ²For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and **with the measure you use**, it will be measured back to you...⁵First remove the plank from your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye. ⁶Do not...cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them...tear you in pieces. ⁴⁹*

This exhortation to prayer is in the context of asking God to intervene in our relationships, ⁵⁰ to give us wisdom, to touch the hearts of those we relate to, and to intervene with good circumstances. Jesus calls us to pray at times when people do not treat us in the way we want. ⁵¹ We must not trust our natural strengths to war against them. We must be careful not to neglect prayer, knowing that the spirit of prayer is our best tool, but not our only one. ⁵²

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you...¹¹**How much more** will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! ¹²**Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them...** ⁵² Matthew 7:7-12*

We must not draw back from wholeheartedly pursuing Jesus by being discouraged by relational conflicts, 53 nor by being seduced by false grace messages and false ministries 54

*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction ...¹⁴Narrow is the gate and **difficult is the way** which leads to life...¹⁵Beware of **false prophets**, who come to you in sheep's clothing...¹⁶You will know them by their fruits... 55*

OUR LOVE AND OBEDIENCE WILL BE TESTED AND PROVEN 56

Our love and obedience will be tested in order to be proved genuine under pressure. 57 Will we persevere even when we face trials? The storms of pressures, the end time storm, 58 and the final judgment 59 will show forth the truth of our lives.

*“Not everyone who **says** to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does the will of My Father**...²²Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name...and done many wonders in Your name?’ ...²³I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me...’²⁴Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and **does them**, I will liken him to a **wise man**...²⁵the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall...²⁶Everyone who...**does not do them**, will be **like a foolish man**...²⁷the floods came, and the winds blew on that house; and it fell.” 60*

IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT JESUS CALLS US TO LIVE OUT THE 8 BEATITUDES 61

As we pursue **100 percent obedience**, 62 **resist 6 temptations**, 63 and **pursue 5 kingdom activities** 64 that position our hearts to freely receive more grace. We do all this with confidence in His rewards, both eternal and temporal 65 and His *provisions*. 66 We do this without criticism of others who pursue God with less *intensity* or who oppose us, 67 while we **seek Jesus to intervene** in our relationships, 68 yet without drawing back from our **wholehearted pursuit** of God 69 as we **discern** false grace messages. 70 We do all of this knowing that our obedience will be **tested**. 71 Jesus said that by walking in these truths we will impact society, 72 be great in His eyes, 73 receive treasures in heaven, 74 and **live in this age with our hearts exhilarated in His grace**. 75, 76

Chapter 5.1 – End Notes:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 5:48 2. Matthew 5:3-12 3. Matthew 5:48 4. Matthew 5:3-10 5. Matthew 5:21-48 6. Matthew 6:1-20 7. Matthew 5:13-16 8. Matthew 5:13-16 9. Matthew 5:13-16 10. Matthew 5:17-18 11. Matthew 5:18 12. Matthew 5:19-20 13. Matthew 5:19 14. Matthew 5:21-48 15. Matthew 5:21-26 16. Matthew 5:27-30 17. Matthew 5:31-32 18. Matthew 5:33-37 19. Matthew 5:38-42 20. Matthew 5:43-47 21. Matthew 5:48 22. Matthew 6:1-20 23. Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21 24. Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21 25. Matthew 6:5-13 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Matthew 6:14-15; 5:44 27. Matthew 6:16-18 28. Matthew 6:4-20 29. James 4:6 30. James 4:6 31. 2 Corinthians 12:9 32. Matthew 6:20-34 33. Hebrews 11:6 34. Hebrews 11:6 35. Matthew 6:20-34 36. Matthew 6:20-24 37. Matthew 6:24-33 38. Matthew 6:4-24 39. Matthew 6:25-33 40. Matthew 5:21-48 41. Matthew 6:1-20 42. Matthew 6:22-23 43. Matthew 7:1-20 44. Matthew 7:1-5 45. Matthew 7:6 46. Matthew 7:7 -12 47. Matthew 7:13-14 48. Matthew 7:15-20 49. Matthew 7:1-6 50. Matthew 7:7 -12 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 51. Matthew 7:12 52. Matthew 7:7-12 53. Matthew 7:13-14 54. Matthew 7:15-20 55. Matthew 7:13-16 56. Matthew 7:21-27 57. Matthew 7:21-27 58. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 59. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 60. Matthew 7:21-27 61. Matthew 5:3-12 62. Matthew 5:48 63. Matthew 5:21-48 64. Matthew 6:1-20 65. Matthew 6:20-24 66. Matthew 6:25-33 67. Matthew 7:1-6 68. Matthew 7:7-12 69. Matthew 7:13-14 70. Matthew 7:15-20 71. Matthew 7:21-27 72. Matthew 5:13-16 73. Matthew 5:19 74. Matthew 6:19-20 75. Matthew 6:22-23
<p>76. Edited from: <i>Overview of the Sermon on the Mount</i> (Matthew 5-7)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.2

Poverty of Spirit: The Foundational Beatitude (Matthew 5:3)

To be poor in spirit is to be aware that we are in great need of experiencing spiritual growth in our heart, ministry, church, and society. This truth is one of the most misunderstood and misapplied truths in the grace of God. To be “happy” means to have a vibrant spirit.

*Blessed are the **poor in spirit** [those who see their need], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who **mourn** [spiritually], for they shall be comforted. 1*

To be poor in spirit is to see ourselves as spiritually poor instead of spiritually rich, in terms of our ability to experience and impart spiritual life without the Spirit. It means seeing our deep need to be helped by God in light of how much God wants to give us; seeing our poverty-stricken state in spiritual things; and, thus, being aware of our spiritual deficiency and neediness.

This virtue starts with the awareness of our need to receive salvation and then continues through our spiritual life. It is a deep awareness of our spiritual needs and deficiencies, especially in light of the call to be perfect. 2

Poor in spirit means that we are aware of our spiritual deficiency in our obedience and love.

We are aware of the need for our love to be developed. “Poverty of spirit” is how we see ourselves; “mourning” is how we feel about what we see.

Poverty of spirit and meekness are closely related, but are not exactly the same virtue. Poverty of spirit acknowledges our lack before God and our inability to produce spiritual life on our own. Meekness is awareness of our lack before people; it includes using our resources to serve them.

The way that we become poor in spirit is by gaining understanding of God’s highest purpose for His people. We see how much God desires to do in us and through us. We are called to walk in love for Jesus and people and then to inspire others to this lifestyle as defined in the Sermon on the Mount. It includes having a vibrant spirit and being hungry for the Word, for a spirit of prayer, and for the release of the Holy Spirit’s power through our words, hands, praying for the sick, and deeds.

God wants to manifest His Presence in our lives and anoint us to inspire other people to walk out the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle as well. 3

We grow in this by seeing what the Scripture says about how much God will do in and through us, by reading biographies of what He did through others, or by receiving teaching that strengthens our vision to live for the fullness of the Spirit in our love, obedience, power, and wisdom. Immerse yourself in teaching, writings, singing, and fellowship that presses in for God’s fullness.

Each generation receives a different measure of the Spirit’s power according to God’s purpose. We do not know exactly what the measure of breakthrough is that the Holy Spirit will give to each of us personally or corporately in this generation. Many lower their expectation and settle for less after years of not receiving the fullness of what the Scripture sets forth for God’s Church.

As our understanding increases, we discern the gap between what God wants to do through and in us and what we experience. We see that we cannot close the gap without the Spirit helping us in response to our seeking Him; we cannot experience more of His fullness without His help, so we set our heart to live in a way that positions us to receive all He has for us. 4

We are gripped by the reality that things are not good enough as they are, and that we do not have power in ourselves to correct things without a dramatic intervention of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we set our heart to reach for the fullness of His purposes and destiny for ourselves and others.

This can be an offensive message because it makes people feel uncomfortable when they realize that they have a great spiritual lack and need to respond in specific ways. Many agree with the message in principle but are troubled by it when it touches them specifically and personally.

Jesus addressed this as the root problem in the church of Laodicea. 5 When a ministry, either individual or corporate, becomes rich in finances, popularity, and influence they are tempted with spiritual passivity. The Lord spoke to Howard Pitman in 1979 that the church in the Western world was living like the Laodiceans, without knowing it.

*...you are **lukewarm**...neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, “I am rich, have become wealthy, and **have need of nothing**” and do not know that you are **wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked**...¹⁹As many as I love, I rebuke...be zealous and repent...²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne. 6*

In the dungeon with Joseph, was a cupbearer and a baker. 7 Genesis 40:2-19 They represented two types of ministry. The baker poisoned the king’s bread; the cupbearer was innocent and was exalted to serve wine in the king’s presence. The Lord shows that the “poison in the bread” is ministry that does ***not produce humility***.

Theirs is the kingdom: Theirs “is” the kingdom, not “shall be.” Jesus promised that any who live poor in spirit would experience the kingdom realities. This includes having a vibrant spirit, feeling God’s presence, and being a vehicle of His presence to others. Many feel a lack in these realities without ever connecting it to being poor in spirit.

The kingdom belongs to us now. This speaks of experiencing more of the kingdom of God in a personal way.

OUR VISION FOR THE IMPARTATION OF GOD’S LIFE

Two different words for *life* are used in the New Testament: the word for natural or animal life and the word for God’s supernatural life—*zoe*. We cannot impart *zoe* through natural abilities.

Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man...you have no life [zoe] in you. 7
It is the Spirit who gives life [zoe]; the flesh profits nothing. 8

Paul said that no good thing was in him apart from God’s grace. To be poor in spirit includes seeing ourselves rightly, specifically with regard to our natural abilities and dedication being unable to produce spiritual life; it starts with salvation, then grows in our heart and our ministry.

*For I know that **in me** (that is, in my flesh) **nothing good dwells**; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find...²⁴**O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?** ²⁵**I thank God—through Jesus Christ!** 9*

Having a strong desire to experience and impart the Spirit's "zoe life" gives us urgency to press in to God for a progressively greater breakthrough in our heart and ministry and in the Church.

Mistakes are made in the application of this truth. We are not to be comforted by externals in our quest for a deep spiritual breakthrough, like big crowds, growing popularity, and human enthusiasm in meetings. Do not mistake it for the impartation of zoe life that leads to people living a "Sermon on the Mount" kingdom of God lifestyle. Some confuse the outward, enthusiastic responses of people and a growing ministry influence for the impartation of zoe to the people.

We press in to God, having confidence that He enjoys us and that our weak efforts and limited impact are valuable to Him and move Him. **We are not to despise the smallness of our work** and spiritual impact; neither must we despise growth, popularity, and human enthusiasm in our ministry, but we are certainly not to be content with it.

To apply this rightly in the life of a believer, we must **distinguish between our legal position and our living condition in grace**. What Jesus' work on the cross freely and instantly **worked for us** is what He now progressively **works in us** as we take up our cross in response to His grace.

Many believers feel inferior to others when comparing their gifting, dedication, and achievements to others' gifts, but this is not the same as being poor in spirit. Furthermore, many believers feel condemned before God when they relate to Him based on their dedication, but neither is this the same as being poor in spirit.

We must see God's enjoyment of us and how He values the small things that we are doing, as we press in for a greater breakthrough in our heart and ministry, knowing that He has more for us. We are to feel confident in God's love and to receive His esteem of our small effort, but without being content with the measure of the Spirit that we walk in and impart to others.

NOT BEING CONTENT WITH ANYTHING LESS THAN GOD'S HIGHEST

Jesus charges us to be very careful what we listen to or accept as the truth of Scripture. This is a most important text related to the understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit.

*The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the **desires for other things** entering in **choke the word**, and it becomes unfruitful...²⁴**Take heed what you hear. With the same **measure you use**, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, **more will be given.**** 10*

Do not be content with outward responses to your ministry, but press on for the power to make the inward change, as seen in the Sermon on the Mount.

Many evaluate themselves spiritually by comparing themselves with others. It makes them feel superior and successful. But we must evaluate ourselves by the Word of God. What is the standard of Christianity that you refuse to live without?

*We dare **not**...compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and **comparing themselves among themselves**, are not wise. 11*

The Laodiceans were seduced by their popularity and the enthusiasm around them so that they no longer sought God wholeheartedly. This issue separates different types of ministries today.

Believers in prosperous circumstances often lack this virtue. Feeling superior to others in their gifting and accomplishments results in self-confidence, which minimizes their need for God.

The ear-tickling that Paul warned of is common today as a distorted grace message that seeks to make people feel comfortable. Most truths related to our walk with God are double-edged, having positive and negative aspects. The distortion of this message is in emphasizing the positive aspect and ignoring the negative. The net result is a message that is less than truthful.

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have **itching ears**, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴and they will turn their ears away from the truth...⁵But you be watchful in all things... 12*

Do not let anyone put “humanistic water” on your fire to press in for fullness. There are well-meaning believers who use the Scripture in a non-biblical way in their desire to comfort others. The result is that they put the fire out in people making them feel good in compromise. 13

We must understand of poverty of spirit and continually press in to God for His greater love, purity, healing, and evangelism.

Chapter 5.2 – End Notes:

1. Matthew 5:3-4	5. Revelation 3:14-21	9. Romans 7:18-25
2. Matthew 5:48	6. Revelation 3:16-21	10. Mark 4:19-24
3. Matthew 5:19	7. John 6:53	11. 2 Corinthians 10:12
4. Matthew 6:1-18	8. John 6:63	12. 2 Timothy 4:3-5
13. Edited from: The Kingdom lifestyle <i>Poverty of the Spirit: Foundational Beatitude</i> (Matthew 5:3)		

CHAPTER 5.3

Mourning, meekness and spiritual hunger (Matthew 5:4-6)

SPIRITUAL MOURNING 1

Being poor in spirit is of how we see ourselves; spiritual mourning refers to how we feel about what we see. When we see differently, then we feel differently. The result of seeing our great need is that we feel pain as we mourn for more experience of God's presence in our life. It does not mean mourning over difficult circumstances, but for a spiritual breakthrough.

*⁴Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted. 2*

Godly sorrow or mourning are a supernatural work of the Spirit that will lead you to salvation or deliverance from a dull spirit and a powerless ministry. This mourning is God's gift to us. Your desire for God is His gift to you. This gift of mourning is rare, precious, and powerful and it cannot be bought. Therefore, we must refuse to be comforted by anything except the breakthrough of the fullness that the Lord promises us in His Word.

***Godly sorrow produces repentance** [wholeheartedness] **leading to salvation** [breakthrough]...¹¹**What diligence it produced in you...what indignation** [against compromise], *what fear* [fear of God], *what vehement desire* [for Jesus], *what zeal, what vindication!* 3*

We **mourn** because we see how much God longs to give to our life, ministry, church, and in the nations. It refers to **the pain we feel in seeing the gap between what God has for us and what we are experiencing**. Isaiah was undone because he saw the spiritual state of his life and nation.

*So I said: "Woe is me, for **I am undone!** Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of **unclean lips**; for my eyes have seen the King..." 4*

We mourn over our double-mindedness, failures, and lack of follow-through in spiritual things.

***Draw near to God** and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands...and purify your hearts, you **double-minded**. ⁹Lament and **mourn** and weep! Let your laughter be turned to **mourning** and your joy to **gloom**. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord... 5*

We must continually be aware of who we are in Christ and what we are experiencing in God. while at the same time growing in our awareness of how much more there is to experience. We experience a measure of joy with gratitude for what He has given us while yet mourning to experience so much more. Mourning does not cancel our confidence that God enjoys us and values our small efforts and ministry impact. 6

***We are grateful for all that we experience in God's grace, but we are never content without pressing in for His fullness.** We must never despise the measure of blessing that we experience, but must seek a greater measure.*

Feeling the pain of this godly desperation and holy discontent causes us to be extreme in rearranging our life to spend our strength, time, and money to seek God for all that He will give. Our cry for more cannot be answered by a human solution. Our culture so values comfort that our tendency is to seek and give the wrong comfort. Refuse to be comforted by anything less than God's highest. Refuse false comforts that are rooted in human sentiment. Don't let a well-meaning believer give you false comfort that steals your vision to experience all that Jesus has provided for you. Believers who have never been pained by their spiritual lack will miss out on much of what God desires for them. They are stuck in barrenness without being aware of it.

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK 7

Poverty of spirit and meekness are related, but have important distinctions. Poverty of spirit starts with knowing of our spiritual lack before God and our great need for His resources. Meekness involves knowing our lack before people and our indebtedness to God for the resources that He gave us and His ownership. This changes how we use what He gives us.

*Blessed are the **mee**k, for they shall inherit the earth. 8*

Our natural mindset is to see our resources, our gifting, money, position of authority, as mostly belonging to us and being the fruit of our dedication and hard work.

Walking in meekness or humility is not the same as the personality temperament of timidity that is rooted in the fear of man and low self-esteem. Meekness is to have power over our selfishness. We naturally think that we deserve better treatment from God and people in our circumstances.

The essence of meekness is rooted in who we are preoccupied with. The meek are preoccupied with Jesus as their source and owner of everything they possess. Therefore, they are grateful for it and they use it with a servant spirit and with generosity. By nature, we are preoccupied with ourselves and with the sense that we deserve more honor, money, and favor than we receive. This results in a sense of entitlement that complains and demands more privileges and honor because of how we esteem our gifting, accomplishments, dedication, or position.

If we see that everything we have received is a gift of the grace of God, then we will not view it with a boastful or proud attitude. We display pride when we complain about how small the measure of blessing is or by using our gifting, position of authority, or money as if it was mostly ours instead of being a gracious stewardship from God that we use with a servant spirit. Those who boast may think, "How dare someone overlook or resist one as gifted, dedicated, and deserving as I am."

*For who makes you differ from another? And **what do you have** that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, **why do you boast** as if you had not received it? 9*

With a wrong view of our gifting or lack of gifting, position or lack of position, wealth or lack of wealth, we lack gratitude and thus can easily become offended when we are overlooked or resisted. The meek know that they deserve God's discipline much more than any measure, small or large, of blessing that He has given them before people. The meek embrace important tasks or menial tasks with gratitude, knowing they are getting more than they deserve from God. The meek refuse to manipulate or exert pressure on people to promote them.

*Which of you, having a servant plowing...will say to him, "Come at once and sit down to eat?"⁸ But will he not rather say to him, "Prepare something for my supper...?"⁹ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? **I think not.**¹⁰ So likewise you, when you have **done all those things** which you are commanded, **say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'**"¹⁰*

The promise of inheriting the earth speaks of having influence and impact. It is partially fulfilled in this life and completely fulfilled in the age to come. ¹¹

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS ¹²

Jesus taught on the necessity, glory, and liberty of hungering for more in the grace of God. Jesus called us to press into God for the release of righteousness in our personal lives, for others, and in society. To hunger for righteousness is to press into God to experience more with Him. We refuse to be denied in our pursuit of the fullness of His promises. Some define grace as the absence of pressing into God, but this is a distorted message of grace, which is common today.

*Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they shall be filled.* ¹³

Seeing our great need ¹⁴ causes us to mourn ¹⁵ for a breakthrough. We are so desperate that we use all our resources or strengths to seek God and serve His purpose. ¹⁶ Our hunger increases by the grace of sustained zeal that seeks Him long-term, not just for a season. ¹⁷

Paul pressed in hard for the prize of walking in the fullness of His destiny in the grace of God.

*Not that I have already attained...**I press on**, that I may **lay hold of** that for which Christ Jesus has also **laid hold of me** [fullness of Paul's destiny]...¹⁴ **I press toward the goal** for the prize of the upward call [fullness of Paul's destiny] of God in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁸

As we hunger and thirst, we will embrace whatever it takes to experience more of God. Part of hungering and thirsting for more includes the grace of fasting. We are pursuing a Person who releases righteousness in us and through us. Jesus is worthy of our efforts to press into God.

We seek God for a breakthrough of righteousness in our heart, in the lives of others, and in the nations. We long to experience more grace to follow through in our commitment to God.

We care about righteousness in the small issues of our heart and speech. Immediately after this, Jesus spoke of righteousness in 6 areas:

- Resisting anger
- Immorality
- Disloyalty in relationships
- Swearing falsely
- Retaliating
- Passivity that does not walk in love ¹⁹

Hunger is one of the most important signs of life. When there is no hunger for a sustained period, then there is no life. Many live in a “spiritual intensive care unit” without any hunger for prayer or the Word. This is abnormal Christianity. Hungerless and passionless Christianity is not normal from God's point of view. Lack of hunger is a serious sign of sickness in the spirit.

Gaining new ground in the grace of God—growing in our hunger and pursuit of God—is the only way to keep the ground we have today.

There is no static position. Our heart is either growing colder or hotter.

It is not staying the same. The Spirit is willing to make anyone spiritually hungry, if they will begin to seek Him for it.

We press in with the confidence that He enjoys us and that He esteems our weak efforts and small works. We do not despise the smallness of our work, but neither are we content with it.

Jesus taught that as we mourn and stay spiritually hungry that *we will be filled* and will progressively experience more grace for righteousness in our lives. [20](#)

Chapter 5.3 – End Notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 5:4 2. Matthew 5:3-4 3. 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 4. Isaiah 6:5 5. James 4:8-10 6. Matthew 25:21 7. Matthew 5:5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Matthew 5:5 9. 1 Corinthians 4:7 10. Luke 17:7-10 11. Revelation 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6 12. Matthew 5:6 13. Matthew 5:6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Matthew 5:3 15. Matthew 5:4 16. Matthew 5:5 17. Matthew 5:6 18. Philippians 3:12-14 19. Matthew 5:21-48
<p>20. Edited from Sermon on the Mount: <i>Mourning, meekness and spiritual hunger</i></p>		

CHAPTER 5.4

MERCY, PURITY, PEACEMAKING AND PERSECUTION (Matthew 5:7-12)

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL 1

*Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall obtain mercy. 2*

Receiving and giving mercy is essential to our happiness and greatness. Being merciful is not a call to be casual about sin with “unsanctified mercy.” God is equally merciful, holy, and just. God gives mercy to give His people a new beginning so that they would fear God.

*But there is forgiveness with You, **that You may be feared.** 3*

There are various ways to express mercy. We are called to be tender towards those who mistreat us and complain against us, who annoy us, who are different, who are less committed to God than we are, who make mistakes, who stumble in scandalous sins, and especially those who suffer and are in great need due to poverty, sickness, oppression, persecution, or other trials. We are to help people in all these categories to feel accepted and valued by both God and His people.

*Put on **tender mercies**, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³**bearing with one another**, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a **complaint** against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also **must do.** 4*

To those who mistreat us: Jesus calls us to give mercy to those who mistreat us by lying about us or by taking what is ours, our position, money, honor, people. He calls us to give mercy to those we work closely with, even if they speak untrue things about us. He calls us to restrain our insistence on being treated fairly, with justice, by showing tender mercy that refuses to take revenge on a “friend” who betrays us. This type of mercy is a work of grace in us that submits to Jesus’ authority. It is more than natural kindness.

*But I say to you, **love your enemies**, **bless** those who curse you, **do good** to those who hate you, and **pray for** those who spitefully use you and persecute you. 5*

To those who are suffering: To be merciful is to seek to help people who are suffering. God’s mercy stirs our heart and moves our hand to help those in need. Jesus gives an illustration of showing mercy in the parable of the “Good Samaritan.” 6 When we are moved to action to help those in difficult circumstances, we are seeking to reduce the miseries of others even if it requires denying our personal comfort.

*Whoever has this world’s goods, and **sees his brother in need**, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love [mercy] of God abide in him? 7*

To those who stumble in scandalous sin: To be merciful to people who experience significant spiritual failure, to cover people’s failures and tenderly seek to help them. It causes us to sympathize with those who deserve the trouble that they are in. It is not “unsanctified mercy,” but it is the quality of mercy that agrees with God. 8

We typically give mercy to the measure that we understand that we have received it from God. When we lack mercy, it is a sign that we do not clearly see the mercy that God has given us. When we think we have been treated unfairly, like being overlooked by God and His people,

then we are not able to be genuinely gracious towards others. What helps us resist our natural anger and annoyance towards others is gratitude for receiving mercy that we do not deserve. We have each received far more forgiveness, after being born again, than we perceive or deserve.

Justice gives what we deserve and mercy receives what we do *not* deserve. God always gives at least what we deserve because He is just. Yet, He is free to give more than what we deserve. Our life is full of God's mercy in receiving so much more than we really deserve. We can overlook the fact that we do not deserve the possessions and position that we have. We can compare our lack of blessing and honor with others and conclude that we did not get what we deserved. ⁹

*They complained...¹²saying, "These last men have **worked only one hour**, and you made them **equal to us** who have borne the burden and the heat of the day."¹³But He...said, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong...¹⁵Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is **your eye evil because I am good?**"¹⁰*

The measure of our gratitude is the measure of our understanding of the mercy that we received. The measure of our anger is the measure of our lack of understanding of the mercy we received. God delights in showing us His mercy. He wants us to delight in this by the work of the Spirit in us. Jesus wants us to be a part of His redemptive plans. Embrace His tenderness toward them.

*Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant...? He does not retain His anger forever, because **He delights in mercy.*** ¹¹

We shall receive more mercy, if we give mercy to others. Jesus highlights the principle that we will reap whatever we sow. He develops this principle more. ¹² We will reap mercy at the hands of others as we sow mercy. God gives more mercy to those who pass it on.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART ¹³

*Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they shall see God.* ¹⁴

Purity of heart includes purity in our *morals, motives, and methods*. To be pure means to live with the goal of single-minded obedience to Jesus and to resist the defilement that comes from lust. ¹⁵ The heart includes our mind, emotions, and will.

- **Morals:** To resist fleshly lusts which war against our heart

*I beg you...**abstain from fleshly lusts** which war against the soul... ¹⁶*

*Out of the heart of men, proceed **evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders...***

*²³All these evil things come from within and **defile** a man. ¹⁷*

- **Motives:** To seek to give more to people than we seek to receive from them
- **Methods:** Without manipulation or distortion in any of the processes

They shall see God: The pure will have an increased capacity to see and experience God. This is one of the greatest promises in God's Word. This promise is partially fulfilled in this life. To see God is the privilege of the living creatures, who live closest to God. They are full of eyes and thus are blessed with a vast capacity to see God. ¹⁸

*The four living creatures...were **full of eyes** around and within! Revelation 4:8*

The ultimate experience of Christianity now and for eternity is to know, or see, God. 19

*This is eternal life, that they may **know You**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ... 20*

There is no substitute for purity for those who want to see and experience more of God. **Purity** does not cause us to earn revelation of God, but it **positions** us so that our spiritual capacity can be enlarged to see and **experience God**. We must be in agreement with God's purity to see more.

*Pursue...**holiness** [purity], without which **no one will see the Lord**... 21*

*God is light, and in Him is **no darkness at all**. 22* In the spiritual realm, light and darkness cannot mix. **We will "see God" only to the degree that we think like Him**. The urge to live before man's eyes instead of God's fades before this promise. Knowing that the Spirit sees everything in our heart motivates us to live in a way that agrees with Him.

Believing and pursuing the promise of seeing God in a greater way will revolutionize our life. When our spiritual eye is single in our obedience to Jesus, then our whole body is full of light.

*If your [spiritual] **eye is good** [single], your whole body will be **full of light**. 23*

There is nothing more important in life than coming into communion with God!

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS 24

*Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God. 25*

Jesus calls us to avoid creating strife and to work to reconcile and repair relationships. It takes time to hear the hearts of others so that we may properly honor them. The peacemaker sees the value of investing time and energy to bring peace between individuals, families, races, and ministries, in social, civic, and marketplace issues, and even in the nations.

We are called to live peaceably with all men by humbling ourselves to serve them and to refuse to push our agenda or to complain against them. We are to make godly appeals in the right spirit and way. An argumentative person is one who speaks from their pride. 26

*If it is possible, **as much as depends on you**, live peaceably with all men. 27*

By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-advised is wisdom. 28

Peace is not sought at the expense of truth and righteousness. It is not a peace at any price.

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 29

They shall be called sons of God: Peacemakers will resemble God to many. 30 The promise is to be called sons of God, so that even unbelievers may say about them, "They are like God."

BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE 31

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven... 32

Jesus blesses any who will endure persecution for His sake with a rejoicing spirit. Persecution includes being penalized or harmed socially, verbally, financially, or physically. Jesus warns His people to expect persecution and tells us how to respond to it. 33

Three blessings that come for enduring persecution with a rejoicing heart are as follows:

- Persecution produces perseverance and godly character in us in this age. 34
- The Spirit of glory rests on those who are being persecuted. 35
- Great eternal rewards will be received in the age to come. 36

***For righteousness' sake:* Test yourself when you are being resisted by others. Often, people are resisted for saying the truth with a wrong spirit or without wisdom. Learn to know the difference between being persecuted for Jesus sake or for a fleshly cause. 37**

Chapter 5.4 – End notes:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 5:7 2. Matthew 5:7 3. Psalm130:4 4. Colossians 3:12-13 5. Matthew 5:44 6. Luke 10:30-37 7. 1 John 3:17 8. Philippians 1:9-10 9. Matthew 20:1-16 10. Matthew 20:11-15 11. Micah 7:18 12. Matthew 7:2 13. Matthew 5:8 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Matthew 5:8 15. Matthew 6:22 16. 1 Peter 2:11 17. Mark 7:21-23 18. Revelation 4:8 19. Revelation 22:4 20. John 17:3 21. Hebrews 12:14 22. 1 John 1:5 23. Matthew 6:22 24. Matthew 5:9 25. Matthew 5:9 26. Proverbs 13:10 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 27. Romans 12:18 28. Proverbs 13:10 29. Matthew10:34 30. Matthew 5:45 31. Matthew 5:10-12 32. Matthew 5:10-12 33. John 15:18-25 34. Romans 5:3-5 35. 1 Peter 4:14 36. Romans 8:17-18; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
<p>37. Edited from: Sermon on the Mount: <i>Mercy , Purity, Peacemaking and Persecution</i> (Matthew 5:7-12)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.5

KINGDOM IMPACT: BEING SALT AND LIGHT (MATTHEW 5:13-20)

Jesus used the metaphors of salt and light to describe the impact on society of God's people who walk out the 8 Beatitudes. ¹ Jesus sees the world as filled with moral decay and spiritual darkness. He describes believers as salt and light and unbelievers as the earth and world.

*You are the **salt** of the earth; but if the **salt loses its flavor**, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing...¹⁴You are the **light** of the world...¹⁵Nor do they **light a lamp and put it under a basket**, but on a lampstand, and it **gives light to all** who are in the house. ²*

Salt: Salt is a preservative and it causes food to taste better. God's people are to function spiritually as salt that hinders decay in a sinful society and makes people thirsty for Jesus. Before refrigeration was invented, salt was rubbed into meat to prevent it from decaying.

Light: Light exposes darkness and gives direction. God's people are to reveal the truth about Jesus by our words and deeds to a world filled with darkness.

A lifestyle that embraces the 8 Beatitudes is costly to the flesh, leads to persecution, and requires sacrificial service. Someone may ask, "Where are these things going and will it be worth the effort?"

After calling us to walk in the 8 Beatitudes, ³ Jesus encourages us by giving us the assurance that pursuit of a costly and demanding kingdom lifestyle will impact others. ⁴ Jesus is saying, "I have a glorious plan to change the world through My people in relationship with Me."

Jesus' people are His primary change agents and world changers. We should fully embrace this great privilege and responsibility.

The main weapons in this spiritual war include the 8 Beatitudes, our words, and good works.

We are in the minority and our message is often scorned. What good can meek people who mourn over their sin do? It seems that we are too weak and too few in number to change the earth. Jesus called a few young men to be the salt and the light of the world.

Martin Luther said, "*With His Word I can be more defiant and boastful than they with all their power, swords, and guns.*"

Jesus calls His disciples to be salt and light in a world filled with moral decay and spiritual darkness. The world cannot stop itself from rotting or descending into greater darkness. Only salt and light introduced from outside this world can prevent the decay and dispel the darkness.

The salt must retain its saltiness and the light must not be hidden Jesus gave these two conditions for the effectiveness of His Church. The Church and the world have conflicting values and their own distinct message. Our power is found in maintaining distinctions. We are tempted to blur the lines in order to be more accepted by people who reject Jesus and His message.

The call to be salt and light is a call to make a relevant impact on society. We can only do this as we are true to the message and refuse the temptation to distort it by removing difficult aspects.

Jesus' teachings are offensive to the natural worldly mind and different from the values of the present world systems.

- C. S. Lewis wrote of *resistance thinking* that is *against the world yet for the world*. When we weaken Jesus' teaching to make it acceptable and comfortable, we present something other than the true gospel. We must uphold Jesus' teaching on self-denial, sacrifice, and persecution, without minimizing the aspects that are more difficult or repellent to people.
- Our message is both *world-affirming* and *world-denying* as we preach on the scandal of the cross with its two applications. First, Jesus died on the cross as the only way to obtain our deliverance. Second, we must respond to His grace by embracing the cross as a lifestyle. Refusing this 2-fold message leaves the Church powerless and in compromise. We must proclaim the dignity and destiny of *what God has called the world to be* while at the same time proclaiming *what the world has become* in all its depravity.
- The idea of blending into the secular scene with music, fashion and movies to win people *by becoming like them* is a great mistake.

Jesus taught that believers who are indistinguishable from non-Christians are useless in bringing real change to the world.

The message is for people who feel hopeless in the face of the political, social, and economic forces which seem to control them. **Jesus is raising up His revolutionaries, who are dedicated to changing the world by spreading His revolution of love, truth, and righteousness.**

Losing our saltiness: We can lose our saltiness and fail to shine as a lamp by not walking out the 8 Beatitudes, not standing for truth, and not following through on the good works that God has prompted and prepared us to do. In the ancient world salt became contaminated with impurities or other minerals. Salt was often in the form of a white powder and it could be washed out.

We must be courageous in speaking the truth, which points to who Jesus is and what He wants. The decay-preventing action of salt has a negative element in a society filled with rotteness. We are to speak the uncompromising message of God's holiness and justice in the context of His grace and judgment; then we back it up with good works that demonstrate His love and justice.

Part of our spiritual identity is to be salt and light. Each believer has a responsibility to use their resources to stop decay and bring light to society in their generation, to live as salt and light. We seek to go deep in your walk with Jesus; stand for truth, work hard, give much, resist sin, and serve others as salt and light. Do this, even in your weakness because you salt and light.

YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

*You are the light of the world. A **city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.** ¹⁵Nor do they **light a lamp** and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light so shine before men,** that they may see your good works and **glorify your Father...** 5*

Light a lamp: If we ask the Spirit, He will give us ideas for service and truths to speak out on. In this way, He “lights our lamp.” We must follow through on these ideas and stand for these truths. He will often give us very simple assignments to help people in practical ways, or to start a Bible study, or to reach our neighbors. To let our lamp shine means to act on these directives from the Spirit. Many refuse them because they reach only a few people and are routine and mundane.

Let your light shine before men: We must speak up and follow through in service. We must not hide the truth deliberately out of fear, or neglect to act because of lust or laziness.

*I was **afraid,** and went and hid your talent in the ground...²⁶His lord answered, “You **wicked and lazy servant...**” ²⁸Take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten.” 6*

A city that cannot be hidden: Jesus asserted that a city set on a hill could not be hidden. A city of lights is made up of many individual lights that shine together. It is glorious when many work together, each making a small impact, but collectively making an impact that cannot be hidden. The city is seen when many individuals are faithful to speak up and follow through in service.

Glorify your Father: We are to speak and act with humility, tenderness, and faithfulness to truth. Jesus talked about the spirit in which we serve and make the truth known. We are to live, speak, and act in a way that draws attention to God, without drawing attention to or promoting ourselves. The disciple is to do all things in meekness, 7 without showmanship.

THE ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FULL PURPOSE

Jesus is committed to changing the world. Jesus did not destroy or minimize any of God’s purposes, promises, or moral commandments from the Law and Prophets. 8 He came so that the fullness of all that God had promised and commanded would be expressed in the lives of His people. One day the earth will be filled with God’s glory, when the nations walk in righteousness. Jesus will transform the earth and fill it with God’s glory.

*Do not think that I came to **destroy** the Law or the Prophets...but to **fulfill it...**¹⁸I say to you...one jot or one tittle will **by no means** pass from the law **till all is fulfilled.** 9*

THE INVITATION TO BE GREAT

Jesus invites everyone to be great in His kingdom by walking in the Beatitudes. A disciple asks, “Lord, what role can I have in Your plan to transform the earth? We cannot repent of the desire for greatness because God designed our spirit with this longing. We are to repent for seeking it in a wrong way.

***Whoever breaks** [consistently] **one of the least** of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called **least** in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever **does** [consistently] and **teaches them,** he shall be **called great** in the kingdom of heaven. 10*

Whoever: God invites anyone to greatness, without regard for their outward achievements or the size of their ministry. It will be based on the size of their heart in obedience and love to Him. Jesus revealed a new paradigm for greatness. **We are to focus on being great in His sight rather than in the sight of men.** This greatness will be fully manifest in the age to come.

Does and teaches: The issue of our place in His kingdom in the age to come is centered on how much we keep and teach the least of His commandments, especially the Sermon on the Mount. Most people’s teaching ministry is small. We must talk often about the 8 Beatitudes, teaching them in informal ways and in public settings. We teach them in our home groups, to our neighbors. We share our commitments into the 8 Beatitudes, knowing they are not popular.

The least: Jesus warned that if we minimize the **least** of His commandments and teach others to do so, we will be **least** in His kingdom in the age to come. Many, in the name of teaching on God’s grace, promote spiritual laziness, passivity, and a lack of discipline in the grace of God.

Our function in the age to come is linked to our responsiveness in this age. There will be an exchange from “few things” to “*many things*” ¹¹ and from “*very little*” to “*government over ten cities.*” ¹²

*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a **few things**, I will make you ruler over **many things**. Enter into the **joy** of your Lord. ¹³*

*Because you were **faithful in a very little**, have authority over ten cities. ¹⁴*

Your assignment on earth in this age is like a 70-year internship that prepares you for your ministry on earth in the Millennium. Our primary ministry assignment on earth will be in the Millennium and it will last for 1,000 years. ¹⁵

*There is one glory of the sun...and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. ⁴²**So also is the resurrection of the dead.** ^{16,}*

In the age to come, we will each receive a different measure of glory in our resurrected body. We will all be loved equally by Jesus, but we will have varying functions and authority. Some of the saints will be called the least and some will be called the greatest. ¹⁷

Chapter 5.5 – End notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 5:13-16 2. Matthew 5:13-15 3. Matthew 5:3-12 4. Matthew 5:13-14 5. Matthew 5:14-16 6. Matthew 25:25-28 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Matthew 5:5 8. Matthew 5:17-18 9. Matthew 5:18 10. Matthew 5:19 11. Matthew 25:21 12. Luke 19:17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Matthew 25:21 14. Luke 19:17 15. Revelation 20:4-6 16. 1 Corinthians 15:41-42
<p>17. Edited from SERMON ON THE MOUNT: Session 06 Kingdom Impact: Being Salt and Light (Mt. 5:13-20)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.6

OVER COMING THE SPIRIT OF ANGER (MATTHEW 5:21-26)

THE SPIRIT OF MURDER: ESCALATING ANGER

The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' most comprehensive statement about our role in cooperating with grace. We need faith teaching to equip us to experience grace to walk in the 8 Beatitudes. The promise of being blessed includes living with a vibrant heart by the Spirit's activity in us.

Jesus identifies six temptations ¹ that poison and war against our hearts. ² The first issue He addressed was anger, perhaps because it is common and starts so early in us.

*You have heard that it was said to those of old, “**You shall not murder,**” and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. ²²But I say to you that whoever **is angry** with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever **says** to his brother, “Raca!” shall be in danger of the council. But whoever **says**, “You fool!” shall be in danger of hell fire. ²³Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. **First** be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Agree with your adversary **quickly**, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you are thrown into prison. ²⁶Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there **till you have paid the last penny.** ³*

Jesus was not raising the standard of the Old Testament moral law but was explaining its original intention in God's heart. God always intended that the sixth commandment meant not letting the spirit of murder have any place in our life. God's people thought that murder occurred when someone took a human life in anger. Jesus was not teaching against capital punishment, ⁴ nor against a war of defense from aggression, nor against protecting ourselves from attack.

Jesus taught that the spirit of murder operates on many levels and grows through many stages. We must not take anger lightly because it is like a spiritual cancer that continues to grow if not resisted. We were all born with sinful weakness related to anger that must be resisted. Angry emotions are the first stage of the expression of the spirit of murder, which grows into bitterness expressed in angry words and then escalates into vindictive actions.

*¹⁵Looking diligently lest anyone **fall short** of the grace of God; lest **any root of bitterness** springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled... ⁵*

Whoever hates or harbors bitterness towards a brother is operating in a spirit of murder. Satan is a murderer who subtly seeks to draw us into greater expressions of murder. ⁶ He wants our **sinful weakness** related to anger to escalate into a **stronghold of wickedness**, but he needs our cooperation. He wants to poison our spirit and then imprison our spirit.

¹⁵Whoever hates [harbors bitterness against] his brother is a murderer... ⁷

Jesus was graciously revealing how dangerous anger is. He emphasized that the only way to freedom is to deal quickly and fully with anger in each stage of detection. ⁸

OVERCOMING ANGER: 4 PRINCIPLES

1: Whoever is angry is in danger of judgment in the courts of God and man. ⁹ Why? Because the nature of anger is to grow powerfully in us, leading to very dangerous results.

*But I say to you that whoever **is angry** with his brother...shall be in danger of the judgment.* ¹⁰

- Anger is often caused by people blocking our goals, for honor, comfort and money.

*Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your **desires for pleasure** that war in your members? ²You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war...* ¹¹

- The measure of your anger is the measure of your unperceived pride.
- Judgment on anger has many levels depending on the degree to which it is expressed. There is a strong relationship between what we think, say, and do and how our emotions develop and what happens in the spirit realm. What we say and do gives legal access to angelic or demonic powers to be more active in our life.
- The spirit of murder operates to the degree we open the door to it. We can honor social etiquette in public but harbor angry thoughts in private and be in danger.

2: Whoever speaks or acts with anger, without repenting, is in danger because the consequences related to it will surely escalate. ¹² It results in strongholds of anger, murder being developed in them, in others being wounded by them, in relationships being broken, in negative circumstances increasing, and in the hardness of heart that leads to eternal judgment.

*And whoever **says** to his brother, “Raca!” shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, “You fool!” shall be in danger of hell fire.* ¹³

Raca or fool: These were insulting words spoken in anger to a person. Calling someone “raca” was like calling someone an imbecile, an idiot, or stupid.

- Who are we to speak words of contempt and imply that we are a reliable judge of people’s heart, abilities, or value to God? Who are we to exalt ourselves above others?
- When we speak and act with anger and insults, we open the door for anger to grow in us. The spirit of murder operates in us to the capacity of its “legal right” when we open to it.
- When our words and actions are godly, then our emotions will follow and angels will be more active in our life. When our words and actions are ungodly, angry and immoral, then our emotions will follow and demons will be more active in our life.

3: We must act in the opposite spirit of anger, murder with urgency. ¹⁴ When we act in the opposite spirit of love, it begins to heal us of the poison that resides in our heart.

*Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. **First** be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 15*

- ***Therefore:*** Jesus connected the offense in our brother 16 to the angry words that we spoke to the brother that He described in verse 22. We must seek to treat our brother in the same way Jesus treats us. He calls us to be **peacemakers with meekness and mercy**.
- ***Leave your gift:*** Our gifts to Jesus are an expression of our love for Him. He does not receive them if we ignore the offense we caused a brother by our angry words or actions. Jesus requires immediate action without any delay. On the way to offer our gift, He wants us to leave it until we make things right with others. This starts by confessing our anger.
- ***First:*** We cannot present our heart to God as a gift in worship if we speak in anger to His children. Our union with Jesus in worship is deeply connected to our honor of others. Our worship is hindered by how we treat our brother. **We must love the people God loves**.
- It is impossible to be God's child without being a brother or sister to His other children, for whom Jesus died. Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection mean He has become inseparable from those He redeemed. The effect of Jesus' death for us is that He has made us one with Himself. We cannot offer ourselves in union with Him if we are angry against those who belong to Him. Humbling ourselves to make peace with our brother or sister is an essential part of our love and surrender to Jesus and of our spiritual life.
- The fellowship of the Trinity has a human expression in our relationship with our brother. Fellowship is making visible on earth the life of the Trinity that comes to us through Jesus. This glorious human community is rooted in God and His merciful character.

Cain sought to worship the Lord on his terms instead of God's. Cain was the first man in history to wrestle with a root of bitterness. God asked Cain several questions. 17 Cain was angry with both God and Abel. His countenance fell because of disappointment and self-pity.

*The LORD said to Cain, “**Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not **do well**, sin lies at the door. And **its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.**” 18***

God gave Cain opportunity to do well, to have a good future, if he did well. God gives us hope when calling us to repentance. It is never too late to start again. We do well only if we “follow through” on our good choices. If you don't, sin lies at the door waiting to pounce. If yielded to, the root of bitterness leads to greater sin as it spreads to other areas of our emotional life.

4: We pay the full debt for the anger we refuse to repent of. We are liberated only by repentance and by appropriating God's grace to replace the anger that held us in bondage.

***Agree with your adversary quickly** ..., lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, ... and you are thrown into prison. ²⁶Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there **till you have paid the last penny.** 19*

- Jesus told of a man who was thrown into prison for not paying his debts to his creditors. When a man was guilty of not paying his debts, he was handed over to the court, who sought to get money for the creditor. If he was unable to collect it, he took the man who defaulted on his payment and threw him in prison until the debtor was fully paid. We are to see the main point in this parable without seeking for a symbolic meaning.
- ***Assuredly***: Jesus was illustrating the point that we will surely stay in bondage until we resist anger. We are in debt to love people because we have freely received God’s love. As debtors of His love, we must resist anger or we will feel its power, even as believers.

*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing **debt to love** one another ...²⁰*

- ***Prison***: Any who continue in anger will surely experience emotional bondage.
- ***Agree quickly***: We must come to terms quickly with our anger and settle out of court. In other words, we pay our debt of love by asking our brother to forgive us before things escalate. The idea is to immediately resolve the bitterness instead of letting it escalate. The consequences of bitterness and anger will not just go away until we deal with them.
- ***Adversary***: Our anger is our enemy; it has the power to imprison us if we yield to it.
- ***By no means get out***: The way out of the spiritual and emotional debt of our anger is to repent of it and put things right with the people that we expressed our anger to. This only works because of the grace of God in forgiving us and empowering us to walk in freedom as we humble ourselves and accept His forgiveness and transforming power. Jesus made provision for us to be freely forgiven of our anger, but He requires us to repent of anger in order to enjoy liberty in our heart.
- ***Paid the last cent***: They would not get out of prison until they paid the last cent. We do this by repenting of anger in every area of our life highlighted by the Holy Spirit.

All will pay the penalty for their unrepented anger. We pay for it in our emotions, relationships, and circumstances. It is important to understand and determine to live by this spiritual kingdom principle before a severe penalty occurs. ²¹

Chapter 5.6 – End notes:

1. Matthew 5:21-48	7. 1 John 3:15	14. Matthew 5:23-24
2. 1 Peter 2:11	8. Matthew 5:22-26	15. Matthew 5:23-24
3. Matthew 5:21-26	9. Matthew 5:22a	16. Matthew 5:23
4. Genesis 9:6; Leviticus 24:17; Exodus 21:12-14; Numbers 35:16-17	10. Matthew 5:22a	17. Genesis 4:6-7
5. Hebrews 12:15	11. James 4:1-2	18. Genesis 4:6-7
6. John 8:44	12. Matthew 5:22b	19. Matthew 5:25-26
	13. Matthew 5:22b	20. Romans 13:8, NIV
21. EDITED FROM: SERMON ON THE MOUNT : Session 07 Overcoming the Spirit of Anger (Mt. 5:21-26)		

CHAPTER 5.7

OVERCOMING THE SPIRIT OF IMMORALITY (MATTHEW 5:27-30)

THE SPIRIT OF IMMORALITY

Jesus called His disciples to resist the spirit of immorality. ¹ He was not raising the standard of the Old Testament law but, explaining its original intention. In the seventh command, God was speaking of more than avoiding physical adultery, but also the spirit of immorality. The Pharisees taught that committing adultery only involved avoiding the physical act.

*You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall **not commit adultery.**” ²⁸ But I say to you that whoever **looks** at a woman to lust for her has **already** committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your **right eye** causes you to sin, pluck it out...it is **more profitable** that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be **cast into hell.** ³⁰ If your **right hand** causes you to sin, cut it off...for it is **more profitable**...than for your whole body to be **cast into hell.** ²*

Jesus was not giving a comprehensive teaching on freedom from sexual addictions, but focused on **two of the most important and most neglected principles.**

First, the spirit of immorality does not start in one’s actions, but in the eyes and then moves to heart. ³

Second, that we must make radical, even costly and painful decisions to remove whatever stirs up lust. ⁴

Jesus taught how the spirit of immorality operates and grows and how dangerous it is. We must not take it lightly because it is like a spiritual cancer that continues to grow if not resisted.

Immorality includes all sexual activity, including physical, verbal or technological through media, outside of a covenant of marriage between one man and woman.

Jesus knows that immorality grants Satan legal doors of access to oppress and damage our heart and our relationships with God, our family and others.

Jesus as a good shepherd was graciously seeking to help His people by this teaching. He was not railing against sin, but was giving insight to help us detect and then overcome immorality. He wants us to understand the destructive and deceptive nature of the spirit of immorality. He wants us to benefit from this insight so He emphasized, **“It is more profitable for you.”** ⁵ ³⁰ He knew that those who live in purity will encounter God in a deeper way. ⁶

Because God is love, blessing flows from His every act and command. Every connection that we have with Jesus cause His blessing to enrich our lives.

Because God is love, obedience to His commands brings us closer to Him and liberates our hearts.

THE LORD SET ALL SEXUAL EXPRESSION WITHIN THE COVENANT OF MARRIAGE

He knows that the only place where sexual activity enriches one's life is in a covenant commitment to their spouse's life story, pain, weaknesses, joys, goals, family, parents, children, dreams, sickness, prosperity or poverty. To engage in sexuality without this life-long covenant defiles one's spirit, dulls and injures their heart, causes lust to increase, devalues their story, and despises the Lord. [7](#)

THE TWO PRINCIPLES THAT JESUS EMPHASIZED [8](#)

Principle 1: Whoever looks at a woman to lust has already committed adultery in the heart. Jesus explained how the spirit of immorality operates. It is rooted in “looking with lust” at a person directly or through media and internet porn. This fuels the heart with sexual fantasies. Adultery progresses from *eye adultery* to *heart adultery* then to *physical adultery*.

*Whoever **looks** at a woman to lust for her has **already** committed adultery **in his heart**.* [9](#)

Jesus emphasized the role of the eyes as a primary way to hinder the spirit of immorality. It is much easier to close the “eye gate” than to try to put out the raging fires of immoral passions. Job understood the power of making a covenant with his eyes as a way to walk in purity.

*I have made a **covenant with my eyes**; why then should I **look** upon a young woman? ⁹If my heart has been **enticed** by a woman, or if I have **lurked** at my neighbor's door...* [10](#)

David affirmed that the eye gate was the battle front to walk perfectly or to mature before God.

*I will walk within my house with a **perfect heart**.* ³*I will set **nothing** wicked before my eyes...* [11](#)

Principle 2: Jesus emphasized how important it is to deal with immorality in a radical way. A casual approach to lust is not sufficient. We must make radical, even costly and painful proactive decisions to remove whatever stirs up lust in our members. [12](#) This means that some of what we cherish, people, places or things, may need to be removed from our lives.

*If your **right eye** causes you to sin, **pluck it out** and **cast it from you**; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be **cast into hell**.* ³⁰*If your **right hand** causes you to sin, **cut it off** and **cast it from you**; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be **cast into hell**.* [13](#)

One example of dealing radically with lust is to obey Paul's exhortation for men to refuse what is often called “innocent touching” of women, when they know that it stirs lustful desires in them.

*It is good for a man **not to touch** a woman.* [14](#)

Many in the Church have a low view of hell. Those with a biblical view of hell know that God will send the immoral person to hell. This gives us a greater urgency to speak out boldly on it.

***Do not be deceived.** Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰nor thieves...nor drunkards...**will inherit the kingdom of God.** 15*

This you know, that no fornicator...has any inheritance in the kingdom...⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes... 16

The sexually immoral...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire. 17

Enter...into the city [New Jerusalem]. ¹⁵But outside are...sexually immoral... 18

THE DANGER OF LUST IS THAT IT GROWS

The spirit of immorality is unbiased and operates to the degree that anyone opens the door to it. We were all born with sinful weakness. Satan wants our weakness to escalate to wickedness, but he needs our cooperation. He wants to poison our spirit and then imprison it. Augustine wrote, “**Lust yielded to becomes a habit, and a habit not resisted becomes necessity (addiction).**”

Premise: Immorality is dangerous because it grows and becomes uncontrollable. People imagine that they can “dabble with a little immorality,” then control it later. They do not understand the power of a cold heart, darkened mind, and defiled conscience with demonic activity in their life. It increases in corruption, shame, oppression, and perversion now and leading to judgment later.

***Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.** ⁸For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption... 19*

Immorality sins against the body by opening the door for sexual addiction to be established. Immorality defiles the body and dulls the spirit as it provides Satan legal access to enter the human domain through these open doors for demonic activity.

***Flee sexual immorality.** Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 20*

Paul described how people sin against their body by engaging in immorality. He explained how a “penalty” works in those who continually refuse the Spirit’s warnings to resist immorality. The penalty is that God progressively “gives them up” to greater darkness—going from uncleanness 21 to vile passions 22 and finally to a debased mind. 23 When someone is “given up” to dark desires, God lifts the natural restraints that He graciously built into our human design. Thus, they are compelled to yield to greater depths of lust.

***God gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves...²⁶ God gave them up to vile passions.** For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷Likewise the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error... ²⁸God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting... 24*

- First, they are “given up” to uncleanness leaving them compelled by lust to dishonor their bodies by engaging in even more by immoral activities. 25

- Next, they are “**given up**” to vile passions which are even stronger sexual desires that go far beyond what they are accustomed to. ²⁶ Romans 1:26 Burning in lust for new types of sexual experiences is an expression of God’s judgment or “penalty” in their body. ²⁶
- Finally, they are “**given over**” to a debased mind so that all restraints are lifted from their thinking so that they are driven by demonic influences to do very shameful things. ²⁷

THE DANGER OF LUST – GOD JUDGES IT

Jesus reveals how He feels about those who continue in immorality without repenting of it. He warned the churches in Pergamos and Thyatira to not tolerate immorality.

*To...Pergamos write...¹⁴“You have there those who hold the doctrine of **Balaam**, who taught...Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit **sexual immorality**...¹⁶Repent, or I will come to you quickly and will **fight against** them with the sword of My mouth. ²⁸*

*To...Thyatira write...²⁰“You allow...**Jezebel**...to teach and seduce My servants to commit **sexual immorality**...²²I will cast her into a **sickbed**, and those who commit adultery with her into **great tribulation**, unless they repent...²³I will **kill** her children with death... ²⁹*

Believers are sometimes made sick and die prematurely under God’s judgment on immorality. God’s discipline includes Satan being permitted to make the unrepentant sick. ³⁰ Paul commanded the elders to deliver a believer over to Satan, lift God’s protection, allowing Satan to make him sick, to wake him up spiritually so that he would not fall away.

*There is sexual immorality among you...a man has his father's wife...⁴In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered...⁵deliver such a one to **Satan** for the **destruction of the flesh** [sickness], that his spirit may be **saved** in the day of the Lord. ³¹*

If we judge ourselves by repenting, then we will not be disciplined by the Lord. We can **reverse** God’s judgment or discipline by repenting of areas of persistent compromise in our life. The Lord is the avenger of immorality in the lives of unrepentant believers. ³²

*For this reason many are weak and **sick** among you, and many sleep. ³¹If **we would judge ourselves**, we would **not be judged** [by the Lord]. ³²When we are judged, we are chastened [disciplined] by the Lord, that we may **not be condemned** with the world. ³³*

WE MUST DILIGENTLY LIVE IN THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT OF IMMORALITY

We act in the opposite spirit of immorality by diligently seeking to grow in our relationship with Jesus and by meditating on His Word being implanted in us which is able to heal our hearts. You are recommend to read Proverbs 5-7 regularly to be reminded of the terrible cost of immorality.

***Lay aside all filthiness**...and receive with meekness the **implanted word**, which is **able to save** [heal] your souls. ³⁴*

Many issues contribute to being able to walk free from the spirit of immorality. They include:

- **looking inward** by communing with the Spirit through the Word;

- **looking upward** to heaven and its rewards; 35
- **looking backward** to deal with bitterness, shame, and wrong mindsets;
- **looking forward** to God’s assignment in our life and to His end-time purposes so that we are prepared by understanding the coming glory and crisis; 36
- **looking around** to see the pain that our immorality would cause others;
- **looking to others** in relationships with accountability, confessing our weaknesses;
- **looking outward** by establishing boundaries to avoid circumstances that stir lust in us by what we look at, where we go, and what we do. 37

Immorality was called the sin of Balam in the Old Testament. This is how the enemy led the nation of Israel to sin against the law and convent of God. God ultimately judge the people of the nation because of their immoral sin. The enemy is still using this powerful sin to destroy lives, marriages, children, families, churches, communities and nations.

Pray for the grace of God to resist the progressive seduction of immorality in your life.

Chapter 5.7 – End Notes:

1. Matthew 5:27-30 2. Matthew 5:27-30 3. Matthew 5:28 4. Matthew 5:29 5. Matthew 5:29 6. Matthew 5:8 7. 2 Samuel 12:10 8. Matthew 5:28-30 9. Matthew 5:28 10. Job 31:1, 9 11. Psalm 101:2-3 12. Matthew 5:29-30	13. Matthew 5:29-30 14. 1 Corinthians 7:1 15. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 16. Ephesians 5:5-6 17. Revelation 21:8 18. Revelation 22:14-15 19. Galatians 6:7-8 20. 1 Corinthians 6:18 21. Romans 1:24 22. Romans 1:26 23. Romans 1:28 24. Romans 1:24-28	25. Romans 1:24 26. Romans 1:27 27. Romans 1:28 28. Revelation 2:12-16 29. Revelation 2:18-23 30. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 11:30-32 31. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 32. 1 Thessalonians 4:4-8 33. 1 Corinthians 11:30-32 34. James 1:21 35. Colossians 3:1-4, 23-24 36. 2 Peter 3:14
37. Edited from: Sermon on the Mount: Session 08 Overcoming the Spirit of Immorality (Matthew 5:27-30)		

CHAPTER 5.8

HONORING MARRIAGE AND OUR COMMITMENTS (Matthew 5:31-37)

RESISTING TEMPTATION

There are two temptations that must be resisted. They are closely related.

- **The temptation to disregard the sanctity of marriage—covenant breaking.** ¹
- **The temptation to not keep our word and agreements—commitment breaking.** ²

DISREGARDING THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE (MATTHEW 5:31-32)

*Furthermore it has been said, “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a **certificate of divorce.**” ³²But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason **except sexual immorality** causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.” ³*

We resist the temptation to disregard the sanctity of marriage—covenant breaking. ⁴ The Pharisees taught that the important issue related to divorce was to go through the “proper legal procedure” to obtain a legal certificate of divorce. They focused on the legality of the process.

The physical union of marriage supersedes the legal certificate that the Pharisees were focused on. Jesus does not recognize legal divorce as ending a marriage in God’s sight. The reason the remarriage is called adultery is because He considers the previous marriage to still be valid.

The sanctity of marriage is a very important kingdom value. Divorce and remarriage are only permitted for two reasons—adultery and desertion. The prevailing Protestant view is that remarriage after divorce is biblically sanctioned in cases where divorce occurs after adultery or desertion. This is the position of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

In Matthew 5, Jesus does not give a comprehensive teaching on divorce and remarriage. He does not address the many pastoral issues related to divorce and remarriage, but He focuses on the foundational principle related to the sanctity of the physical bond of marriage. It is important to Jesus that we honor the marriage covenant and be loyal in all relationships.

There are two components in establishing a marriage or in ending one. First, a covenant is made between a man and a woman, with witnesses, authorized by the state. Second, is the physical consummation of the marriage in becoming one flesh. Sexual union by itself does not constitute a marriage unless vows are exchanged in a legal way. A legal divorce does not end a marriage in God’s eyes because the physical bond is not broken. In other words, for a marriage covenant to end in God’s eyes the legal commitment must be ended and the physical bond must be broken.

Jesus’ primary teaching on divorce and remarriage is in Matthew 19:3-9. ⁵

The place in which Jesus gives us the most detail on divorce and remarriage is in Matthew 19.

*He said, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives...⁹Whoever divorces his wife, **except for sexual immorality**, and marries another, **commits adultery**; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” ⁶*

Immorality: Jesus gave only one reason for divorce—sexual immorality (v. 9). The Greek word is *porneia*; it refers to various acts of immorality including adultery and other acts of immorality. The biblical basis for divorce is “acts” of immorality, not just thoughts. In other words, viewing pornography is not a biblical basis for divorce unless it is acted out in physical ways.

Whoever **first** violates the physical bond of the marriage covenant, by having sexual intercourse with one who is not their spouse, breaks the covenant and thus, commits adultery. Jesus taught that any who remarry, without adultery breaking their previous marriage, commits adultery. They commit an **act** of adultery by remarrying, but are not in a **permanent state** of adultery.

Anyone who divorces his wife *causes* her to commit adultery. ⁷ There are two unspoken implications behind this statement. First, that he is never involved in another sexual relationship and second, she will be forced by economic pressures to get remarried.

Desertion for the faith: Paul encountered a new situation in the conversion of Gentiles as the gospel went to the nations. Certain homes were divided due to only one spouse being converting to faith in Jesus. This new situation was the context for a second exception for divorce and remarriage due to circumstances that Jesus did not address. It is for those who are deserted for the faith. The deserted spouse is not bound to the marriage covenant.

*But if the unbeliever **departs**, let him depart; a brother or a sister is **not under bondage** in such cases. But God has called us to peace. ⁸*

A converted spouse was not to leave their unconverted spouse. The converted spouse **sanctifies** the family by influencing them through being a vessel of grace in their home. ⁹

The grace of God is available to empower a divorced believer to be single and live in purity. Wrestling with the difficulties of remaining single is far better than committing adultery.

Believers who violate biblical principles in remarriage must continue in the marriage, but should acknowledge that the new marriage involved an act of adultery. It should be confessed to God with the assurance of His forgiveness. Staying in the marriage is God’s will for the couple. A physical union has been formed and it is now sacred to God and He can still bless them.

REFUSING TO MAKE FALSE COMMITMENTS ¹⁰

*“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ ³⁴But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷But **let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’** For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. ¹¹*

Jesus taught His disciples on the importance of resisting the temptation to not keep our word and agreements—commitment breaking. 12 He did not quote a specific law, but referred to the Pharisees' summary of several laws. 13 Jesus was not correcting or changing a Mosaic law, but was restoring its original meaning.

The Pharisees distorted their application of the third commandment. 14 They taught that the main issue was to keep oaths *in God's name* instead of keeping all of our commitments. They argued that the law forbade using *God's name* in vain, but not in making commitments in vain.

*You shall not take the **name of the LORD your God** in vain... 15*

They saw this command as forbidding profanity, not dishonesty. Therefore, they developed a new system for making vows. They taught that only vows made with God's name were binding. They shifted the attention from the need to keep the vow to the formula used in making it. The original intent in God's heart was to honor God's name and be truthful in what we say. The Pharisees distinguished between vows that were binding and vows that were not binding.

They established new ways to make vows, by swearing not by the name of God, but by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or the temple. The obligation to keep the vow depended on the nature of the object sworn by. 16 They viewed swearing evasively as a way to lie, yet keep the law.

The purpose of swearing in God's name was ordained to restrict man's tendency to lie. Oaths were to be restricted to very serious occasions. The Jews allowed the use of oaths for personal conversations instead of reserving them for the legal courts or between people to end disputes.

In Scripture, oaths are permitted and necessary. They are to be used in formal and legal settings. What Jesus commands is that we not use oaths in personal conversation. Thus, the legitimate use of oaths is to serve godly purposes and not ungodly purposes.

Jesus testified under oath in a legal setting before the Sanhedrin. He had refused to answer His accusers until the high priest put Him under an oath; then Jesus answered. 17 Paul used oaths calling God to witness. 18

*Jesus kept silent. The high priest...said to Him, "I put You **under oath** by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ...!"⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, "**It is as you said.**" 19*

Do not swear at all: Jesus was not referring to legal settings in this command, but to our ordinary conversations with people. He did not intend this command to be taken without any limitations, but qualified it by telling us to not swear by created things (v. 34-36).

Jesus is saying that every oath is an ultimate reference to God. Thus, we do not escape the seriousness of an oath by omitting to use God's name since all oaths are to be honored.

Let your "Yes" be "Yes": Jesus calls for truthfulness and integrity in our commitments. People of integrity do not need oaths and should refuse them unless required by an authority.

Some people *promote themselves in a false way* by exaggerating their commitments. They present themselves as one who will keep their commitments to show up to do work, attend a meeting, give money, solve a problem, run an errand, or spend time with someone.

Our word is our bond. Thus, *to exaggerate our commitments is to lie* by giving a false impression as to how much others can rely on us to do what we said.

We can operate in a *spirit of manipulation* if we promote ourselves in a false way. We do this by portraying ourselves as more committed than what we will follow through on. Someone may say, “I’m committed to this and that,” so that others will accept or applaud them for that commitment.

- However, if over the next months they do not follow through consistently, then it becomes clear that they presented themselves in a way that was not based on truth.
- Some deliberately ignore their commitments and seek to hide them and are evasive about the truth when confronted. Jesus calls us to resist this kind of falsehood in our lifestyle and to live out the truth of what we say.

We are disciples of the One who is “*the Truth*”. 20

When we do not follow through on what we say, *integrity demands that we acknowledge it* to those we committed to. This applies to our marriage, children, workplace, friends, financial obligations, ministry situations. This is to walk out a Sermon on the Mount lifestyle.

The Spirit is restoring integrity in the Church and raising up people who will keep their word.

Who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? ²He who... speaks the truth in his heart...⁴He who swears to his own hurt and does not change. 21

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? ⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not...sworn deceitfully. 22, 23

People used to say, “A man’s word is his bond.” Christians are still called to live by this standard in fear and obedience to the Lord and as a righteous witness to the world.

Chapter 5.8 – End Notes:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 5:31-32 2. Matthew 5:33-37 3. Matthew 5:31-32 4. Matthew 5:31-32 5. Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-15, 27, 39 6. Matthew 19:8-9 7. Matthew 5:32 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. 1 Corinthians 7:15 9. 1 Corinthians 7:12-14 10. Matthew 5:33-37 11. Matthew 5:33-37 12. Matthew 5:33-37 13. Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12; Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 10:20; 23:21-24 14. Exodus 20:7 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Exodus 20:7 16. Matthew 23:16 17. Matthew 26:63-64 18. Romans 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Galatians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 2:5 19. Matthew 26:63-64 20. John 14:6 21. Psalm 15:1-4 22. Psalm 24:3-4
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23. Edited from: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: Session 09 Honoring Marriage and Our Commitments (Matthew 5:31-37)

CHAPTER 5.9

REFUSING RETALIATION AND DEFENSIVENESS (MATTHEW 5:38-42)

REFUSING A SPIRIT OF RETALIATION AND DEFENSIVENESS 1

We cover the fifth temptation that must be resisted, this is the temptation to retaliate and be defensive towards those who offend, insult us or take advantage of us. So much good is lost in our relationship with God, our family, and with others by this mindset which is so natural to us.

We must understand this rightly or we will not even attempt to walk this out. If we will conclude that it is just idealism that is not really possible to walk out, then we end up ignoring this truth.

We do not retaliate or are defensive towards those who insult or take advantage of us.

*...it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." ³⁹But I tell you **not to resist** [retaliate against] an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. ⁴¹And whoever **compels** [forces, NAS] you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴²Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you... 2*

Jesus gave 4 illustrations of the kingdom principle of refusing retaliation and defensiveness. Each of the 4 examples describes one who insults or takes advantage of us in small ways. Jesus He did not give precise rules for every circumstance, but gave us examples that we would apply the principles to other situations. The Sermon was not written as a code of conduct giving details for each situation, but to show us the spirit of the Law.

The Pharisees taught two errors. The Law commanded revenge and that people could administrate it personally outside of the court system. Moses taught the people to not take the law into their own hands, but to resist an evil man by using the court system. The Pharisees empowered people to act in wrong ways and in a wrong spirit in their conflicts.

Eye for an eye: The principle here is that the **punishment must fit the crime.** 3 It was not to be too lenient or too severe. This law defined justice, restrained revenge, protected the innocent from evil doers, protected evil doers from judges with a wrong spirit who were too severe in their penalties, and kept the people from taking the law into their hands outside the court system. If someone poked an eye out, they would not kill the person. There is no record of anyone mutilating someone, but rather making a monetary payment.

The law of Moses did not command revenge, but to love one another without bearing a grudge. The people were to live free from the spirit of revenge, vengeance and defensiveness or grudge.

*You shall **not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge...but love your neighbor... 4***

Do not resist: The Greek verb (anthistimi) here translated *resist* means to *oppose* or *withstand* someone or to *fight back*. In other words, we are not to retaliate or seek to pay back people who do evil against us by insulting us or troubling us in small ways. Jesus was speaking about our attitude toward people who offend, infringe on our personal rights or cause us inconveniences. Jesus was not teaching against the principle of just retribution in the legal court system.

Jesus called us to respond to evil men in the ***right way***, not taking the law into our own hands, in the ***right spirit*** with gracious humility, and in ***the right measure***, that we accept small injustices. This passage has been often misapplied in a way that contradicts the plain and obvious teaching of other Scriptures. Scripture must always be compared with Scripture to gain the right meaning.

Pacifism: This is one of the most debated passages in the Bible related to pacifism or forbidding the use of all force. Some interpret this passage, without any qualification, as teaching against soldiers, police, or judges. **Jesus was not teaching the rejection of all force against evil men**, including legal courts, military, or police. Civil leaders are God's servants to resist evil. **5** War, police, and prisons are a part of God's order in a fallen world. We are to defend ourselves and others from evil men. The abuse of a wife or child is always to be resisted as evil.

Jesus told His disciples to carry a sword to defend themselves, **6** taught us how to resist one who sins against us, **7** resisted the officer who struck Him, **8** and cleansed the temple with a whip. **9** Peter resisted the evil actions of Ananias and Sapphira. **10** Paul spoke of resisting brothers in the right way. **11** Paul resisted Peter for hypocrisy **12** and appealed to government. **13**

An evil person: Jesus describes the people pursuing you as having evil goals and motives. This is a key part of the context that affects the way we interpret the four examples that Jesus gave us.

Jesus calls us to live with a liberated heart that is free from the spirit of revenge, defensiveness, and entitlement and their continual petty complaints against those they relate to. People protest saying, "It is not the money, but the principle." Yes, the issue is who will walk out this kingdom principle? We can only do this if we see the big picture of receiving Jesus' love and mercy. This makes us grateful so we can respond with a servant spirit that allows others to get their way in small issues. This is not the same as yielding out of the fear of man, which results in bitterness.

Many people live consumed with many small things that bother them. They live in continual turmoil about people not saying the right things or treating them with the honor they think they deserve. They live in continual turmoil until they win their argument. In conflicts, both people can operate in kingdom of God principles or remain stuck in their petty demands for honor, to be treated right or not to be inconvenienced, or they can let go because God has been so gracious to them. When people are entrenched in this, they end up with a broken relationship and bitterness.

*Martha was **distracted** with much serving and...said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve **alone**? Therefore tell her to help me." ⁴¹Jesus...said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are **worried and troubled** [bothered, NAS] about **many things**. **14***

TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK **15**

Jesus is not speaking of physical injury, but of being offended or insulted. If a person hits someone with their right fists, it strikes their left cheek. The right cheek is hit by a backhand to insult someone not to injure them. This speaks of verbal abuse not physical. Jesus applies the principle of non-retaliation beyond merely avoiding taking revenge outside the court system.

*Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, **turn the other** to him also. **16***

Jesus calls us to not seek revenge when insulted, but to endure the insult graciously knowing that the Lord sees us as precious to Him. He will answer for you in His time and way.

*When He [Jesus] was reviled, did **not revile** in return; when He suffered, He did **not threaten**, but **committed Himself** to Him who judges righteously... 17*

We endure offence and insults knowing that the one insulting us does not have the power to enforce them. Being insulted without retaliation makes a deep impression on others because it is so unnatural. An insult can be given with words or with looks. Jesus wants us to not be offended.

Bless and do not curse...**¹⁷*Repay no one evil for evil...*¹⁹*Beloved, do not avenge yourselves ...*²¹*Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good. 18*

If people offend or insult you because you stand for righteousness, then Lord will reward you.

*Blessed are you when they **revile** and persecute you, and **say** all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²**Rejoice and be exceedingly glad**, for great is your reward in heaven... 19*

BEING SUED FOR YOUR SHIRT 20

We are not to fight against people who attack us by using the legal system to take our small possessions like a shirt. The tunic could be compared to a shirt-like garment and the cloak a coat.

*If anyone wants to **sue** you and take your **tunic** [shirt], let him have your **cloak also.*** 21

The issue is in the smallness of the attack. Who sues someone for a shirt? No one sues for something as small as a shirt. The one suing is probably offended with the one they are suing.

Jesus is not referring to a lawsuit that takes your business or home thus jeopardizing your ability or your employees to feed your family. This is about a lawsuit in a small claims court.

If an evil person wants to sue you for a small amount that you can afford, give it to him willingly. It may injure your pride, but it will not affect your ability to feed your family.

Our tendency is to insist on our petty legal rights and to stand on the “principle” of the matter. Our defensiveness can manifest quickly in this sort of situation.

BEING FORCED TO GO ONE MILE

Roman soldiers had the legal authority to require a man to carry the soldier’s gear for a mile. People despised this legal requirement because it was inconvenient, annoying, and even humiliating. Thus, most obeyed this legal requirement, but with a wrong spirit.

*Whoever **compels** [forces, NAS] you to go one mile, **go with him two.*** 22

This has to do with infringement of our time and personal rights by the government. It takes 15 minutes to walk one mile and thus a total of 30 minutes to walk the extra mile. It is easy to feel insulted when those in positions of power infringe on our schedule with inconvenient demands.

If an evil person uses the law to force you to do something that is inconvenient, do it plus more. It does not really affect our ability to fulfill our job, but rather it injures our pride. The passage addresses our natural resentment at the small demands of the government or those in authority.

We try to get out of things without getting caught. That is the attitude Jesus condemns. There are occasions when we are pressed into the service of the State. We are to serve cheerfully.

When those in authority require more than is necessary in small matters, it is easy to feel resentment, but we are to patiently bear the injustice. Examples of this are governmental requirements from taxes, the police or other government agencies. The point is not to resist them by seeking loopholes. We are to cooperate with their request and not ignore it. Jesus is not calling us to become servants to the government, but to bear with small inconveniences.

LET PEOPLE BORROW FROM YOU

We are to allow the evil man to borrow from us and to give with a generous spirit. If someone is in need and asks to borrow something, let them use it. This is not only about people asking for our money, but for our help by allowing them to borrow our things which can help them.

Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow ...you do not turn away. 23

Jesus is not saying that in all circumstances we are to give our money to anyone who asks. He is referring here to our attitude in resisting with bitterness and defensiveness the evil man who troubles us. We are not to resist him, but to see his request as God’s opportunity to show grace.

The application of this principle is qualified by the context and by comparing it with other Scriptures. For example, Scripture commands us to not allow the lazy to eat 24 and warns us of the difficulties of co-signing. 25 It is not our responsibility to enable the professional beggar to continue to not work or to pay for the drug or alcohol habits that destroy a person’s life who is asking us for money.

We commanded you this: if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. 26

Walking out the kingdom of God principle of refusing retaliation and defensiveness is an important and powerful part of living out the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle and in being the light of the world 27 to society. 28, 29

Chapter 5.9 – End Notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 5:38-42 2. Matthew 5:38-42 3. Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21 4. Leviticus 19:18 5. Romans 13:1-7 6. Luke 22:36 7. Matthew 18:15-17 8. John 18:22-23 9. John 2:14-16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Acts 5:1-11 11. 1 Corinthians 5:1-11; 6:1-8 12. Galatians 2:11-14 13. Acts 16:37 14. Luke 10:40-41 15. Matthew 5:39 16. Matthew 5:39 17. 1 Peter 2:23 18. Romans 12:14-21 19. Matthew 5:11-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Matthew 5:40 21. Matthew 5:40 22. Matthew 5:41 23. Matthew 5:42 24. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 25. Proverbs 11:15; 17:18; 22:26 26. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 27. Matthew 5:14 28. Matthew 5:13
<p>29. Edited from: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: Session 10 Refusing Retaliation and Defensiveness (Matthew 5:38-42)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.10

REPLACING PASSIVE LOVE WITH ACTIVE LOVE (MATTHEW 5:43-48)

The sixth temptation that must be resisted is the temptation to be passive towards our enemies who hate us instead of actively loving them. To refuse to retaliate is the beginning of our victory, but it is not complete until we actively love them. Jesus told us what **not to do**, to not resist evil men; **1** and **what to do**, to love our enemies. **2 Much potential good is lost in our relationship with God, our family, and with others when we refuse to actively love our enemies.**

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’
⁴⁴But I say to you, **love** your enemies, **bless** those who curse you, **do good** to those who hate you, and **pray** for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father...for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good...”* **3**

This is the most challenging part of the Sermon on the Mount. Loving our enemies leads us into a supernatural lifestyle. It is praised by many, mocked by some, and ignored by most.

It is a victory to say nothing and not retaliate against our enemies. Jesus calls us to do more than just keep a passive distance from them. Some say, “I cannot even look at them and I refuse to be in the same room with them.” But to act in the opposite spirit of our enemies by actively loving them instead of passively avoiding them, causes us to face our bitterness and fear. This is the place we experience the supernatural realm and make great advances in the kingdom of God.

Jesus is referring to our attitude toward people who mistreat us in everyday life. He is not addressing the issue of self-defense against a criminal who physically attacks your family.

Jesus corrected the Pharisees’ distortion of the command to love. They limited it by taking out “*as yourself*” and adding the command to “*hate your enemy.*” They saw their fellow Jews as neighbors, but not foreigners, Gentiles. They limited the command to loving people who were nice to them, not those who troubled them and to those like them. They lived with revenge toward their fellow Jews and racism towards outsiders, instead of with God’s all embracing love.

*You have heard that it was said, “You shall **love your neighbor and hate your enemy.**” ⁴
You shall love your neighbor **as yourself**...³⁴The **stranger** who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall **love him as yourself**... ⁵*

In the parable known as the Good Samaritan, **6** Jesus identified our neighbor as any human being regardless of their race or religion. Our neighbor includes our enemies as human beings.

LOVING OUR ENEMIES

The call to actively love our enemies includes **our words, to bless, actions, to do good and our prayers.** This is the summit of love and is much more than sentiment it has practical actions. It is an act of our will that transcends negative feelings. As we obey this, our feelings will change.

*But I say to you, **love** your enemies, **bless** those who curse you, **do good** to those who hate you, and **pray** for those who spitefully use you and persecute you... ⁷*

- **Love your enemies:** Loving people who hate us makes the greatest impact at the deepest level, especially martyrdom. **Embracing this lifestyle opens the supernatural realm to us.** Our enemies are adversaries who seek to hurt or hinder us or who hope to see us fail.

Love suffers long and is kind...⁵is not provoked, thinks no evil...⁷endures all things. 8

- **Bless those who curse you:** We are to speak words of blessing to them and about them. We are to go beyond refusing to answer their insult with an insult. **It can be a fierce struggle to speak words of blessing, but it will dynamically change and liberate us.**
- **Do good to those who hate you:** We are to **look for practical ways to do good for them.**
- **Pray for those who use or persecute you:** By praying for an enemy, we stand in the gap before God for them. This increases our love. **It is impossible to pray for someone without loving them.** Jesus prayed for His enemies as they were killing Him. 9

We can overcome evil by doing good to our enemies. 10 In Romans 12:20, Paul quoted an Old Testament passage that commands us to love our enemies. 11

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse...¹⁹Do not avenge yourselves...²⁰If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good.** 12*

We view this passage as a temptation to resist passive love, since the other five exhortations were temptations to resist, 13 or as one of the five kingdom activities to pursue as described in the next section of the Sermon on the Mount. 14 This passage expands on the implications of forgiving our enemies. 15

The cursing Psalms contain prayers for God to judge the wicked. 16 These prayers are not in response to the psalmist's personal offense or injury, but because the wicked stood against God's cause and name. In other words, the cursing Psalms are not about the vindication of individuals in this age, but with the vindication of God's glory and purpose. For example, at the end of His ministry, Jesus spoke judgment or curses on the very leaders who killed Him. 17

BEING LIKE OUR FATHER

God blesses evil people because it is His nature to love. He loves by providing sun and rain to wicked men. We must not mistake **His blessings over them as His approval.**

*...that you **may be sons of your Father** in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 18*

John Calvin referred to this as God's *common grace* in contrast to God's *saving grace*. Common grace is God's gift of provision given to all people in this age and is not like the gift of salvation.

JESUS DIED FOR US WHILE WE WERE HIS ENEMY¹⁹

Our standard of love is to love like Jesus loves, as we love our enemies, without the condition of our self-interest. God loves people while they are unthankful and evil instead of waiting until they are grateful.

*Love your enemies...you will be sons of the Most High. Be kind to the **unthankful and evil.** 20*

Sons of the Most High: In loving this way, **we prove that we have received the Father's love.** We are **filled with gratitude for love that we did not deserve** so it makes sense to us to share that love with our enemies. This is the best way to prove that the Father's love exists. It is God's grace to unbelievers to witness God's love through you in the times they mistreat you.

*By this **all will know** that you are My disciples, if you have **love** for one another. 21*

WHAT REWARD

Unbelievers know about married love, parental love or friendship love. Even tax collectors, greedy manipulative men, love people who love them. The essence of what Jesus wants us to understand is the value of love that is more than what is natural affection for family and friends.

*For if you love those who love you, what **reward** have you? Do not even the **tax collectors** do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do **more** than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 22*

Reward: Jesus often taught on eternal rewards related to our actions and humility. 23

*Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for **great is your reward in heaven...** 24*

Our natural mindset is, "If you do something bad to me, then I will do something bad to you. If you do something good to me, then I will do something good to you." Our natural way is to give a reward for favors or to take revenge for trouble. "*To return evil for good is devilish; to return good for good is human and to return good for evil is divine.*" 25

HAVING A BIBLICAL KINGDOM OF GOD PERSPECTIVE

In praying for people in an adversarial relationship, you will discover a resistance that forces you to go above the storm to the big picture of truth. **Focus on three biblical truths.**

Entrusting ourselves to God: Jesus calls us to not seek revenge when mistreated, but to endure it graciously by knowing that **God will vindicate us** in His time and way as we commit the mistreatment to Him. 26 **No one has the authority to stop our God ordained destiny.** No Saul can stop David from his destiny. Only David could stop David.

*...when He [Jesus] was reviled, did **not revile** in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but **committed Himself** to Him who judges righteously... 27*

Seeing the big picture: Joseph spoke kindly to his brothers by perceiving the big picture of God's purpose. **We speak kindly to our enemies as we realize God speaks kindly to us.**

*But as for you, you meant evil against me; but **God meant it for good**, in order to bring it about as it is this day, **to save many people alive.** ²¹Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you..." **He spoke kindly to them.** 28*

Eternal friends: Our greatest adversaries in the Body of Christ will be dear and cherished friends in the kingdom of God for billions of years in the age to come!

BE PERFECT: WALKING IN ALL THE LIGHT THAT GOD GIVES US

Jesus called us to live *perfect* by seeking to walk in all the light the Spirit gives us. Seeking to walk in 100 percent obedience to the light we receive is *relative* in this age and *absolute* in next age. We can attain to this in a relative way in this age and in fullness in the age to come.

*Therefore you shall be **perfect**, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.* 29

The Father possesses all light. All His plans, actions, mercy, judgments, and wisdom are in full agreement with His light. As the Father “walks out” all the light that He possesses, so do we. We cannot love Jesus with the same amount of love in which He loves us. However, we can love Him with our “*all*” where we hold nothing back. This is all that He desires from us. When we **obey the Spirit’s light**, then He gives us more light and more experience in God. We have **more responsibility to obey**, but we experience and show others more of God’s power.

In Your light we see [more] light. 30

Power in our life is found in pursuing 100 percent obedience. There are powerful dynamics that occur in our heart when we soberly seek to walk in total obedience. The 98% pursuit of obedience has a limited blessing. The last 2% positions us to live with a vibrant heart. **Maintaining a sustained reach for full obedience for decades is the definition of living radically before God.** We are not radical because we do something unusual for a few months. 31

Chapter 5:10 – End notes

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 5:38-42 2. Matthew 5:43-48 3. Matthew 5:43-45 4. Matthew 5:43 5. Leviticus 19:18, 34 6. Luke 10:29-37 7. Matthew 5:44 8. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 9. Luke 23:34 10. Romans 12:21 11. Proverbs 25:21 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Romans 12:14-21 13. Matthew 5:21-42 14. Matthew 6:1-21 15. Matthew 6:14-15 16. Psalm 5; 11; 17; 35; 55; 59; 69; 109; 137, 140 17. Matthew 23 18. Matthew 5:45 19. Romans 5:10 20. Luke 6:35 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. John 13:35 22. Matthew 5:46-47 23. See below 24. Matthew 5:11-12 25. Alfred Plummer, 1852-1916 26. 1 Peter 2:23 27. 1 Peter 2:23 28. Genesis 50:20-21 29. Matthew 5:48 30. Psalm 36:9
<p>23. Matthew 5:5, 12, 19; 6:4-6, 18-20; 10:41-42; 16:27; 18:4; 19:21, 28-30; 20:16, 27; 22:14; 23:11; 25:21-23; Mark 9:41; 10:21, 42-43; Luke 6:23, 35; 9:48; 12:21, 33; 14:11; 16:11; 18:14, 22; 19:17-19; 22:26-30; John 12:26; Revelation 2:7, 10-11, 17, 26-28; 3:4-5, 9, 11-12, 18, 21; 11:18; 16:5; 19:7-8; 22:12</p>		
<p>31. Edited from: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: Session 11 Replacing Passive Love with Active Love (Matthew 5:43-48)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.11

Called to SERVE, GIVE, PRAY, FAST and BLESS (Matthew 6:1-21)

Jesus describes five kingdom activities that position us to receive more grace:

- **SERVE** – charitable deeds 1
- **GIVE** – time, service and money 2
- **PRAY** 3
- **BLESS adversaries** – fully forgiving 4
- **FAST** 5

These all lead to rewards from God. 6

*That your **charitable deed** [serving or giving money; v. 20] may be in secret; and your Father...will reward you openly...⁶When you **pray**...your Father...will reward you openly ...¹⁴**Forgive** men their trespasses...¹⁷When you **fast**...¹⁸your Father...will reward you openly. ¹⁹Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...²⁰but **treasures** in heaven... 7*

Marvel at the **simple accessibility of these five kingdom activities** that help people, move God, and change us over time, even though they are usually small and weak in themselves. Spiritual disciplines don't earn us God's love, but place our cold hearts before the "bonfire of His presence." He does not love us more, but gives more to our heart, when we embrace disciplines.

*He gives **more grace**...God resists the proud, but **gives grace** to the humble. 8*

Jesus' exhortations to these five activities were given with one *primary warning* and one *primary promise*. He warned us against the hypocrisy of drawing attention to ourselves in our devotion to God, making this point in several different ways. He promised that the Father would reward us.

Jesus called us to avoid *sounding a trumpet*, meaning, drawing attention to our devotion and passion for God. He was speaking directly to the Pharisees, 9 who operated in public with a religious spirit. Jesus was also addressing our natural temptation to sound a trumpet and draw attention to how devoted, passionate, "anointed," smart, diligent, and generous we are.

*Do not **sound a trumpet**...as the hypocrites [Pharisees] do in the **synagogues** [worship or prayer services] and in the **streets** [out in public] that they may have glory from men. 10*

LIVING BEFORE GOD'S EYES: CONFIDENCE IN REWARDS

We must see the value of these five small activities that help people, move God, and change us. **Jesus calls us to live before God's eyes.** God values the "smallness" of these five activities. The Father sees and cares about our small works even when men do not notice or care about them.

Jesus emphasized that the Father ***will openly reward*** these activities. Some of the rewards are ***external***, as circumstances are changed by God's power. Some are ***internal***, as our hearts encounter Him and are tenderized. Some are ***eternal***, affecting our **destiny** in the age to come.

We do these five kingdom activities with ***confidence in His rewards*** both eternal and temporal. We must have confidence that His eyes are on us and that He is responsiveness to us.

*Without faith [confidence in God] it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God **must believe that He is & that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.** 11*

Jesus taught more on eternal rewards than any other man in Scripture

*Your charitable deed...and your Father who sees in secret will **reward** you openly. 12*

*When you pray...and your Father who sees in secret will **reward** you openly. 13*

*Fasting...and your Father who sees in secret will **reward** you openly. 14*

Our wrong views of God come to light when we see Jesus' emphasis on rewarding His people.

*The Son of Man will come...He will reward each **according to his works.** 15
*My **reward** is with Me, to give to every one **according to his work.** 16**

When the Lord returns to earth He is bringing His rewards for the works of His saints!

Live your life before and audience of One, Jesus Christ, the only Judge of mankind. Make the shift over to living before His eyes. This is where power and transformation occur in our life.

Paul contrasted two ways of living: living as unto God or unto man. Are you seeking the applause of God or of men? Paul is telling us how to live in the Spirit and walk in freedom.

*...not with eyeservice, as **men-pleasers**, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷with good will doing service, **as to the Lord, and not to men,** ⁸**knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord.** 17*

Eyeservice: This speaks of serving to gain the applause and recognition of people by serving with more humility, generosity, and diligence when someone is watching. Do we look for the applause of Jesus or men? We know we are looking to men if we get offended after we serve diligently and are ignored or criticized for our labors.

THE FASTED LIFESTYLE: EMBRACING VOLUNTARY WEAKNESS

It is not enough just to resist the negative; 18 we must also pursue the positive. 19 Jesus highlighted five kingdom activities: to serve, give money, pray, bless our adversaries, and fast.

The *Sermon on the Mount* lifestyle, or the *fasted lifestyle*, is a call to embrace voluntary weakness to experience more of God's power. Jesus spoke of the paradox in Paul's life of embracing weakness so as to experience more strength in the Spirit. 20 He was not referring to moral weakness, but to Paul's godly choices to embrace voluntary weaknesses.

*My grace [power] is sufficient for you [Paul], for My **strength** is made perfect in **weakness**.* 21

There are five types of “fasting” in the Sermon on the Mount. 22 We fast food, time, energy, money, and words by *giving, serving, praying, blessing enemies, and fasting food*. Each is a form of fasting, in which we voluntarily embrace weakness to experience more of God’s power. In giving, we fast our money and financial strength. In serving and prayer, we fast our time and energy, investing it in others and in intercession. In giving up food, we fast our physical and emotional strength. Blessing our enemies requires that we fast our words and reputation.

Possibly the greatest enemy of the fasted lifestyle among believers is the false notion that fasting is *radical Christianity* and is optional for healthy Christianity. It is not. Fasting is normal and basic to the Christian life. **It is not possible to live true biblical Christianity without being committed to a lifestyle of praying, fasting, giving, serving, and blessing enemies.**

CHARITABLE DEEDS: CALLED TO SERVE AND GIVE 23

We are called to ***serve and give***, charitable deeds: service and money. Charitable deeds refer to acts of servanthood and financial giving. They include more than ministry to the poor, but includes investments of time or money to serve people in God’s will.

*Take heed that you do not do your **charitable deeds** [giving service or money] before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not **sound a trumpet** before you as the hypocrites do in the **synagogues** [public meetings] and in the **streets** [marketplace]... Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ³But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your **left hand know** what your right hand is doing, ⁴that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself **reward** you openly.* 24

Jesus further develops the importance of giving money. 25

*Do not lay up...**treasures** on earth...²⁰lay up for **yourselves** treasures in heaven.* 26

How do you invest in the kingdom of God? You invest in God’s people and His work.

Giving financially to others is an expression of *fasting* our money. Serving involves *fasting* our time and energy by investing it in others. Jesus warned us to not let our “*left hand*” know what our right hand is doing. Do not “congratulate ourselves.” Not all giving in the early church was hidden. 27 The point is to be as low key as possible.

CALLED TO PRAY 28

We are called to pray. 29 Prayer has many forms and often includes meditation on the Word. Jesus taught us how to pray by giving us what is known as the Lord’s Prayer. 30

*When you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the **synagogues** and...the **streets**, that they may be **seen by men**...they have their reward. ⁶When you pray, go into your room...pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will **reward** you openly.* 31

There is nothing more important than coming into communion with God!

Prayer is an expression of voluntary weakness that fasts our time and emotions. Instead of using all our time for the advancement of our status or success, we use some of it to seek God for ourselves and for others. Instead of using most of our free time being entertained by media, we pray. In this, we forego opportunities to build up our ministries or businesses.

Part of the reward that God gives is in greater intimacy with Him; is in increased productivity and fruitfulness that may only be seen decades later. Jesus was not banning corporate prayer meetings. The early church prayed together. ³² He was warning us not to draw attention to ourselves related to our prayer alone or in worship meetings.

CALLED TO BLESS ³³

We are called to bless our adversaries as part of expressing the fullness of forgiveness. ³⁴ This is connected with the call to resist passive love. ³⁵ Jesus expands on forgiving our enemies. ³⁶

*If you do not **forgive men** their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you... ³⁷
Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you... ³⁸*

The call to actively love our enemies includes our words, bless, actions, do good, and prayers. Our enemies are adversaries, who seek to hurt or hinder us, or who hope to see us fail.

CALLED TO FAST ³⁹

We are called to fast. Jesus said, “*When you fast*” not “*if you fast,*” implying that it should occur in the regular course of a disciple’s life. We do not fast to motivate God to love us, but to increase our spiritual capacity to receive and feel more of His heart, Word, and power.

When you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance...that they may appear to men to be fasting...¹⁷But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will **reward** you openly. ⁴⁰

Jesus emphasized that the Father **will reward** fasting. This proclamation makes fasting important. Jesus called us to fast because He knows that its rewards will far outweigh its difficulties. ⁴¹

My personal Fasting testimony

I have fasted every year since 2002. When the Lord first called me to fast I said, “I can’t fast!” The Lord said, “You are right you can’t fast. I will fast through you.” For each fast I pray for the grace of God to fast. The Lord is faithful to ‘turns off’ my appetite and to bless and strengthen me through the time of prayer and fasting.

I have fasted on water only for over 2 weeks. I have completed several Esther Fasts of 3 days with no food or water. I have completed 12 months of Daniel Fast with no meats, sweets or alcohol. I normally start each year with 40 days of fasting to establish a spiritual foundation for the year. I can testify that these fasts put you in a better position to pray and hear God better and receive the grace to obey Him. I can also see rewards and fruits from God from each fast.

Fasting is also healthy for your body. You can lose excess weight and purge toxins from your body. I believe that fasting without pray is just a diet. I do not believe that God calls us to do harmful things. Harm comes from the work of the enemy. Think of the body of Christ becoming fit both spiritually and physically to be effective soldiers in God’s army. God promised Joshua the “*No man will stand before you* 42 since the Lord goes before Him.

Developing the spiritual disciplines of Serving, Giving, Praying, Fasting and Blessing will position you to better know and obey the plans and purposes of our King and His kingdom.

Chapter 5:11 – End Notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21 2. Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21 3. Matthew 6:5-13 4. Matthew 6:14; 5:44 5. Matthew 6:16-18 6. Matthew 6:4, 6, 18, 20 7. Matthew 6:4-20 8. James 4:6 9. Matthew 23:5-7 10. Matthew 6:2 11. Hebrews 11:6 12. Matthew 6:4 13. Matthew 6:6 14. Matthew 6:18 15. Matthew 16:27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Revelation 22:12 17. Ephesians 6:6-8 18. Matthew 5 19. Matthew 6 20. 2 Corinthians 12:9 21. 2 Corinthians 12:9 22. Matthew 6:1-18 23. Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21 24. Matthew 6:1-4 25. Matthew 6:19-21 26. Matthew 6:19-20 27. Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; 5:1-10; 11:29-30 28. Matthew 6:5-13 29. Matthew 6:5-8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30. Matthew 6:9-13 31. Matthew 6:5-6 32. Acts 1:14; 2:42; 12:5; 16:13 33. Matthew 6:14-15 34. Matthew 6:14-15; 5:44 35. Matthew 5:21-42 36. Matthew 6:14-15 37. Matthew 6:15 38. Matthew 5:44 39. Matthew 6:16-18 40. Matthew 6:16-18 41. see below 42. Joshua 1:5
<p>41. Edited from: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: Session 12 Called to Serve, Give Pray, Fast and Bless (Matthew 6:1-21)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.12

JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES TO PRAY (Matthew 6:9-13)

THE MODEL PRAYER

It is a great gift to learn about prayer from the One who had the greatest prayer life and the greatest teaching ministry in all history. Matthew 6:9-13 is one of the most familiar passages in the Bible, yet so few have searched out its deeper treasures. It is so familiar that many are content with a superficial view of its glorious contents.

Jesus gave us a model of prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 based on what God is like and on the nature of the kingdom. It covers all the foundational basics that are expanded on throughout Scripture.

Jesus told us the things that we must know and keep focused on in our pursuit of growing stronger in prayer.

*In this manner, therefore, **pray**: our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. 1*

Jesus pointed out six requests to pray regularly. The first three focus on God's glory, His **Name**, **Kingdom**, and **will**. The second three focus on man's needs, physical, relational, and spiritual.

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

Jesus' teaching on prayer starts with a strong focus on who God is. God is *our Father in heaven*. Foundational to a strong prayer life is a right view of God as our heavenly Father. A. W. Tozer insists that a low view of God has been the biggest problem in the Church in every generation. As we pray, we must intentionally take time to recall who He is according to His Word.

*Our Father in heaven, **hallowed** be Your name. 2*

In the time of Jesus, the Jewish people saw God as transcendent creator and King. They trembled before His great power. Jesus taught them that their creator God was their Father.

In heaven, points to God's transcendence. Jesus combined two ideas about God, He is powerful and personal. He combined God's fatherly love with His heavenly power, His transcendence with His tenderness, and His being exalted so high with His humility that bows so low.

God is a Father who longs for a relationship of deep partnership with us, in which He trains, disciplines, provides for, protects, and directs us with His tenderness. He plans our **destiny** in His glory with great detail. He is a Father in the core of His personality. He expresses the fullness of the highest ideals of fatherhood. C. S. Lewis wrote that God is "*beyond personality*."

Our Father in heaven is so kind, yet terrifying, in His majesty. We are to draw near to His tender heart with great confidence, adoring love, awestruck humility and wholehearted obedience.

Our: He is not only *my* Father, but *our* Father. Our prayers requests are tempered by the realities of who we are to God as one family. We are to pray inclusively for the whole family of believers, and not for ourselves only.

Revelation 4 is one of the great passages on the Father's heavenly glory and beauty. See four categories, each having three themes. These 12 details have many implications.

- The beauty of **God's person:** how God looks, feels, and acts 3
- The beauty of **God's people:** the Church enthroned, robed, and crowned 4
- The beauty of **God's power:** manifest in the lightning, thunder, and voices 5
- The beauty of **God's presence:** His fire on lamps, seraphim, and sea 6

A throne set in heaven...3 He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne...like an emerald. 4 Around the throne...I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns...5 From the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne...6 There was a sea of glass, like crystal...around the throne, were four living creatures...8 they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, 7

Jesus set the context of intimacy with God within His sovereignty and majesty. Some only see His heavenly glory, but do not see His nature as a Father with deep love. They depersonalize God, presenting Him as majestic, but distant, cold hearted, and even harsh. We will see much more of the truth of His fatherhood as we see glimpses of His transcendence. Others only see Him as a tender Father, without seeing His heavenly glory. They see a Father who is kind and personal but without trembling before His transcendence. They portray God as a familiar and fun-loving buddy. It is based on bad and shallow theology and little personal experience of God.

PRAYING FOR GOD'S GLORY: 8 THREE REQUESTS

1 - Praying for God's name to be hallowed: God's name refers to His person, character, and authority. His name is hallowed when it responded to in a way that He is worthy of. The very thought of His name stirs awe and holy fear in anyone who understand a little. This petition is that God's majestic name be revealed *to* us and then *through* us.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. 9

- Pray, "Lord, work in me and others, so that we see and respond appropriately to Your greatness." Ask God to release His power to cause more people to see the truth about Him and to refuse to take His name in vain in jest or expressions of anger.
- This is a prayer that the Father receives the highest place in our life, heart, and worship. We revere God's name by not asking for anything contrary to His glorious name and will.

2 - Praying for the kingdom to come: We ask for His kingdom to increase on earth. The kingdom is the place where His Word is **obeyed**, His will is done, and His power expressed. Kingdom power is manifested when the sick are healed and demons are cast out. 10

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11

- **The kingdom is manifest in part in this age and in fullness when Jesus returns to earth.** The kingdom is “already, but not yet.” It is already here, but not yet fully here. 12
- **We are to labor in prayer for the kingdom to increase.** The error of the church of Ephesus was to do kingdom work without prayer or connecting deeply with Jesus. 13 The Lord gives more if we ask for more. In the process of speaking to God and bringing Him these requests, we develop our relationship with Him, and this is what He really wants.
- **This petition includes being kingdom-minded in our lifestyles** and in our attitudes towards others. Therefore, we are to work together with other believers, instead of having a territorial attitude and being focused only on our own sphere of authority and influence.

3 - Praying for God’s will to be done: The third request includes our obedience in light of God’s kingdom purposes. His will consists of His commands and our ministry assignment. Some who are committed to changing the nations are not committed to personal purity. They are more captivated with their ministry as a “change agent” than with Jesus and obeying Him.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 14

PRAYING FOR OUR PERSONAL NEEDS: 15 THREE REQUESTS

The next three requests are for our needs, *physical*, daily bread, *relational*, forgiveness, and *spiritual*, deliverance from evil. Jesus commanded us to bring our personal requests to God in prayer. These prayers express our dependence on God in every area of life. Some wrongly conclude that this kind of prayer is “selfish,” so they neglect to make petition for personal needs.

4 - Praying for our daily provision: This request is for our *daily* provision, protection, and direction. We do not pray to inform God of our needs, 16 but to enhance our relationship with Him. Asking God for our needs does not free us from the responsibility of working. He meets our needs partially by giving us the ability and opportunity to earn a living.

Give us this day our daily bread. 17

5 - Praying for forgiveness: This petition helps our relationship with God and people. This is a prayer for restored communion with God that also renews our relationship with others.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 18

We are justified by faith, so prayer for our debts to be forgiven speaks of restoring our fellowship with God, 1 John 1:9 not being saved from hell. It is to cleanse our heart and thoughts.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful...to cleanse us from unrighteousness. 19

The proof that we have been freely forgiven is that we gladly forgive others. The man who knows he has been forgiven is compelled to forgive others. Jesus did not say, “Forgive us our

debts *because* we forgave our debtors.” This truth was illustrated in John 13, when Peter refused to let Jesus wash his feet, Jesus said that he was *clean* and that He only needed to wash his feet.

He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; & you are clean 20

6 - *Praying for deliverance from evil:* This petition is that the Father lead us away from temptation. God never tempts anyone with evil. 21

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. 22

Jesus’ point was to pray that God help us to avoid and escape temptations. He used a figure of speech to express *one petition* in two ways—*lead us from temptation* and *deliver us from evil*. The second half of the request defines positively what the first half says expresses negatively.

There are *opportune* times when demonically-energized temptations hit us like a “storm.”

The devil ended every temptation...he departed from Him until an opportune time. 23

Jesus was calling the apostles to pray this prayer 24 when He urged them to pray to *not enter into temptation*. 25 To enter temptation speaks of something far more intense than the general temptations we all face. It points to a specific “storm of temptation” that occurs when three components come together—when demonic activity against us is heightened, our lusts are aroused, and circumstances are optimum for sin.

Watch & pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, ... the flesh is weak. 26

Satan has asked for you [Peter], that he may sift you as wheat. 32But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me... 27

Pre-temptation prayers for help will remove or reduce a storm of temptation. Praying before the temptation expresses humility that depends on God’s strength and acknowledges our weakness.

David prayed for deliverance from sinful situations even before they occurred. 28

Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless... 29

We “take heed” by keeping our relationship with Jesus strong through a consistent prayer life.

Let him who thinks he stands [without prayer] take heed lest he fall... 13 God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 30

Jesus calls us to “pray always” to prepare for the snare of temptation in the end times.

Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36Watch and pray always

that you may be counted worthy [found prepared] to escape...and to stand [victorious] before the Son of Man. 31, 32

Prayer and thanksgiving as your lifestyle

Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 33

How does this work? First *in everything give thanks* to God for everything. As you thank Him for everything you begin to *pray without ceasing*. As you pray and thank God for everything you begin to see more and more how God is intimately involved in blessing every part of your life and you will *rejoice always*. This is the Christian, the kingdom lifestyle that actually works.

There is nothing more important than to come into communion with God!

Chapter 5:12 – End Notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 6:9 2. Matthew 6:9 3. Revelation 4:3 4. Revelation 4:4 5. Revelation 4 5a 6. Revelation 4:5b-7; 15:2 7. Revelation 4:2-8 8. Matthew 6:9-10 9. Matthew 6:9 10. Matthew 12:28 11. Matthew 6:10 12. See below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Revelation 2:4 14. Matthew 6:10 15. Matthew 6:11-13 16. Matthew 6:7-8 17. Matthew 6:11 18. Matthew 6:12 19. 1 John 1:9 20. John 13:10 21. James 1:13 22. Matthew6:13, NIV, RSV 23. Luke 4:13 24. Matthew 6:13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Matthew 26:41; Luke 22:40 26. Matthew 26:41 27. Luke 22:31-32 28. Psalm 19:12-13 29. Psalm 19:13 30. 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 31. Luke 21:34-36 32. See below 33. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
<p>12. Matthew 3:1- 2; 4:17, 23; 6:10, 33; 10:7; 12:28; 13:11; 16:18-19; 19:12; Mark 4:11, 26; 9:1; Luke 16:16; 17:20-21; 18:16, 29-30; Acts 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 30-31; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20</p>		
<p>32. Edited From: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: <i>Session 13 Being Taught to Pray by Jesus</i> (Matthew 6:9-13)</p>		

CHAPTER 5:13

Receiving the Father's Reward Financially (Matthew 6:4)

BIBLICAL PROSPERITY

The Bible has much to say about principles related to managing, saving, investing, and multiplying money.

Jesus taught often on finances. He emphasized two themes more than any other biblical principles on finances. **First, He promised that God desires to supernaturally multiply our finances. Second, He warned of the spiritual danger of covetousness. He taught that the Father rewards those who are charitable with their time and money.**

"...your charitable deed [giving time or money]...your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly." 1

Jesus talked often about money. The Bible has over 2,350 references to money and the management of money. Of Jesus' 38 parables, 16 deal with money. One out of every 10 verses in the Gospels has to do with money or possessions, for a total of 288 verses.

Jesus did not emphasize the many biblical principles on how to manage money. He focused on stewarding money *with the right spirit*, which includes not loving it, hoarding it, or trusting in it.

The Bible makes clear that prosperity is a blessing, and poverty is a curse. The definition of prosperity is *having enough money to meet our needs and enough to bless others and to invest in extending the work of the kingdom*. God gives "power to get wealth" to "establish His covenant," which includes the ability to bring more people into the benefits of covenant relationship with Him. He gives us wealth to promote the kingdom. The biblical understanding of money includes seeing money as that which helps us to win souls, support missionaries and help the oppressed.

It is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant... 2

God desires that we prosper financially as we grow spiritually. He is looking for partners to be "vessels of supply" in purposes. We refuse both the spirit of poverty and over indulgence.

I pray that you prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. 3

Having financial abundance is God's blessing; it is also like swimming in shark-infested waters, and requires the Spirit's help to navigate it safely. Money can be compared to a sharp knife. In the hand of a skilled chef, it brings blessing, but in the hand of a child, it is dangerous.

Jesus' premise: God created us to love Him in four spheres of life, with our heart (affections), soul (personality), mind (thoughts), and strength (resources), because He loves us this way.

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” 4

We use our money to express love to God. Money is a relational subject to Jesus. He taught us how to express the first commandment, to love Him, in our finances. He linked money to pursuing God with love. 5 There are emotional dynamics related to giving our money.

Jesus teaches that the size of the sacrifice in loving God through giving is more important than the size of the gift. 6 The widow who gave her last two mites showed much more love for God than those who gave more money but with less sacrifice.

THE FATHER OPENLY REWARDS FINANCIAL FAITHFULNESS

The Father openly rewards those who are charitable with their time and money. Charitable deeds refer to acts of servanthood and financial giving to serve people in God’s will. The Father’s rewards openly show us how He feels about the way we love Him.

...that your charitable deed [giving our time or money] may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. 7

Instead of using all our financial strength to seek our comfort and success, we invest some of it in the kingdom. We trust Him to return our financial strength to us in His way and timing. He does it in a way that transforms our heart and blesses our circumstances.

Financial power encounters: God’s power is expressed as much in His supernatural provision of finances as in healing a sick person. There is a cause and effect dynamic that God intends us to understand. Jesus taught that God gives back to us in proportion to the measure of our giving.

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over...For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. 8

The measure in which we act against fear and covetousness by operating in the opposite spirit, faith and generosity, determines some of the measure in which God intervenes in our finances.

Love is not minimized by believing that God promises to give us more money. We are called to believe that He will provide us with a greater ability to give and thus love others more. God promises to supernaturally open the windows of heaven financially and to rebuke the devourer as His people obey Him with their money. This is the only time He calls us to *test* Him.

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food [provision] in My house, and try Me now in this...if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground... 9

Why does the Lord command His people to tithe?

- Tithing declares that Jesus is **Lord** over all our money and our **source** of money. It forces us to trust His leadership over our finances and positions us to receive *financial power encounters* as He answers us in our giving.
- The storehouse was the central place to receive tithes under the leadership of those in the Lord’s house. ¹⁰ Today, the storehouse speaks of the place you are “fed” spiritually, Typically this speaks of your local church, your spiritual family.
- Tithing is the beginning not the ceiling of our giving and receiving from God.

God delights in opening the windows of heaven to release finances in response to our giving. The testimony of three poor young people, Joseph, David, and Esther, who prospered is meant to inspire our faith. Do not limit God, as you may also receive one idea that leads to wealth. ¹¹

Jesus gave us the best investment advice! He said to, *Store up your treasures in heaven*

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ¹²

How do you store up your treasures in heaven? You invest your time, treasure and talents in the people and purposes of God to receive eternal rewards and glory!

Chapter 5:13 – End Notes:

1. Matthew 6:4 2. Deuteronomy 8:18 3. 3 John 2 4. Mark 12:30	5. Matthew 6:24 6. Luke 21:1-4 7. Matthew 6:4 8. Luke. 6:38	9. Malachi 3:10-11 10. Nehemiah 13:5-12 11. See below 12. Matthew 6:19-21
11. Edited From: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: <i>Session 14 Receiving Father’s Reward Financially</i> (Matthew 6:4)		

CHAPTER 5.14

Relationships: Forgive, Bless, and More (Matthew 6:12-14)

JESUS' EMPHASIS ON RELATING TO PEOPLE WITH GENEROSITY 1

There are many principles for cultivating relationships throughout the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus exhorted us to forgive the people who mistreat us. 2 We do this out of gratitude for the way He graciously forgave us. 3 This is foundational to all that He said about building relationships.

forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And... deliver us from the evil one... 14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 4

Our forgiveness from God is conditional on our forgiveness of others. Jesus highlighted four principles in relating to those causing us pain and trouble.

- He urged us to deal with our anger and quickly pursue reconciliation. 5 He stressed that our worship and relationship with God will be hindered until we do this.

*If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there... **first be reconciled to your brother**, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Agree with your adversary quickly.... 6*

- He called us to bless those we are in an adversarial relationship with.

Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you... 7

- He exhorted us to forgive the people who are not treating us right. 8
- He warned us to not judge or evaluate people with a wrong spirit, with wrong information, and with a wrong process and to focus first on our failures. 9

*For **with what judgment you judge, you will be judged**; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you... 5 First remove the plank from your eye... 10*

We respond to these issues in our relationships by asking the Lord for help.

*“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you... 12 Therefore, **whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them ... 11***

These principles are most applicable to *familiar relationships* in our families and friendships.

Jesus' premise: God created us to love Him with our heart, our affections, soul, our personality, mind, our thoughts, and strength, our resources, because He loves us this way. We express our love to God by the way we respond from the heart to people who cause us pressure.

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” 12

RESTORING INJURED RELATIONSHIPS

A relationship can be injured at various levels, from being slightly wounded to deeply broken. The spirit of a relationship can be injured without the people themselves being deeply wounded. In other words, the trust and open communication can be injured between two good people who are not emotionally devastated and dysfunctional. In other words, this applies to you and me.

The signs of a wounded relationship include a **closed spirit**, unreceptive, **being guarded**, unwilling to share freely, **strained communication**, defensive, argumentative, and sarcastic and **resisting touch**, a spouse or child with a wounded spirit resists being touched.

A relationship is wounded long before it is broken. A broken relationship requires much more skill and attention to heal. An offended brother speaks of a person in a familiar relationship with you such as a spouse, child, sibling, extended family member, friend or a co-worker. It takes wisdom, effort and patience to win them in a way that makes them want to open their heart.

A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city... 13

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES IN RESTORING AN INJURED RELATIONSHIP

The most common way the spirit is wounded in a relationship is through perverse speech. Perverse speech is more than speech about immorality or perversion, but it is speech that has a negative tone and being critical, accusatory, sarcastic, and lacking tenderness and affirmation.

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit. 14

Corrupt speech injures our relationships in imparting grace to the person who is being corrected.

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.... do not grieve the Holy Spirit... 15

Death and life are in the power of the tongue... 16

A gentle response diffuses anger in the one you speak to; however, a harsh tone will stir it up.

A soft answer turns away wrath [anger], but a harsh word [tone] stirs up anger. 2 The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness [anger]... 4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit [feels hopeless]... 28 The heart of the righteous studies how to answer... 17

We speak our concerns in the right **tone, timing, spirit** and **ratio** of affirmation and correction.

Tone: The tone of our communication is one of the important issues in restoring a relationship. A negative tone includes anger, defensiveness, impatience, rushing people to answer, or a tone of lecturing, instructing instead of listening. Sarcasm in our tone of communication hinders us from speaking our heart and being heard by the one we are speaking to. Expressing our anger with sighs, huffing, and slamming doors also hinders the entire communication process. The tone of the communication involves our body language and facial expressions including making eye contact or looking away at the clock, at our phone or computer.

Timing: We must make time to communicate and not do it on the run, or when we are bothered by other issues or when angry. We must not share certain things in front of other people.

A right spirit: Wait until you are both feeling peace instead of being agitated, pressured or angry. Many times we have to wait until a later time before initiating or responding to a correction.

Ratio: A healthy relationship requires about ten positive statements to one negative one. Do not drive a “ten ton truck” of correction over a relational bridge that can only bear five tons. We must not speak more about their failure than their virtues. Speak to their desire for greatness and not only to their shame of failure. Seek to see who they are in God’s eyes and what they are reaching to be. Be grateful for the good in them and not only critical of their faults.

Ask the Lord: Ask the Lord for insight on how you lacked sensitivity in the relationship and how you contributed to the wounded relationship instead of only asking Him to change the other person. Ask for insight into how He sees your spouse, child, friend or co-worker.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you...¹² Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them... ¹⁸

Ask the person: Ask them information about what they were thinking, feeling, doing or wanting. Ask questions of the person you are in tension with instead of starting with statements of complaint. For example, “What were you thinking or feeling when you told me...?” Ask them for help. For example, “Help me understand what I heard when you told me...?”

Tell them what you feel: Start by telling them how you feel or what you heard instead of making statements about what they did wrong. For example, “I felt rejected when you said...” or “I heard you say you wanted me off the team when you said...” “I feel you are not happy with me.”

Appeal: Make appeals with a spirit of gentleness as we consider and confess our own weakness.

If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. ¹⁹

Confessing our faults: Confession is our “love offering.” Do not say, “I am sorry, *if* I have offended you, but say I repent *since* I sinned against you, by coming up short in love.

Confess your trespasses to one another [your spouse] ...that you may be healed ²⁰

Set your heart to approach the relationship in godly wisdom. 21

Who is wise and understanding among you?...17 The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy...and without hypocrisy. 22

Willing to yield: Be willing to yield to their appeal by being eager to take responsibility for our faults and insensitivity. We seek to have a teachable spirit to “hear” what they are feeling instead of defending ourselves because some of the facts are not 100% accurate.

Full of mercy: Be merciful with their failure even when their perspective is wrong. Try to hear their pain and understand any way in which you contributed to it.

Active listening: Listen carefully to their unspoken words, pains, fears, and desires. Then speak back to them what you “heard” them say. For example, “It sounds like you are saying...” This gives them the opportunity to clarify what you heard. We honor people by patiently listening to their point of view in the conflict.

Set boundaries: Come to agreement, when there is not a conflict, to what the “trade-offs” are in the relationship that you agree to give each other in terms of time, service, and communication.

The whole truth: Some people say, “I just want the truth to come out.” They must remember that the “whole truth” about someone includes their *virtues* and not just their *failures*. Remember that God doesn’t tell any of us the whole truth about all our shortcomings—it would overwhelm us.

Complaining: We are warned to not allow our complaints to dominate a relationship. Continual complaining makes people want to quit the team, discontinue the relationship, and even tempts children to leave their own home. 23 This principle applies to all people in many different types of relationships, and not just women in their homes.

The contentions of a wife [spouse, parent or friend] are a continual dripping. 24

Better to dwell in a corner...than in a house shared with a contentious woman...19Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman. 25

Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife. 26

The wise woman [leader] builds her house [team], but the foolish pulls it down... 27

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Winning: We must remember that the one *who loves most* is the one who *wins* in God’s court.

Get an arbitrator: An arbitrator can be very helpful in solving long-term conflicts. This is a person who makes both sides listen to each other, instead of interrupting. They ask questions of both sides that are easy to lose sight of by the people in the conflict. Also, they can give a perspective that is unbiased because they have nothing to personally gain or lose in the conflict.

Pick your battles wisely: It will be necessary to give up some things. Don't spend all your "relational equity" on small things that don't matter the most. Be willing to lose a battle to win the war. In order to gain the most important things, we will need to give up some smaller things.

Gnats: Jesus referred to "swallowing gnats", overlooking smaller issues, to avoid swallowing camels, to lose sight of the larger issues. Remember, it is always unpleasant to swallow a gnat.

Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! 28

Proverbs: Read Proverbs every day together in a marriage and with your children. This is the part of Scripture that highlights wisdom and communication skills. There are 31 Proverbs, so you can read the Proverb that correspond with the date on the calendar. 29, 30

Always chose to live at peace with all through the power of the Prince of Peace within you.

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 31

Chapter 5.14 – End Notes:

<p>1. Matthew 5-7 2. Matthew 6:12-14 3. Matthew 18:21-35 4. Matthew 6:12-14 5. Matthew 5:21-26 6. Matthew 5:23-25 7. Matthew 5:44 8. Matthew 6:12-14 9. Matthew 7:1-5 10. Matthew 7:2-5 11. Matthew 7:7-12</p>	<p>12. Mark 12:30 13. Proverbs 18:19 14. Proverbs 15:4 15. Ephesians 4:29-30 16. Proverbs 18:21 17. Proverbs 15:1-4, 28 18. Matthew 7:7-12 19. Galatians 6:1 20. James 5:16 21. James 3:13-17 22. James 3:13, 17</p>	<p>23. Proverbs 14:1; 17:1; 19:13; 21:9, 19; 25:24 24. Proverbs 19:13 25. Proverbs 21:9, 19 26. Proverbs 17:1 27. Proverbs 14:1 28. Matthew 23:24 29. Proverbs 15:28 30. See below 31. Romans 12:18</p>
<p>30. Edited From: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: <i>Session 15 Relationships: Forgive, Bless and More</i> (Matthew 6:12-14)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.15

Loving Jesus in the Use of Your Money (Matthew 6:19-24)

JESUS' TEACHING ON MONEY

God gives wealth to establish His covenant and bring more into the benefits of it. ¹

I pray that you prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. ²

Jesus taught on finances many times. He emphasized two themes related to money more than the other biblical principles on finances:

- He promised that God desires to supernaturally multiply our finances, time and eternity.
- He warned us of the spiritual dangers of covetousness. He focused on stewarding money *with the right spirit*, which includes not loving it, hoarding it, or trusting in it.

Jesus spoke on money four times in Matthew 6. He promised that the Father rewards generosity in this age. ³ He called us to pray for our daily provision. ⁴ He addressed fear related to lacking money. ⁵ He warned us of covetousness and urged us to use money in a way that gains heavenly treasure, expresses our love to God, and strengthens our spiritual life. ⁶

The measure in which we act against fear and covetousness by operating in the opposite spirit, faith and generosity, determines some of the measure in which God intervenes in our finances.

“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over...For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. ⁷

GIVING: LOVING JESUS AS WE LAY UP TREASURE IN HEAVEN

Jesus urged us to use our money in a way that gains us heavenly treasure, expresses our love to God, and strengthens our spiritual life. He warned us of covetousness.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy...²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...²² The lamp of the body is the eye. If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light...²⁴ No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.” ⁸

Principle 1: Jesus urged us to use our money to express loyal love to God. Here, He defined love of God in terms of how we spend money. Money is a relational subject to Jesus. The size of

sacrifice in loving God in our giving is more important than the size of the gift. The widow loved more than those who gave more with less sacrifice.

“This poor widow has put in more than all; 4 for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all.” 9

Principle 2: Do not treasure earthly possessions. The word *treasure* is an all-inclusive term that includes anything a man thinks of as his wealth, such as his position and reputation; it includes all that money can buy. Our treasure is what we most want to invest our time, money, and thinking into. Is it possessions, comfort, reputation, and influence, or is it developing our relationship with Jesus and helping others do the same?

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy.” 10

- Some are tempted much more by status and position than money. They dream much more about influence than money. Their main interest is in establishing their prominence in their work or their ministry. Thus, they lay up treasures on earth without recognizing it.
- Jesus did not call us to refuse to have possessions, property, a savings account, or life Insurance. Scripture endorses planning, saving and investing.
- Jesus warned us of covetousness, which is to inordinately treasure or strongly desire money and possessions in a way that hinders our devotion to God. Most people assume they do not have a problem with covetousness.
- Jesus warned us not to “treasure” our possessions, not to thinking that our life consists in the amount of money that we have. He called us to be rich toward God.

“Beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” 16...He spoke a parable...20“... ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you...’ 21So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” 11

- Jesus taught that we must guard against the deceitfulness of riches, covetousness, so that our love for God, our heart, will not be choked and defiled.

“They are the ones who hear the word...19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches...choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.” 12

- Being preoccupied with money and entitlement, with what should be “mine,” is defiling.

“From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, covetousness...23 These evil things...defile a man.” 13

- The love of money is *a root of many evils*. 14 Paul listed covetousness as an attitude that we must put to death, because it leads to more evil. 15

Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is

a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 16

- Money that we keep is not “our money,” only the money we give away is ours forever.

Principle 3: We can exchange our money for heavenly treasure. Eternal rewards show us how God feels about the way we loved Him while we were on earth. Jesus “pays us very well” for doing so little. He rewards us for even giving a cup of water. 17

“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys.” 18

- We will soon enter a realm of endless glory, so we should invest as much time and money as possible into the kingdom and not our houses, pleasure, comfort, or reputation.
- Jesus called His disciples to gain treasure in heaven by using their money to obey God.

“Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves...treasure in the heavens...” 19

- Heaven is the realm of glory and nothing can steal or destroy there. Thieves cannot steal our heavenly treasures because God is the guardian of it. Even our reward for giving a cup of water will never fade away. This makes our obedience very rewarding. Why lay up treasures on earth when we know what is going to happen to them?

...an inheritance incorruptible...that does not fade away, reserved in heaven... 20

- The apostles will rule in the Millennium in light of “leaving their money” to obey God.

“We have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” 28 Jesus said, “...in the regeneration [Millennium]...you will sit on twelve thrones.” 21

Principle 4: Our emotions follow the way in which we use and spend our money, either to worldliness or to the realities of heaven. The way we use our money affects our emotions.

“For where your treasure [money] is, there your heart will be also.” 22

- There is a connection between our money and our emotions, love, desire, greater interest, possessiveness, jealousy and fear.
- Those who give their money to the kingdom of God will love the kingdom more.

Principle 5: If the eye of our heart is good, we’ll be full of light, having a vibrant heart. The way we use our money affects our spiritual life and our capacity to enjoy God and His Word. In Scripture, our body often refers to our *whole personhood* and not just our outer man.

“The lamp [source of light] of the body is the eye [of the heart]. If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light...23If your eye is bad...full of darkness.” 23

- Having a good eye speaks of our “primary life vision” being to love Jesus by obeying His teaching and living for treasures in heaven. The lamp that allows spiritual light to touch our inner man is the “eye of our heart,” or the eyes of our understanding. [24](#)
- Having a bad eye refers to a life vision that neglects the values of the Sermon on the Mount and makes decisions primarily to increase our treasures on earth.
- Jesus longs for us to know the *pleasure of wholehearted love* for God instead of seeing it as a sacrifice. The eye gate is where our imagination is fed. If the eyes of our heart are set on that which brings us light, then our whole body, or person will be full of light.
- Being full of light means having the capacity to feel loved by God and to feel love for Him and others in return. It means feeling delight in doing God’s will, meditating on His Word, embracing holiness, and receiving living understanding of His Word.
- What is the primary dream and vision of your life? Is it to have more money, influence, or honor in business and ministry, and comfort in circumstances, or is it to walk in grace that empowers us to live out the Beatitudes?

Principle 6: Light can be lost and replaced by darkness. This principle can be experienced at various levels, from a believer who loses ground in their spiritual life to one who completely rejects the Lord and ends up in outer darkness. [25](#)

“But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” [26](#)

- Our past decisions to obey Jesus must be maintained, because it is possible to lose some of our capacity to experience light. Restoring our commitment to obey and seek Jesus with all of our heart is the only way to restore our capacity to enjoy His light.
- Some speak of the cost of discipleship, but ***the cost of non-discipleship is much higher.***

Principle 7: It is impossible to serve both God and money. The picture here is of a slave and a slave-owner. To serve does not signify an occasional act of obedience, but a bondservant who constantly obeys. Men can work for two employers, but no slave can be the property of two masters. Single ownership and full-time service is the essence of slavery.

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” [27](#)

A SIMPLE LIFESTYLE

Paul exhorted Timothy to embrace a simple lifestyle by being content with food and covering.

8...and having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. [28](#)

We must see God’s desire to give financial blessing; we must resist covetousness, yet without overreacting and embracing a spirit of poverty. We should teach on the kingdom benefits of prosperity, the perils of covetousness, and the contentment of a simple lifestyle.

I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound...I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. 29,

Give and invest your all into the kingdom of heaven, because you can't keep any of it.

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 31

The Lord gives you the best return of your investment of your time treasure and talents. Your relatively small temporal investments into the kingdom of God will receive eternal rewards!

Chapter 5:15 – End Notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deuteronomy 8:18 2. 3 John 2 3. Matthew 6:4 4. Matthew 6:11 5. Matthew 6:25-33 6. Matthew 6:19-24 7. Luke 6:38 8. Matthew 6:19-24 9. Luke 21:3-4 10. Matthew 6:19 11. Luke 12:15-21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Mark 4:18-19 13. Mark 7:21-23 14. 1 Timothy 6:10 15. Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:3 16. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 17. Matthew 10:42 18. Matthew 6:20 19. Luke 12:33; Luke 18:22 20. 1 Peter 1:4 21. Matthew 19:27-28 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Matthew 6:21 23. Matthew 6:22-23 24. Ephesians 1:17-18 25. Matthew 8:12 26. Matthew 6:23 27. Matthew 6:24 28. 1 Timothy 6:8 29. Philippians 4:11-13 30. See below 31. 1 Timothy 6:7
<p>30. Edited From: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: <i>Session 16 Loving Jesus in the Use of Our Money</i> (Matthew 6:19-24)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.16

Overcoming Anxiety and Fear (Matthew 6:25-33)

PURSUING YOUR DESTINY WITHOUT FEAR

Jesus addresses how we pursue our **Destiny** as related to our finances and daily provisions. The way we pursue our destiny, our life-mission, is radically different from how the world pursues it.

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?...31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'...32 For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 1

“Worry” is the key word used here. It occurs six times in Matthew 6:25, 27–28, 31, 34. The King James Version’s translation of worry as *take no thought* can lead us to unbiblical conclusions.

We are to plan for the future, but without a spirit of fear and anxiety.

Therefore: This points to a connection with verses 19-24. Only by choosing heavenly treasure, 2 a lifestyle in light, 3 and God as our master 4 are we prepared to trust our Father in the way Jesus sets forth. 5 When we determine that our primary treasure is God’s glory and the kingdom and not earthly wealth, 6 then we approach getting our daily provision with a different attitude. 7

Our life is eternal so there is much more to it than just the food which sustains it. A life dominated by worry about food misses the bigger purpose of our life in seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. 8

Jesus called us to escape covetousness that is fueled by the anxiety of not having enough money. Anxiety hinders our progress in walking out the 8 Beatitudes in practical ways.

FOUR REASONS TO RESIST ANXIETY

Jesus gave us four reasons to not yield to a mindset of worry: We are more valuable to God than the rest of creation like birds and flowers; 9 worry doesn’t add any benefit to us; 10 God knows all our needs; 11 and He gives us His sufficient grace to help us for each day. 12

Reason 1: We are more valuable to God than the rest of creation like birds and flowers. Matthew 6:26-30 Jesus reasons from the “lesser to the greater.” Thus, worry results from not seeing God’s goodness. God's people are more important to Him than the rest of His creation.

He gave humans dominion over creation to bring it forth in much fruitfulness. 13

Food: Birds are diligent in seeking for their food. Despite their great efforts, birds are still dependent on God’s processes in nature. Since humans have a far greater opportunity to use God's processes in creation, we should not worry.

Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 14

- God's creation provides the food which birds need. However, God does not hand feed them. The truth that God feeds the birds does not imply that they did not work to get their food or that we should not work for our material needs.
- Birds search for food so how much more should humans who have the skills to sow, reap, and store food have confidence in God's provision.
- This teaching was not an endorsement for lack of diligence for people or for birds.

Clothes: The flowers of the field illustrate God's care to provide us with clothing. The term “lilies of the field” included many types of beautiful wild flowers.

Why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 15

- To “consider” means to learn from. The uncultivated and short-lived wild flowers are so beautiful without being purposely fashioned for it by man's work of toiling and spinning. To toil meant to cultivate beautiful fields and to spin meant to make beautiful clothing. Yet, our Father adorns them with beauty that surpasses the clothing of wealthy Solomon.
- These flowers have a very short life span and were then thrown in the oven as fuel for cooking. Their survival is not at issue here since they quickly die. Jesus' point was not the survival of the flowers but their natural beauty.
- If God gives extravagant care to perishable flowers, then how much more valuable are we? If God creates with such love and care flowers that die quickly and are burned, then we can be confident that He will provide much more for us.
- The principle here is that our heavenly Father as the sustainer of a beautiful creation can be trusted to meet the basic needs of His children.

Reason 2: Worry doesn’t add any benefit to us. 16 Worrying doesn’t help us to gain more food, to live longer or to accomplish anything at all.

Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 17

- Worry is more likely to shorten a person's life than to extend it.
- A cubit was a measurement of about 18 inches. Stature comes from the Greek word *helikia* which can mean either physical height, life span or age. Most translations mean adding *a single hour to one's life span*. (NAS, ESV, NIV)
- Our life span, food, and clothing are all gifts of God and are greater than human ability.

Reason 3: God knows all our needs. 18 Anxiety is confidence in the wrong things.

Therefore do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?"..32Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 19

- Our confidence is in our Father's knowledge of our needs.

Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 20

- Also for trusting God for daily needs see Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 13:5; 1 Peter 5:7.

Reason 4: God gives us sufficient grace to help us for today. 21 Jesus shows the futility of having anxiety today about tomorrow's troubles.

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. 22

- **The day:** God only promises to provide for us on a daily basis. He wants us to pray daily.

Give us this day our daily bread. 23

- It is good to plan for tomorrow, but not to worry about it.
- **Trouble:** Jesus reminded His disciples of the reality of daily "trouble" or more literally of "evil." Jesus wants us to be realistic about pressures. Jesus promised believers a reward for enduring persecutions that will surely come. 24

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 25

- God's provision of the necessities of life are promised, but that does not mean that the disciple's life will be trouble free. Each day will still have its "troubles."

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Jesus calls us to seek first the kingdom of God, His kingship and His righteousness. 26 This call to wholehearted commitment links back Matthew 6:19-21, 24. He called us to make God our master and treasures in heaven our priority. 27

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 28

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate one and love the other...You cannot serve God and mammon. 29

- Seeking righteousness first implies obedience to Jesus' commands in the main teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. 30 Righteousness is the holy lifestyle of Jesus' disciples who hunger after it. 31
- The gift of righteousness freely gives us a legal position of full acceptance before the Father with the hope we will be moved to such gratitude that we choose righteousness. Some rightly ask, how these promises of provision of daily food, drink and clothing apply to those who live in a region devastated by famine or in one oppressed by persecution? How are we to give this teaching to disciples who die in famine or persecution? It is wrong to suggest that the famine in their region is linked to their personal lack of faith.

This does not address Christians living in famine or persecution.

Some suffering can be blamed on human selfishness and our bad management of the resources in creation. However, we can trace a human cause for every famine or disaster. Such theological issues are not addressed here. The focus is on our trust in our Father.

The God-given dominion over creation has been abused in recent generations. The most basic cause of hunger is not a lack of divine provision, but of human greed and distribution. God has provided sufficient resources in His creation.

These promises presuppose the sharing of goods within the Christian community. Over half of the Body of Christ worldwide lives in the "Two-Thirds World" and are below what those in the "First-World" define as the poverty line. When believers corporately seek first the kingdom, they will consider fellow-believers who suffer from famine or persecution. 32

We are not promised freedom from work, responsibility, trouble, or great abundance but from worry and lack of daily necessities.

These three principles related to living by faith:

- We are to work to earn our living and not idly claim to trust God to provide. 33 The use of "means" or secondary causes does not lessen our faith.
- Believers are not exempt from responsibility for others. God promises to feed His children in areas devastated by famine partly by using the Body of Christ. The fact that God promises to feed His children does not exempt us from the responsibility of being the agents through whom He provides for others.
- Believers are not exempt from experiencing trouble. He provides for the birds, but the sparrows still will be killed, 34 but not without the Father's knowledge.

A gentle and quiet heart is precious to God. This speaks of those freed from the dominion of anxiety. The fruit of peace is evidence of the First Commandment operating in our heart. Living

with “holy detachment” from materialism is part of developing a loyal heart to Jesus. ³⁵ Living this way is a statement of trust. It is about actively loving, submitting, and seeking Jesus.

Jesus lived in perfect peace without any anxiety because His eye or vision was pure and full of light. He is gentle and meek at heart, but not passive. He trusted and submitted to the Father by keeping the end in view because His treasure wasn't in the temporal "shadows" of His 33 years on the earth. His treasure was loving the Father and being faithful to His will.

The hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. ^{36, 37}

When you truly consider the great love, care and power of God toward you, then you can live in peace trusting the Lord in faith to care for you without worry or fear.

Chapter 5:16 – End Notes:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 6:25, 32 2. Matthew 6:20 3. Matthew 6:22 4. Matthew 6:24 5. Matthew 6:25-34 6. Matthew 6:23-24 7. Matthew 6:25-34 8. Matthew 6:33 9. Matthew 6:26, 30 10. Matthew 6:27 11. Matthew 6:32 12. Matthew 6:34 13. Genesis 1:26-28 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Matthew 6:26 15. Matthew 6:28-30 16. Matthew 6:27 17. Matthew 6:27 18. Matthew 6:8, 32 19. Matthew 6:31-32 20. Matthew 6:8 21. Matthew 6:34 22. Matthew 6:34 23. Matthew 6:11 24. Matthew 5:10-11 25. John 14:1 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Matthew 6:33 27. Matthew 6:22, 24 28. Matthew 6:33 29. Matthew 6:20–24 30. Matthew 5:20 31. Matthew 3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1 32. 2 Corinthians 8:13-15 33. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 34. Luke 12:6 35. Matthew 6:24 36. 1 Peter 3:4
<p>37. Edited From: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: <i>Session 17 Overcoming Anxiety and Fear</i> (Matthew 6:25-33)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.17

To Judge or Not to Judge? (Matthew 7:1-6)

Walking out the kingdom lifestyle as described in Matthew 5-6 creates challenges that result in new relational dynamics. Some will be positive and some negative. New relationships will be established and some older ones changed, sometimes improved and other times not. Some people draw back from their wholehearted pursuit of God out of fear of being judged or criticized.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness... 1

We must avoid being hindered by the spirit of judgment, in our pursuit of the 8 Beatitudes. This occurs in two ways: first, by judging others who pursue God with less intensity than us ² and second, by being judged by others who are against the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle. ³ We are tempted by both situations even in close relationships and we must respond rightly.

Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged... 5 First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye. 6 Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they...turn and tear you in pieces...15 Beware of false prophets... 4

Jesus taught us how to evaluate and respond to those with values that differ from us. ⁵ In Matthew 7:1-6, He highlighted two types of people that we may differ from. Those brothers who are close enough that we can take the speck from their eye ⁶ and those who oppose us. ⁷

Judge: The word *judge* means to evaluate so as to approve or correct in seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. ⁸ Some misinterpret this passage to say that we must never point out anything or any person that is wrong. They believe that we are to avoid all judgment or evaluation. Jesus called us to avoid judgment without going through the right process, with the right information, and in the right spirit. In this very context, Jesus called us to remove the speck from a brother, ⁹ and recognize “dogs and pigs” ¹⁰ and false prophets. ¹¹

Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment. 12

We can judge or evaluate what is right without having a judgmental spirit. We only judge “fruit,” the actions or words in someone’s life and not motives. ¹³

The Scripture is clear about the responsibility to bring scandalous sin or error into the light that is not repented of. 14 Leaders who fail to do this according to the biblical process are displeasing to the Lord.

We are not to be critical of others who seem to pursue God with less intensity or clarity. 15 With the standard of judgment that we use on others, we will receive it from God and man. 16 We determine part of the standard of our judgments at the judgment seat of Christ.

Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 17

Jesus taught us how to respond to faults in others, especially in those close to us. 18

*why do you look at the **speck** in your brother's eye, but do not **consider the plank** in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 **Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.***
19

Look at the speck: We must not look at a speck in our brother's eye without focusing on the plank, or bigger problem in our own eye. To look at a speck in our brother's eyes means to focus on a small area in their life that blurs their ability to see and thus act rightly. We lack the full information about our brother's life that results in the speck being in his eye.

Consider the plank: To consider a plank in our eye is to think long and deep about the larger areas in our life that blur our ability to see and thus act rightly. These large areas include our pride, selfish motives, and compromises that are often unknown to others. We have much more information about our heart, which we do not act on, than our brother's.

Hypocrite: Jesus pointed out the lack of sincerity for godliness that has zeal to address a small area in a brother's life without addressing the larger issues in our life.

First: We are to first take time to address the plank or bigger area in our life. This will give us insight, tenderness, and sensitivity to help remove a speck from our brother's eye. Embracing the long and detailed process of settling large issues in our life provides us with the ability to see clearly to help our brother far more effectively and with patience. Jesus exhorted us to give advice about truth to those who are unreceptive. 20 We do not force-feed the truth to people. There is a time to move on as Paul did. 21

Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. 22

Pearls: This speaks of truths that are both holy and very valuable.

Dogs and swine: This speaks of people who do not value holy things like pearls. Initially, they will trample on the truths (pearls) and eventually turn on you and seek to tear your reputation and life to pieces. Pigs trample and wild dogs, scavengers tear apart.

Dogs and pigs stood for pagan Gentiles to Jewish people. Dogs persecuted the righteous. 23
However, in the early church they speak of hostile "non-disciples" and false believers. 24

THE BIBLICAL COMMAND TO JUDGE

We do not sacrifice truth for love, but we express them together. Truth empowers real love. Many have wrong views of what the Scripture means when calling us to judge one another in a way that gives people the opportunity for deliverance. It is Christ-like to judge. It is parallel to a doctor "judging" cancer while there is time to treat it. It is an expression of God's mercy.

Speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head. 25

We are commanded to make loving, righteous judgments in a world that greatly values tolerance. This will dramatically change the social dynamics in a church. Any church that refuses to judge according to biblical standards will come under judgment. The natural by-product of neglecting righteous judgment is a steady increase of compromise in its leaders, members, and families.

Jesus commended those who spoke out against ministries who promoted falsehood and impurity. Paul exposed false teachers instead of allowing them to minister in the body. 26

You tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars. 27

I have a few things against you, because you allow [etolerat]...Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality... 28

Paul brought judgment on those who refused to repent of immorality to keep them from greater spiritual harm 29 and he commanded separation from the unrepentant. 30

There is sexual immorality among you...4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together...5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. 31

In the Church today, there is radical individualism and the privatization of faith. However, anyone who confesses love for Jesus and is a part of His covenant community, His Church and is required to receive His standards of conduct that are commanded in the Scripture. Individual believers are not free to choose any lifestyle they want with the assurance of not being "judged".

Go to your brother in private to make a godly appeal that he repents of his sin. 32

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 33

- **Alone:** We first go to our brother in private to seek to win them back to a right relationship with Jesus, not to show ourselves as superior or get back at them.

- **Tell him his fault:** When we meet face to face we feel differently. The Spirit intervenes and we often feel more affection and mercy than when talking about him to others.
- Jesus commanded us to rebuke a brother who sins against us.

If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 34

JUDGING IN THE RIGHT WAY

We judge in the right way, which includes the **right process, right information, and right spirit.** We seek to restore people by judging in the right way which requires a “vigorous spirituality” to recognize the real issues, to invest the necessary time, to search our own hearts, and to stand courageously for our brother as we seek his restoration.

Humbly: We look to ourselves as we approach others with the sense of humility and mourning over our personal failures. We consider the plank in our own eye. We often discover much about our heart and weakness in the process of preparing to appeal to our brother.

First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly... 35

Accurately: We take time and effort to get all the available information. Those who are content with partial information have already made up their minds against another.

He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him...17 The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor...examines him. 36

Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. 37

Gently: We approach our brothers tenderly without harshness praying and hoping for the best in the process. Make appeals to restore with gentleness as we consider our own weakness. We look for their sincere intention to obey Jesus as they declare war on their recent failures.

If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 38

- A gentle response diffuses anger in the one you speak to; a harsh tone will stir anger up.

A soft answer turns away wrath [anger], but a harsh word stirs up anger. 39

- Mercy received transforms a person faster than judgment.

Mercy triumphs over judgment. 40

Patiently: We give people time to understand the gravity of their sin and time to repent without quickly concluding that they refuse to repent. We must not rush through the process too quickly.

I gave her [Jezebel] time to repent of her sexual immorality... 41

Confidentiality: We only make the information known to those with authority to help in the restoration process. *We do not reveal the past sins of anyone who repents.* The leaders are required to be strictly confidential, unless they bring in leaders over them to help.

A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter. 42

Above all things have fervent love...for love will cover a multitude of sins. 43

He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends. 44, 45

Learn to leave judgment to the righteous Judge, Jesus Christ. He know all that we ever say, do or think. When you do judge the fruit of others, judge *humbly, accurately, gently, patiently and confidentially* so you will be judged in the same way.

Chapter 5.17 – End Notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 6:33 2. Matthew 7:1-5 3. Matthew 7:6 4. Matthew 7:1-6, 15 5. Matthew 7:1-20 6. Matthew 7:3-5 7. Matthew 7:6 8. Matthew 6:33 9. Matthew 6:5 10. Matthew 6:6 11. Matthew 6:15 12. John 7:24 13. Matthew 7:16-20 14. See below 15. Matthew 7:1-5 16. Matthew 7:2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Matthew 7:1-2 18. Matthew 7:3-5 19. Matthew 7:3-5 20. Matthew 7:6 21. Acts 13:46; 18:6; 19:9 22. Matthew 7:6 23. Psalm 22:16 24. Matthew 5:47; 6:7, 32; 18:17; Luke 12:30; Philippians 3:2; 2 Peter 2:22; Revelation 22:15 25. Ephesians 4:15 26. 2 Corinthians 11:12-13 27. Revelation 2:2 28. Revelation 2:20 29. 1 Corinthians 5:5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14 31. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 32. Matthew 18:15 33. Matthew 18:15 34. Luke 17:3 35. Matthew 7:5 36. Proverbs 18:13-17 37. James 1:19 38. Galatians 6:1 39. Proverbs 15:1 40. James 2:13 41. Revelation 2:21 42. Proverbs 11:13 43. 1 Peter 4:8 44. Proverbs 17:9
<p>14. Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-11; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 21; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:10-13; 2:15; 3:10-11; 1 John 4:1; Revelation 2:2, 14- 15, 20</p>		
<p>45. Edited from: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: <i>Session 18 To Judge or Not to Judge?</i> (Matthew 7:1-6)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.18

Persevering in Seeking God's Help (Matthew 7:7-14)

Jesus addressed walking out the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle in the context of relating to people with different values who trouble us. ¹ Our challenge is to seek first the kingdom and to love God with all of our heart even when we are tempted to be critical of others ² or when we are criticized by others.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...” ³

Love the LORD your God with all your heart...³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ⁴

This passage applies to seeking the Lord's help in two related issues, maintaining a kingdom lifestyle in the context of responding to and solving relational tensions. We are to respond rightly to people who annoy us and to the people who are annoyed by us.

Jesus called us to pray for God's help with perseverance and confidence. Prayer is a most amazing privilege, in which we obtain an audience with the Majesty on high. Many neglect to engage in this privilege.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened...¹² Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them...” ⁵

We are not to trust our natural strengths but to continually seek God for sustaining grace. Wholehearted pursuit of loving Jesus requires persistent asking, seeking, and knocking in our pursuit of a greater breakthrough spiritually and relationally.

- **Ask:** for God's supernatural intervention to touch you and those you are in tension with
- **Seek:** for God's wisdom on how to walk in the 8 beatitudes and to solve tensions
- **Knock:** to overcome obstacles that hinder our growth and reconciliation

The disciple's abiding relationship with God ⁶ is the key to breakthrough. In view of our weakness, we pray with perseverance for God's help or we maintain our dialogue with Him.

To be poor in spirit ⁷ is to recognize our inability to walk out kingdom values or solve relational problems in our own natural strength.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁸

Faith refuses to be denied. **All who ask in God's will are sure to receive**, all who seek will find, and all who *keep* knocking will eventually see the opening of the door and the obstacle removed.

There is always a greater measure of grace to experience, renewing grace, enlightening grace, and empowering grace.

He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God...gives grace to the humble." ⁹

Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may...find grace to help in time of need. ¹⁰

The Father uses prayer to draw us into deeper relationship with Himself and to produce in us gratitude, humility, and love. God is not unaware of or unconcerned about our needs.

We ask God to reveal our deficiencies in the relationship. Before going to a brother or sister, we ask the Lord to show us where we contributed to the wounded relationship. Ask the Lord how He sees the other person and to give us insight on how we can humble ourselves.

SEEKING GOD WITH PERSEVERANCE

We are to persevere knowing that we will be answered in God's timing and way. Jesus called us to ask and keep on asking, to seek and keep on seeking, and to knock and keep on knocking. The verbs are in the continuous present tense indicating that it is something we are to do *consistently*.

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ Everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹

There is an asking which is casual, where we put little effort into seeking God, because it is not something we value. When it is highly prized, we search for it as hidden treasure.

*You will seek Me and find Me, when you **search for Me with all your heart.** ¹²*

If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; ⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. ¹³

Paul called us to pray with all perseverance. ¹⁴ He also exhorted us to “*strive,*” ¹⁵ “*labor fervently,*” ¹⁶ and “*wrestle*” ¹⁷ in prayer.

Praying always...with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. ¹⁸

SEEKING GOD WITH CONFIDENCE

As children we ask our Father with confidence in His goodness. Our view of God is important. He is not reluctant but is our heavenly Father who gives good gifts in answer to prayer.

What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” 19

Human fathers are evil or selfish compared to God’s standards of perfect love.

THE GOLDEN RULE

Jesus called us all to the “Golden Rule” as He continued to talk about relationships.

*“...how much more will your Father...give good things to those who ask Him! 12 Therefore, **whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them**, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” 20*

“Therefore” looks back to what Jesus said about seeking God. Jesus gave a practical application of what He just said on praying for a greater breakthrough.

The kingdom principle: Whatever we want others to do for us is what we are to do to them.

Our actions are not determined by how people treat us, but by how we *desire* them to treat us and by how graciously the Father gives to us.

Love fulfills all that the Law and Prophets taught in Old Testament. 21 True spirituality is not only devout, but is kind to people. Some speak like an angel when praying to God, but speak like a devil when talking to the people who bother them.

ENTER THE NARROW GATE

Those who say they are believers seek Jesus in two very different ways. Some choose the broad way of the world, others the narrow way to *life* in Christ. We are strengthened to enter the narrow gate by consistently asking, seeking, and knocking to experience more of God’s help. 22

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many [it is popular] who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few [this is unpopular] who find it.” 23

The narrow way is difficult on our flesh, because it requires self-denial and thinking with a renewed mind. 24

He...said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan...for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men...²⁴ If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."²⁵

Jesus exhorted us to strive to enter the narrow gate of obedience. We do not strive to earn forgiveness, but rather to position ourselves for a greater breakthrough in our heart.

"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many...will seek to enter and will not be able."²⁶

Striving has two very different meanings in the New Testament. We are not to strive *to earn* God's love. However, we *are* to strive in the sense of **putting effort** into our relationship with God, like how we put effort into our relationships with our family and friends. Striving, like this is an expression of love. If we do not strive in this way, by putting effort into the relationship, then we are not loving God with all our heart and strength.

Wrong striving: We must never strive to receive God's love, acceptance or forgiveness. It has been freely given to us because of Jesus' work on the cross. To strive to earn God's love denies the foundational truths of the gospel. It is also wrong to strive to establish our own agenda or to strive to make people respond to our ministry or ideas by pressuring them.

Biblical striving: Jesus calls us to exert great effort in walking in the narrow way. ²⁷ We strive to obey God ²⁸ in ministry labors, ²⁹ in prayer, ³⁰ for unity ³¹ and in being diligent to enter God's rest, ³² disciplining our body, ³³ and pressing into God. ³⁴

- Jesus called us to make radical choices in our cooperation with the grace of God. He spoke of "cutting off our hand" or "plucking out our eye."³⁵

If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out ...for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. ³⁶

- Paul exerted much effort in seeking to live without any compromise. ³⁷

I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men. ³⁸

You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. ³⁹

How should we resist striving and how should we embrace it? When we answer this in the wrong, we embrace errors that thrust us into legalism or compromise. Believers are to be diligent to renew their minds so that they can enjoy God's rest.

Let us therefore be diligent [make every effort, NIV] to enter that rest... ⁴⁰

Easy yoke: Jesus did not contradict Himself in Matthew 7:13 and Matthew 11:29. The truth is seen in considering both passages. Rest in this context is a spiritual rest for our soul and not a physical rest for our flesh. The opposite of rest is not diligence; it is restlessness with its emotional turmoil. Lazy people are often very restless, spiritually and emotionally.

“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” 41

- Taking Jesus' yoke is not about receiving forgiveness but embracing meekness. We are to be yoked to Jesus and His lifestyle, which is difficult on our flesh but easy on our heart.
- The easy yoke is to have peace in our heart as we deny our flesh by ceasing to fight for our honor, recognition, and comfort. **Great freedom comes to our heart by renouncing all our agendas that compete with Jesus' perfect will in our life.**
- The difficult yoke is to live with rejection, fear, turmoil, and confusion.

What is *difficult* to our flesh is often an easy yoke to our heart, spiritually and emotionally. What is *easy* to our flesh is often difficult on our heart, spiritually and emotionally. Some believers seek in vain for an “easy” path for their flesh that is also “easy” for their heart. 42

Seek, ask, and knock persistently in prayer knowing the Lord wants to answer you in His perfect will. Pray for the grace of God to follow Him in His narrow way of obedience. Find your rest and peace as you are yoked to Him in obedience.

Chapter 5:18 – End Notes:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matthew 7:1-20 2. Matthew 7:1-6 3. Matthew 6:33 4. Matthew 22:37-38 5. Matthew 7:7-12 6. John 15:5 7. Matthew 5:3 8. Matthew 5:3 9. James 4:6 10. Hebrews 4:16 11. Matthew 7:7-8 12. Jeremiah 29:13 13. Proverbs 2:4-5 14. Ephesians 6:18 15. Romans 15:30 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Colossians 4:12 17. Ephesians 6:12 18. Ephesians 6:18 19. Matthew 7:9-11 20. Matthew 7:11-12 21. Romans 13:8 22. Matthew 7:7 23. Matthew 7:13-1 24. Matthew 16:23 25. Matthew 16:23-24 26. Luke 13:24 27. Matthew 7:13-14 28. Luke 13:24; Acts 24:16; Hebrews 12:4 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 29. Colossians 1:29 30. Romans 15:30 31. Philippians 1:27 32. Hebrews 4:11 33. 1 Corinthians 9:27 34. Philippians 3:12-15 35. Matthew 5:29-30 36. Matthew 5:29 37. Acts 24:16 38. Acts 24:16 39. Hebrews 12:4 40. Hebrews 4:11 41. Matthew 11:29-30
<p>42. Edited from: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: <i>Session 19 Persevering in Seeking God’s Help</i> (Matthew 7:7-14)</p>		

CHAPTER 5.19

Being Wise and Great in God's Eyes (Matthew 7:15-27)

FALSE PROPHETS AND TEACHERS

Jesus warned His people to beware of false prophets or teachers who claim to speak for God.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits...17 Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit...20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 1

Jesus compared false teachers to wolves because their ideas are extremely dangerous. They are dangerous to people's spiritual life because they convince them that the "narrow way" is much broader than Jesus taught. They present the broad and easy way as the "narrow way." They contradict the words of Jesus by presenting the broad road as the way of grace.

Know them by their fruits: We can only test or know a ministry by its fruit, their words and deeds. 2 We do not treat others based on what we discern is wrong without evidence of fruit. In this way, the Lord protects the Body of Christ from a culture of accusation and slander.

Most false teachers are not aware they are false because they do not read the Scriptures enough to understand their error. Do not be dazzled by their popularity, charm or stories.

Scripture requires God's people to take a stand against compromising trends or doctrines in the Church without dismissing the whole Church as participating in them. There are millions of faithful believers worldwide who boldly refuse compromise.

- There are times to bring judgment to ministries that have destructive doctrines and behavior. 3 We must do this in the right way and with a right spirit.
- In Revelation 2-3, Jesus identified compromise in five of the seven churches. We must take a stand against issues that Jesus took a stand against without assuming that entire denominations or "streams" in the Body of Christ are all in error.

- Loving the Church is not the same as agreeing with the practices of each local church in the Body of Christ. It is a biblical expression of love to identify major compromises that are hurting the Church, but without criticizing specific ministries by name unless going through the biblical process. ⁴

Practical ways to avoid deception include regular, prayerful Bible reading; setting our hearts to obey the Lord; staying in close relationship with others; regular involvement with a body of believers that has leaders who uphold biblical doctrines and practices; and maintaining a teachable spirit, that receives instruction and correction from others.

THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE

Many who profess Christ do not seriously embrace obedience in their private lives. Jesus went from talking about false prophets ⁵ on to false professors. ⁶

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” ⁷

He who does God’s will: Obedience to Jesus does not earn salvation, but gives evidence that our faith is genuine. ⁸ **We express our faith with works of obedience to Jesus.** To exalt works as that which earns God's love greatly undermines the grace of God. However, to exclude good works as unnecessary is to deny the life empowering influence of grace. ⁹ Salvation *by* works and salvation *without* works both rob Jesus of His glory.

*“...if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can [that] faith save him?...”
17 Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁰*

They say: Many boldly profess allegiance to Jesus publicly by calling Him their Lord, but they lack the saving faith that must be expressed in the lives of all who genuinely love Jesus.

Supernatural ministry: They assume their popular ministry will be sufficient proof of their genuine faith. They have many testimonies of their prophecies, exorcisms, and healing miracles.

Depart from Me: These will be the most shocking and terrifying words that they will ever hear. Their focus is mostly on their ministry and not in cultivating a life of obedience to the Lord.

You who practice lawlessness: These are not mass murderers, but simply people who embraced lifestyles of immorality, drunkenness, lying, and financial lack of integrity.

Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹

Many: Jesus emphasized the popularity of the broad way with its distorted message of grace. ¹² It is alarming to know that so many professing believers live this way.

Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord..." 13

Broad is the way that leads to destruction, and...many who go in by it. 14

*For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many...10
Then many will be offended, will betray one another...11 Then many false prophets will
rise up and deceive many...12 The love of many will grow cold. 15*

BEING WISE AND GREAT IN GOD'S EYES

Jesus ended the Sermon by calling us to a lifestyle of consistent obedience. 16 He summoned us to renounce the values of secular worldly culture that are popular in the Church. Nothing can substitute for our consistent obedience. Even a popular ministry cannot cover up disobedience in one's private life that is not repented of. Tragically many in the Church are deceived. We live in the fear of God knowing that our obedience will be tested.

Jesus contrasted the two types of professing believers in His parable of the two builders. One was wise because he took the trouble to build his house on a rock foundation. The foolish one built it on sand. A casual observer cannot see the differences because foundations are not seen.

Jesus tells us that the way to be wise and great in God's eyes is by doing or obeying His teachings in the Sermon on the Mount.

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine [Sermon on the Mount], and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 17

Jesus invites everyone to be great in His sight without regard for their outward achievements or the size of their ministry. It will be based on the size of their heart in obedience and love to Him.

Whoever breaks [consistently] one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does [consistently] and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 18

- Jesus revealed a new paradigm for greatness. We focus on being great in His sight rather than in the sight of mankind. This greatness will be fully manifest in the age to come.
- Jesus warned that if we minimize the least of His commandments and teach others to do so, we will be least in His kingdom in the age to come. Many, in the name of teaching on grace, promote spiritual laziness and a lack of commitment to Jesus.

The storm: Our love of Jesus must be tested and proven as genuine under the pressures of life. There is a two-fold application of storms that test our spiritual foundations. First, personal pressures in this life reveal the genuineness of our faith. Second, the evaluation of our life at the judgment seat of Christ will reveal the true character of our faith. 19

Jesus tells us that the way to be foolish in God's eyes is by neglecting to obey and apply His teachings in the Sermon on the Mount to our lives.

Everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall. 20

Jesus did not describe Christians with non-Christians, but only those who heard His sayings or teachings. Both groups read the Bible, went to church, listened to sermons and listened to Christian music. We cannot always recognize the differences between them because the “foundations” of their private lives are out of view. The main issue is whether they diligently sought to obey Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. C. S. Lewis wrote of *resistance thinking* that is *against the world yet for the world*. Our message is both world-affirming and world-denying. We proclaim *what God has called the world to be* in its dignity and destiny, while at the same time proclaiming *what the world has become* in all its depravity.

The idea of blending into the secular scene with music, fashion, and movies to win people *by becoming like them* is a great mistake. Jesus taught that believers who are indistinguishable from non-Christians are useless in bringing real change to the world. Jesus' message is very serious and must not be ignored in light of its sober warnings. Which road are we going to travel? On which foundation are we going to build? What type of message will we proclaim? The biblical message calls forth humility, poverty of spirit, and makes people cry to God for mercy and to hunger for Jesus and righteous lifestyles. 21

Building your life on firm the foundation, the unshakable Rock of Jesus

When Jesus finished His teaching in the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ He gave an illustration comparing those who heard and obeyed His teaching and those who did not follow and obey Him. He compared them to people who build their homes or lives on rock or on sand.

*“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who **built his house on the rock**: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for **it was founded on the rock**. 26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” And so it was, **when Jesus had ended these sayings**, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for **He taught them as one having authority**, and not as the scribes. 22*

Building on rock is hard and takes more effort. Building on sand is easy and comfortable. The true test of our life foundations are proven when the storms of life come. Those who build their lives on obedience to the Word of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit will withstand the storms and tests of this life.

The strongest and safest place to live your life is in the center of the will of God!

Chapter 5.19 – End notes:

1. Matthew 7:15-20	6. Matthew 7:1-23	15. Matthew 24:5-12
2. Matthew 7:16, 20	7. Matthew 7:21-23	16. Matthew 7:24-27
3. Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-11; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 21; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14; Revelation 2:2, 14-15, 20	8. James 2:14-17	17. Matthew 7:24-25
4. Matthew 18:15-17	9. Titus 2:11-13	18. Matthew 5:19
5. Matthew 7:15-20	10. James 2:14-17	19. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15
	11. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10	20. Matthew 7:26-27
	12. Matthew 7:13, 22; 24:5, 11, 12	21. See below
	13. Matthew 7:22	22. Matthew 7:24-29
	14. Matthew 7:13	

21. Edited from: **S.O.M.:** *Session 20 Being Wise and Great in God's Eyes* (Matthew 7:15-27)

CHAPTER 6

Kingdom of God – Children

“Change a generation, change a nation.”

This is what the Lord told the President and Founder of Children of the Nations when he started this international mission to orphans.

Children are the future of the church, the future of our community, our nation and the world. If we want to see a positive change in the future of our communities and nation we must take responsibility for training the children to live in obedience to the Word, way and will of God.

If we do not teach and train our children in the ways of God, then they will be trained by lies and deceptions of the enemy through an ungodly immoral culture through the assault of the media.

*... you once walked according to the **course of this world**, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 1*

*“**The lamp of the body is the eye.** If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 2*

The Bible tells parents to teach their children the Word of God; to fear and respect God. Train up children:

*especially concerning the day you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb, when the Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may **teach their children.**’ 3*

***Train up a child** in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it. 4*

Children are a gift and blessing from God

Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him. 5

We are called to leave an inheritance to our Children.

*A good man leaves an inheritance to his **children's children**, But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. 6*

God declared that He is forever the God of all the generations joined together into His family.

*Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is **My name forever**, and this is My memorial **to all generations**.' 7*

God has a plan for joining the generations together for a great end time revival and harvest.

*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful **day of the LORD**. 6 And he will **turn The hearts of the fathers to the children**, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, 8*

There is coming a generation of forerunners, like John the Baptist who will proclaim, "Prepare the way of the Lord." This generation will be set apart, consecrated with clean hands and pure hearts and will wholeheartedly seek the Lord's face in prayer and worship alone!

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. 6 This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face. 9

They will be cleansed, washed and prepared by the Lord as a bride of Christ.

*25 For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her 26 to make her **holy and clean, washed** by the cleansing of God's word. 27 He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be **holy and without fault**. 10*

God knew and chose His children before the foundation of the world!

*You saw me before I was born. **Every day of my life was recorded in your book**. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. 11*

*just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame **before Him in love**, 12*

Jeremiah and John the Baptist were called and anointed from the womb.

As the prepared bride of Christ they will join together with the Holy Spirit and cry out in loving prayer, “COME.” “Come to us, Come for us, Come be with us!”

*And the **Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”** And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. 13*

The race of life

Paul saw his life like a race that he ran to receive the reward, the prize from the Lord.

*Do you not know that **those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?** Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 14*

*I have fought the good fight, **I have finished the race,** I have kept the faith. 15*

Our lives are like a part of a long relay race through the generations of the ages. We run our strongest race and then hand the baton to the next generation to run on. We pray that the next generation will run further faster and higher than our generation. Our ceiling should be the floor that the next generation launches from.

Two important rules to running a strong relay race.

- First, do not drop the baton. Do not retire from your work until you have trained up people who will carry on the work the Lord gave to you.
- Second, the next runner must be running at the same speed to make a strong hand off of the baton. The next generation must be prepared to carry on after we have gone. This is your legacy to the generations to follow.

Be a bridge builder. It takes years to plan, finance and build bridges, but only moments for those who follow to cross it. So it has been and so it should continue to be for all future generations who are raised in biblical understanding, faith, love and obedience to God.

Eternal rewards

If is amazing to learn that when the Lord returns to earth He is bringing His rewards to give to His saints!

*“And behold, I am coming quickly, and **My reward is with Me,** to give to every one according to his work. 16*

Invest in the children of God and please the Lord by wholeheartedly loving the Lord and others; nurturing, teaching, equipping and training the next generation of true followers, disciples and worshippers of the Lord Jesus Christ to fulfill their divine destinies.

Chapter 6 – End Notes:

1. Ephesians 2:2	7. Exodus 3:15	13. Revelation 22:17
2. Matthew 6:22-23	8. Malachi 4:5-6	14. 2 Corinthians 9:24
3. Deuteronomy 4:10	9. Psalm 24:3-6	15. 2 Timothy 4:7
4. Proverbs 22:6	10. Ephesians 5:25-27 NLT	16. Revelation 22:12
5. Psalm 127:3 NLT	11. Psalm 139:16 NLT	
6. Proverbs 13:22	12. Ephesians 1:4	

CHAPTER 7

Kingdom of God – Community, Citizens and Culture

Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10 NKJV

The Spirit of God will dwell with mankind

The ultimate plan of God is to dwell with mankind on the earth. In the New Jerusalem, God the Father, will tabernacle or meet with mankind. The Lord sets apart holy places to meet with the holy consecrated members of His family.

God created man and women and placed them in the **Garden in Eden**. There He walked with them and spoke to them. When they sinned against the word and rule of God they were sent out of the Garden. Ever since that day the Lord has been carrying out His plan to redeem mankind and restore the whole world back to a Garden of Eden like reality and fellowship with Him.

Before God does anything on earth He sets His saints to praying.

CHRISTIANS UNITING IN COMMUNITIES OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP IS A SIGN TO THE WORLD

King David instituted day and night worship in the Tabernacle of David in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant.

King David's son Solomon built the temple to God in Jerusalem. 1

*“So Solomon began to **build the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem** on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to David, his father.” 2*

*“**When Solomon finished praying**, fire flashed down from heaven and burned up the burnt offerings and sacrifices, and the **glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple.**” 3*

Historically the golden age of Israel was a whole society and community centered on the continuing prayer, praise and worship of God in His holy temple.

The prophesy of the coming house of prayer.

*“For My house shall be called a **house of prayer** for all nations.” 4*

Jesus confirmed the prophesy.

Jesus confirmed the prophecy that His house would be a house of prayer for all nations.

*“He said..., “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a **house of prayer**,’” 5*

If the church, God’s ekklesia or assembly, is not a house of prayer then it is not His house.

Jesus’ prayer for you.

Jesus prayed for all believers including you.

*“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. “I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity **that the world will know that you sent me** and that you love them as much as you love me. Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began! “O righteous Father, the world doesn’t know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them.” 6*

The body of Christ, living together in spiritual unity, in love with the Lord and with each other will demonstrate to the world that Jesus is who He said He is; the Son of David, Son of God, the Son of Man, King of kings, Lord of lords, Savior and Judge of the world.

Jesus told His disciples that, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” 7

About 120 were together united in prayer in the Upper Room, “On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place... “Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.” 8

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘ And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,

That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;... And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’ 9

The united prayers of the saints opened the way for the promised Holy Spirit to come and give power to Jesus’ Great Commission to *make disciples of all nations.* 10

KINGDOM OF GOD COMMUNITIES IN HISTORY

The Book of Acts records the beginnings of the church of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. Members of the body of Christ gathered together in communities of believers to pray, worship, learn discipleship, fellowship and minister to others. Other communities of believers have grown up around the world. Just some of these historic Kingdom of God Christian communities include:

The St. Maurice Abbey starting 522 A.D instituted perpetual prayer for over 370 years!

The Bangor Abbey began in 559 AD with continual prayer and worship lasting for 250 years!

The ‘Lord’s Watch’ by the Moravians started on August 13, 1727. They prayed in ‘watches’ night and day continually for over 100 years!

The International House of Prayer – Mission Base, in Kansas City started continually praying and worshipping the Lord, day and night, on September 19th, 1999 and they continue until today!

The Holy Spirit is now restoring day and night prayer and worship in the spirit of the tabernacle of David all around the world.

God said, “*On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages;”* 11

All over the world the Holy Spirit is calling *watchmen* to pray continually day and night. In the majority of the nations of the world day and night prayers are already on going. Houses of prayer, prayer rooms, prayer watches and prayer altars are increasing at an accelerating rate. There are hundreds now across the USA. We can expect Kingdom of God communities to grow up in support of these prayer and worship centers.

JOIN THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMMUNITY VISION

Join in with God’s purposes now. Our lives must be founded on a true understanding and knowledge of God and His will. Our lives, families, work and ministry must be built on the foundation of Jesus. We are to be connected to Him continually through prayer, worship and obedience to His Word. This will happen 24 hours each day, 7 days per week in houses of prayer.

It is in God’s heart to have His houses of prayer opened in every community in the world!

In this way, “*the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*” ¹²

Have a God blessed vision for millions of houses of prayer praying day and night around the world. Just imagine if teams of people each would pray for just 2 hours per week, there would be continuous night and day prayer in that community. This would include believers lifting up their Kingdom of God community before the throne of grace and inviting the Holy Spirit to come.

You can start by praying with a group in your community for one or more hours. God is faithful and will answer your prayers and add to your prayer group if you will only be faithful and continue. Start a prayer group or join an existing one. There is a need for a ‘house of prayer’ in every community. Prayer group locations include our homes, churches, ministries, work and community to prepare God’s people to receive *so much more* of God, and to *prepare the way* for the return of Jesus Christ our Lord and King. This is a work for the *united* body of Christ.

KINGDOM OF GOD COMMUNITY PURPOSES

Kingdom of God communities are foundational works of God to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. We must build all kingdom work and ministry on a firm foundation, Jesus Christ in His house of prayer. We need prayer to communicate with and be guided by our Lord Jesus. We need to communicate regularly with Him to have a relationship with Him. We need to have an intimate relationship with Christ to fully receive His love and to share His love, as *God is love*. The Holy Spirit is raising up Kingdom of God communities around prayer, worship and prophecy around the world established on communities of godly people joining in fellowship.

Functions of Kingdom of God communities

What are the people of God doing in these set apart places around the earth? The Bible describes the first community of believers who gathered together in Jerusalem.

*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the **apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.** ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were **together, and had all things in common,** ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶ So continuing daily with **one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,** ¹³*

These communities of believers are places of;

- **Discipleship** v. 42
- **Fellowship** v. 42
- **Sharing meals together** v. 42

- **Praying together** v. 42
- **Living together in united community** v. 44 [14](#)
- **Sharing** provisions v. 44
- **Worshipping** in the house of God - Hosting the *presence* of the Spirit of the Lord. The Lord inhabits our praise. Exalting the Name of the Lord [15](#)
- **Living in gladness and simplicity in love, fellowship, humility, righteousness, justice and service**
- **Seeking God** – You cannot love and obey the Lord unless we **know God** and His ways.
- **Calling heaven to earth** – The Lord is seeking those who will agree with Him and call forth His unlimited riches to manifest His kingdom on the earth. [16](#)
- **Interceding** – stand in the gap for others. Jesus is our intercessor who sits at the right hand of God the Father and prays for us. There are those who have needs and cannot pray for themselves. As priests we are called to stand before the throne of God and pray for the salvation, healing, freedom from bondage to the lies of this world and wholeness of body, mind and spirit for others. “...*You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*” [17](#)
- **Seeking the will of God** – Listen for prophesy and guidance from the Holy Spirit. The Kingdom of God is ruled by our King, Jesus Christ. Jesus instructed us to pray ‘*Your kingdom come Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*’ [18](#) The kingdom is coming as we follow and obey Jesus. How can we obey if we do not know the truth? “*My people are being destroyed because they don’t know me.*” [19](#)
- **Bring light to displace darkness** – The Lord promised, “*If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and **heal their land.***” [20](#)
- **Preparing for missions and ministry** – **Saving, Healing Delivering** ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit to those who need God to transform their lives. (Sozo, Shalom)
- **Changing the spiritual atmosphere** – As evil darkness is confronted by the glorious *light of the world* shining through the united body of Christ the kingdom rule of the Lord will spread around the world.
- **Prepare the way of the Lord** – Jesus is coming back to earth to rule over the nations. [21](#)
- **Preparing the Bride of Christ** - The Lord is coming back for a clean, prepared and spotless bride. [22](#)

- **Preparing for the Day of the Lord** – There is a day appointed when the Lord will judge all the deeds of mankind in the world, both evil and righteous. He will pour out His wrath on all unrighteousness and cleanse the earth of evil.

The hope of the citizens of the Kingdom of God is to be joyful in God’s house of prayer.

Both individually and corporately believers are being called by God into His **houses of prayer in His kingdom of God Communities.**

KINGDOM OF GOD COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

George Otis of the Sentinel Group has traveled the world documenting communities that are being *transformed* by the presence and power of the Spirit of God coming in answer to united fervent prayers. One of his *God-cumentarys* titled, ‘**An Appalachian Dawn,**’ is about the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in Manchester, Kentucky which was renamed, City of Hope. One pastor said, “Prayer is the main thing!” And, ‘If it can happen here, it can happen anywhere!’

Here are 20 indicators that the Awaken America Alliance have identified that signal when a community is being awakened and transformed into a Kingdom of God community. There are ten listed in the Church and ten in the Culture. These Spiritual indicators will ignite a passion for the body of Christ to unify in prayer, as we prepare our communities, cities and nations.

Join together with other believers to pray and work for these and even more!

In the Church

1. Increasing testimonies of the manifest presence of God.
2. Increased salvations and baptisms.
3. Increased participation in corporate and individual prayer, fasting, and other spiritual disciplines leading to more effective discipleship.
4. A decrease in divorces and renewed commitments to marriage between a man and a woman in covenant relationship as God intends.
5. Imparting faith to children and youth as parents are equipped to become primary teachers and disciplers of their children.
6. A passionate pursuit for the well-being of their cities among united congregations, through the planting of new congregations, benevolent ministries, practical service and focused evangelism.
7. Commitment to extravagant generosity evidenced by compassion ministries and missions.
8. Improved health among leaders as evidenced by their joy, decreased resignations, healthy loving relationships within their families, and an increased response among young people called to the ministry.
9. Christians involved in bold witness accompanied by miracles, dramatic conversions and Holy Spirit empowered victories over evil.

10. Heightened expressions of love and unity among all believers, as demonstrated by the unity of pastors, leaders and members of the congregations.

In the Culture

11. Removal of racial, social and status barriers as the united church celebrates Jesus together.
12. A restoration of morality, ethical foundations and accountability in families and among leaders of the church.
13. A transformation of all areas of society through the restoration of the influence of Christ in government, education, business, media, the arts and entertainment.
14. Increased care for the hungry, homeless and the most vulnerable and needy.
15. Young adults, students and children embracing the claims and lifestyle of Christ through the witness of friends who live and love like Jesus.
16. Community and national leaders seeking out the church as an answer to the problems in society.
17. Increased care for children as "gifts from the Lord" as the good news addresses abortion, adoption, foster care and child well-being.
18. Righteous relations between men and women with decreases in the divorce rates, cohabitation, same-sex relations, sexual abuse, sexual trafficking, out of wedlock children.
19. An awakening to the "fear of the Lord" rather than seeking the approval of people, thus restoring integrity and credibility.
20. Community *transformation* and an accompanying decrease of social ills through increased expressions of "loving your neighbor" in service, compassion and unity. 23

Kingdom of God community citizens:

- Live a fasted Sermon-on-the Mount life style in agreement with the Lord's teachings recorded in Matthew chapters 5-7.
- Gather together to pray.
- Prepare set apart holy places to meet with the Holy Spirit.
- Listen to and obey the Word and voice of the Lord.
- Pray for the grace and anointing to love the Lord wholeheartedly.
- Love and support one another with grace and humility.
- Willingly surrender to the will and ways of God.
- Go out to nations to share the good news of the kingdom of God in love and power.

The Holy Spirit working in Kingdom of God communities will positively influence and transform all spheres of society.

Kingdom citizens will pray and work toward transforming their entire social and community environments including: education, government, the economy, media, the arts and entertainment. As kingdom citizens they want to see all areas of their community come under the rule and reign of their Lord Jesus as King.

The Christian life was never meant to be another world religion. It is a personal intimate relationship with the God of the universe through Jesus Christ His Son. Kingdom citizens are blessed with a direct supernatural connection through the indwelling Holy Spirit to the Lord through prayer and worship.

THE GOSHEN PRINCIPLE

God has promised that He will establish *places of mercy* in times of tribulation, as spiritual and natural havens, like Goshen in Egypt during the days of Joseph and Moses. ²⁴ The people living in Goshen experienced growth from the Lord on all they possessed. Their land was called the *best* in all of Egypt. ²⁵ These regions are blessed with the abundance of the Lord and are fruitfully in all areas of life. ²⁶ These set apart regions become places where crops flourish, the economy thrive, families are full of joy, and individuals live with divine purposes and blessings.

Now God is moving those who hear His call to establish *places of refuge* that provides a blessed place of sanctuary for His people in times of tribulation, and a habitation for the Spirit of God. ²⁷

People are seeking the plans from God to establish these set apart and divinely protected *Regions of Refuge*.

"He [the Lord] turns a wilderness into pools of water, and dry land into water springs . . . that they may establish a city for a dwelling place, and sow fields and plant vineyards, that they may yield a fruitful harvest. He also blesses them and they greatly multiply." ²⁸

The **Lord's supernatural protection** is referred to as the ***Goshen principle***. ²⁹

The Bible promises that there will be places on earth of spiritual protection

I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the land. ²³ I will make a difference between My people and your people... ³⁰

Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail. ³¹

In the time of the plagues and judgment of Egypt, God did not allow His judgments to touch the place where His people lived called Goshen. ³² God protected His people from the plagues He released in Egypt. The Lord said to Pharaoh, *"I will make a difference between My people and your people."* ³³

Though the plagues were poured out in Egypt and all around the Israelites, nobody in Goshen was sick or affected, not even their livestock. In Goshen, none of the hail or fire fell, none of the flies swarmed and they had light. [34](#)

Pockets of mercy is a term used to refer to geographic areas where God's people will be hidden or protected from God's judgment in the end time. These have also been prophetically called cities of refuge

Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden [pockets of mercy] in the day of the Lord's anger. [35](#)

This same idea of the Goshen principle is seen in Scripture when the mark or seal of God is put on the saints to protect them from the judgment of God.

They [demons] were commanded not to harm the grass but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. [36](#)

He [angel] cried to the four angels...³ saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." [37](#)

The LORD said to him [angel], "Go ... through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry [intercession] over all the abominations that are done within it." ⁵ To the others [angels] He said, "Go through the city and kill... ⁶ Utterly slay old and young ... but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark." [38](#)

This "Goshen principle" will be seen in the end times. There will be strategic regions on the earth with special divine protection, provision, and guidance. In these geographic locations, the people of God will be protected from the judgments of God like in Goshen. [39](#) Goshen in Egypt is where the nation of Israel lived was protected and blessed by God.

*During all that time the people could not see each other, and no one moved. But there was **light as usual where the people of Israel lived.*** [40](#)

*Meanwhile, **the people of Israel settled in the region of Goshen in Egypt.** There they acquired property, and they were fruitful, and their population grew rapidly.* [41](#)

*...only place without hail was the region of **Goshen, where the people of Israel lived.*** [42](#)

God will protect His people again on The Day of His wrath.

They are told to gather together and seek the Lord in humility, righteousness, and justice.

Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation, ² Before the decree is issued, Or the day passes like chaff, Before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, Before the day of the LORD's anger comes upon you! ³ Seek the LORD, all you

mEEK of the earth, Who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the LORD's anger. 43

KINGDOM OF GOD COMMUNITIES WILL BE DIFFERENT

True kingdom of God communities will always appear extreme and radical compared to secular worldly communities. The world values tolerance for sinful, unbiblical lifestyles. This is often called 'political correctness.' To appreciate the value of Kingdom of God communities they must be viewed from God's perspective.

God is seeking a holy habitation where He can glorify Himself among His people.

- The Lord wants His people to glorify, worship and honor Him.
- God wants His children to pray to Him and seek His face, and His hand of salvation, provision, and healing.
- He is seeking voluntary lovers who will obey His commandments
- He is Holy so His family is to be holy.
- The Lord is righteous and perfect and He wants His family to be righteous.
- The Lord is just and is making wrong things right. He wants His family to be just as well.
- The Lord is humble and He wants His family to be humble.
- His goal is for all His children to be transformed into the image of His Son, Jesus.

People cultivate a kingdom of God community by living a Sermon on the Mount life style through. Some have called them "Red Letter" people who obey the teachings of Jesus.

Love – which is the primary character of God that He calls His children to reflect and mature in.

Prayer – is the way we commune and communicate with God and see His purposes manifested on earth.

Worship – draws the manifest presence of God to His people.

Unity – in the spirit is how we demonstrate our union with the Lord and His family. 44

Service – Jesus showed us the heart of the Father when He came to serve others.

Humility – is the only way that we can approach the throne of a Holy God.

Righteousness – of God is one of the foundations of the throne of God. 45

Justice – is the other foundation of the throne of God. 45

Community Transformation

For a community to become a Kingdom of God community it must be *transformed*.

The natural, God given, illustration of transformation or metamorphism is a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly within a cocoon. This is a fundamental change to the identity, image and function of this creature.

As true believers and followers of Christ we are also to be fundamentally transformed from our original natural sinful worldly selves into the united faithful mature image of the Son of God!

*This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a **new person**. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!* [46](#)

*Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such **unity in our faith** and knowledge of God’s Son that **we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.*** [47](#)

*So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and **more like him** as we are **changed into his glorious image.*** [48](#)

Jesus said that we all must be **born again** of the spirit to see the kingdom of God.

*Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are **born again**, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”* [49](#)

These kingdom of God communities will be places *set apart*, consecrated to the Lord, places of peace, hope, healthy centers where people are encouraged by living close to one another in true biblical unity, love and Christian community.

Believers are called to build kingdom of God communities in love, prayer, worship, unity, service, humility, righteousness and justice, so that they may be hidden, covered and protected in the Day of God’s wrath and will become PREPARED for The Day of the Lord

Chapter 7 – End Notes:

1. 1 Chronicles 15	18. Matthew 6:10	37. Revelation 7:2-3
2. 2 Chronicles 3:1a NLT	19. Hosea 4:6a NLT	38. Ezekiel 9:4-6
3. 2 Chronicles 7:1 NLT	20. 2 Chronicles 7:14	39. Edited from: STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JOEL – Session 3: The Great and Very Terrible Day by Mike Bickle 8/20/2010
4. Isaiah 56:7 NLT	21. Psalm 2:8	40. Exodus 10:23 NLT
5. Matthew 21:13a NLT Mark 11:17 Luke 19:46	22. Ephesians 5:26-27, Revelation 19:7	41. Genesis 47:27 NLT Genesis 45:10, Genesis 46:28, Genesis 46:29, Genesis 46:34, Genesis 47:1
6. John 17:20-26 NLT	23. Awaken America Alliance	
7. Acts 1:8 NLT	24. Genesis 47:27	
8. Acts 2:1, 3-4 NLT	25. Genesis 47:6	
9. Acts 2:14, 16-17, 21	26. Psalm 65:13	
10. Matthew 28:19	27. Psalm 132: 5	
11. Amos 9:11a	28. Psalm 107:35	

12. Habakkuk 2:14b	29. Exodus 8:22-23; 9:4-6, 26; 10:23; 11:7	42. Exodus 9:26 NLT
13. Acts 2:41-46	30. Exodus 8:22-23	43. Zephaniah 2:1-3
14. Psalm 133, Ephesians 2:14- 15 4:1-6, 11-13	31. Exodus 9:26	44. John 17:21
15. Psalm 22:3 Revelation 5:8- 14	32. Exodus 8:22	45. Psalm 89:14
16. Matthew 6:10, 33; Ephesians 1:7-9	33. Exodus 8:23	46. 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT
17. John 8:32 NLT	34. Exodus 9:4, 6, 26	47. Ephesians 4:11-13 NLT
	35. Zephaniah 2:3	48. 2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT
	36. Revelation 9:4	49. John 3:3 NLT

CHAPTER 8

Kingdom of God – Spiritual Warfare

Our spiritual and physical war

We were all born into an epic spiritual war between two kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness or evil.

The good news is that Jesus has defeated the enemy by the sacrifice of His life on the cross at Calvary and He has judged him for all his evil works.

The bad news is that the battle for the hearts, minds and souls of mankind continues until the Day of the Lord when Jesus returns to earth and binds the enemy and casts him into the bottomless pit.

Who is our enemy?

Our enemy and the enemy of God is Lucifer and his fallen angels now called demons. Lucifer was the most beautiful angel that God created to lead the praise and worship in heaven. Because of his pride he wanted to be worshiped as god. Because of his sin he was cast out of Heaven.

He is now known as satan or the devil. He is also called a murderer, the deceiver, the serpent, dragon, the author of all lies, the accuser of the brethren, the prince of the power of the air and the ruler of this present age.

*in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, the spirit who now **works in the sons of disobedience**,³ among*

whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 1

How does the enemy rule over this age?

The enemy's tactics include doubt, lies, deception and pride. These all work through the sins, rebellion and fleshly desires of mankind.

The enemy rules over the earth in this age through the agreement, cooperation and actions of the *sons of disobedience*. These are people who agree with and promote the work of the enemy. God actually gives these sons of disobedience, unrighteous men and women over to their sin.

*...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and **unrighteousness of men**, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ... ²⁴ Therefore **God also gave them up to uncleanness**, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. 2*

God will actually harden the hearts of those who continue in disobedience and rebellion to God.

*For the **mystery of lawlessness** is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out **of the way**. 3*

Jesus said, *The thief comes only in order to **steal and kill and destroy**. I came that they may have and enjoy **life**, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows). 4*

How do we fight the enemy?

We pray, submit to God and pray for Jesus to fight the enemy for us. He has already won!

*Therefore **submit to God**. **Resist the devil** and he will flee from you. 5*

The scripture promises that as you, **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. 6**

To submit and draw near to God you must, **Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 7**

Jesus said, *the ruler of this world is coming, and **he has nothing in Me**. 8* The enemy had no access to attack Jesus because He fully submitted to God and lived without sinning.

We must choose to close all open doors of access to the enemy into our lives and families.

We can be hidden in Christ from the enemy. ... *your life is hidden with Christ in God.* 9

...*We have the mind of Christ.* 10

...*bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,* 11

We align with the will, heart and power of God by renewing our minds.

*Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be **transformed** (changed) by the [entire] **renewal of your mind** [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and **perfect will of God**, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].* 12

God has given us His armor to protect us for the enemy.

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ **Put on the whole armor of God**, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with **truth**, having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the **gospel of peace**; ¹⁶ above all, taking the **shield of faith** with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**; ¹⁸ **praying always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.* 13

Our choices

God created us and gave us the freewill to choose between love and obedience to God or sin and rebellion to the will of God. He will not violate our freewill right to choose. This is both very honorable and potentially very dangerous, because God holds us responsible for our choices when He makes His final judgment on how we lived our lives.

Our relatively short life on earth is a sum total of all our choices and actions. So choose wisely!

We are given only 2 options on how we will live our lives.

We can choose to live in agreement with the will of God or to live in sin, in rebellion to God. We are either a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness of God. These are our two options.

Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. 14

There is no spiritually neutral place to live. You must choose who you will obey, the Lord or the enemy. Jesus said. ***He who is not with Me is against Me***, 15

The consequences of our choices

If we choose to follow the Lord and His plans and purposes then we are promised unspeakable rewards as we are joined together in a covenant of love with the Lord forever.

But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” 16

The other option is to choose to be separated from the love and presence of God, and live forever in eternal damnation in the lake of fire prepared for satan and his followers. This is beyond your worst nightmare.

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:’ 17

WHICH KINGDOM DO YOU CHOOSE TO LIVE IN FOREVER?

The kingdom of God – full of everlasting love, joy, blessings, peace in the presence of God

The kingdom of darkness – full of everlasting torment and separation from the love of God

You can choose only one. Jesus said, “*He who is not with Me is against Me*,” 18

Truly living an obedient Christian life as a true obedient disciple of Christ is very challenging, but it is infinitely superior to the alternative!

Two priesthoods

There are two priesthoods contending for control of the spiritual atmosphere over the regions of the world. There is a holy priesthood that ministers to God and draws His presence. There is also an unholy priesthood that ministers to satan and his purposes.

The priesthood that prevails in a region determines the spiritual atmosphere over that region.

We build altars of prayer praise and worship to God. “The altar that is most active – the holy or the unholy – will control the territory.” 19

“Darkness is the spiritual force that comes when people reject the will of God.

It gives legal authority to the devil to influence our lives negatively.” 20

WE MUST PULL DOWN SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS 21

Paul gave us understanding on how to we can pull down spiritual strongholds in our life.

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down **strongholds**, ⁵casting down **arguments** and every **high thing** that exalts itself **against the knowledge of God**, bringing every **thought** into captivity [a tenacious commitment] to the obedience of Christ... 22*

A stronghold was a strongly fortified defensive structure. It was a fort or fortified city that often included a large stone wall surrounding it. Some of these walls were as high as fifty feet and were ten feet thick. Their purpose was to keep an invading army out of the city.

Paul used the analogy of an ancient stronghold or fortress to teach a spiritual truth describing how Satan attacks us and how we overcome it. He used a positive word picture of a stronghold, a wall of stone, that protected a city to illustrate the negative way in which Satan as a strong man seeks to “protect” his house from being plundered so that he may hold people in bondage.

*But if I **cast out demons** by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and **plunder his goods**, unless he first **binds the strong man**? And then he will plunder his house. 23*

Satan seeks to establish spiritual strongholds in our mind to keep God’s presence out of our life, so as to keep us in bondage to him. He works in us to establish “stone walls of accusation” in our mind against God to keep His liberating presence from invading our life and freeing our heart.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF STRONGHOLDS

- **Personal strongholds**: Strongholds in our mind are a collection of ideas that are in agreement with Satan. These lies accuse Jesus and His leadership; then they accuse our standing before Him. They are arguments or lies about His character, power, and wisdom and our relationship to Jesus. When we believe lies about God, then we believe lies about who we are in Christ. Renouncing wrong ideas or lies about God is foundational to dismantling personal strongholds.
- **Cultural strongholds**: Strongholds in our culture consist of actions and laws in a specific region that are in agreement with Satan and against God’s righteousness. Repentance for these actions and laws along with intercession for God’s mercy is the way to dismantle cultural strongholds.
- **Cosmic strongholds**: Strongholds in the spiritual realm are caused by territorial spirits or demons that energize entire geographic areas to embrace wicked behavior and evil ideas. There is a demonic hierarchy above each region of the earth. ²⁴ Intercession with repentance in solemn assemblies is one way to dismantle cosmic strongholds. ²⁵

SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS ARE ESTABLISHED BY AGREEING WITH DARKNESS

Strongholds are established by opening doors to Satan through sinful actions and belief systems. Satan's sphere of activity is the domain of darkness. Wherever there is darkness, he has legal access. If darkness is in our hearts, then he has legal access to us. Jesus had no place of darkness or agreement with Satan in His life. Thus, Jesus gave Satan no legal access points into His life.

*For the ruler of this world is coming, and **he has nothing in Me.** 26*

Sometimes we feel an irrational heightened lust, fear, oppression or anxiety. We resist these demonic influences by committing to obey Jesus and declaring the truth of God's Word. In this way, we can quench all the demonic missiles with their heightened energy against our lives.

*You will be able to **quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one...** 27*

When we sin, we give Satan legal entry into our lives to work in a greater way in us. Satan adds a heightened demonic energy to our sin as we yield to it. He wants our weaknesses to escalate to wickedness. Lust does not stop with one act, but continues to grow until it is full-grown. Sin that is not rejected continues to increase in our life. Augustine said, "Lust yielded to becomes a habit, and a habit not resisted becomes a necessity."

*Each one is tempted when he is **drawn away** by his own desires...¹⁵When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is **full-grown**, brings forth death. 28*

PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS OF THE MIND

*The weapons of our warfare are...mighty in God for **pulling down strongholds**, ⁵**casting down arguments** and every **high thing** that exalts itself **against the knowledge of God**, bringing every **thought** into captivity to the obedience of Christ 29*

- **Pulling down strongholds** (NKJV); demolish (NIV); or destruction of fortresses (NAS). **Casting down arguments** (NKJV); imaginations (KJV); or destroying speculations (NAS). **Every high thing** (NKJV); every pretension that sets itself up (NIV); every lofty thing raised up (NAS); or every high thing that exalteth itself against (KJV).
- **Every high thing**: This speaks of demonic activities and ideas that are like a high or powerful wall that hinders God's blessing in our lives. Demonic powers exalt themselves by seducing us to believe their lies that attack the truth about God and who His people are before Him.
- We must pull down, cast down, or dismantle these strongholds one by one. The spiritual stone wall in our minds must be dismantled stone by stone. Every single stone of accusation in our mind against God and His salvation must be cast down. God's Word is like a hammer that strikes the "demonic wall" in our minds and demolishes it stone by stone, or idea by idea.
- We cast down lies by bringing our thoughts into captivity to God, into agreement with His Word. We fill our mind with the Word and make it a slave that is captive to the truth. We do this by breaking our agreement with false ideas, arguments, against God.

Three ways in which we cast down arguments against God in our life

1. We ***expose the lies*** that are lodged in our mind by identifying them. Right thinking is the place we begin to dismantle personal strongholds. Renewing our mind by the Word soon leads to emotional change, which in time results in the transformation of our behavior.
2. We ***renounce our agreement*** with those lies. Sin gives demons the legal permission to operate in our lives. We shut the door by repentance and the renewing of our minds.
3. We ***resist Satan*** and his heightened energy against us. **30**
 1. *Submit to God. **Resist the devil** and he will flee from you. **31***

ARGUMENTS AGAINST GOD THAT MUST BE CAST DOWN: TWO ESSENTIAL TRUTHS

- To understand how to overcome strongholds, we must see 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 in relation to 2 Corinthians 11. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Paul called us to spiritual warfare and gave an application of it in 2 Corinthians 11:2-4. Paul declared two truths that are foundational to disarming personal strongholds in our mind.

*For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have **betrothed** you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin** to Christ. ³But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his **craftiness**, so your minds may be **corrupted from the simplicity** [led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ] *that is in Christ. **32****

- ***Betrothed to one husband:*** He desires you. You are the one that He wants! He wants you as His eternal partner. You are beautiful in His sight. The beauty that He possesses is the beauty that He freely imparts to us in salvation. Isaiah 61:3 Jesus has deep **emotions** for us, and is **committed** to share His heart, throne, secrets, and beauty with us. In the ancient world, a couple was legally married on the day they were betrothed. **We were betrothed, or “engaged,” to Jesus on the day we were born again.** The consummation of the marriage is in the age to come. **33**
- ***A chaste virgin:*** We stand as a chaste or pure virgin in God’s sight by receiving the gift of Jesus’ righteousness the moment we were born again. We are declared as righteous or as clean before God as Jesus is. The righteousness we receive cannot be improved on because it is God’s own righteousness. Everything that legally hinders us from receiving God’s affections is removed.

*If anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new...²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. **34*****

Many mistake their spiritual immaturity for being a hopeless hypocrite that is rebellious. The Devil wants us to confuse weakness for rebellion so that we give up in despair and hopelessness.

Our core spiritual identity: Are we slaves to sin who struggle to love God? Or are we lovers of God who struggle with sin? Are you a hopeless hypocrite or is your weak love authentic?

Do we define ourselves by our struggles or by His work on the cross and His desire for us? When we feel shame, we live shamefully. When we feel clean and filled with dignity, we will live clean and with dignity. When we feel desired by God and clean, we will live differently. When we feel pure, without shame or condemnation, we have great confidence before Him.

These two truths redefine our life: we see God's desire and longing for us and see ourselves as a virgin. When our image of God and our image of ourselves changes, then we live differently. When we see ourselves differently, we feel differently about ourselves and so we act differently. These two truths disarm even our most powerful negative emotions such as the fear of rejection. We must turn our eyes from past failures and all the voices that condemn us. We must unfetter ourselves from man's applause and condemnation, so that we can receive God's truth about us.

DECEIVED BY FALSE TEACHINGS

*I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his **craftiness**, so your **minds may be corrupted** [led astray, NAS] from the simplicity that is in Christ. ⁴For if he who comes preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or if you receive a **different spirit** which you have not received, or a **different gospel** which you have not accepted—you may well **put up with it!** 35*

As the serpent, Satan, deceived Eve with craftiness, so false teachers (called Judaizers) deceived the Corinthians with lies about Jesus and the gospel. Satan's goal was that the Corinthians would leave the simplicity of being received by God that came from knowing that He desired them and had freely given them His righteousness. The Judaizers preached another Jesus and operated in a different spirit with a different gospel from Paul!

- ***Another Jesus:*** The Judaizers preached “another Jesus.” They believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, but not one who offered the gift of righteousness by faith; nor was He understood as the Bridegroom God, filled with desire for His people. When we believe lies about God, then we believe lies about who we are in Christ. We can only know the truth about *our* heart as we understand the truth about *God's* heart.
- ***Another gospel:*** The true gospel is motivated by God's free gift and deep desire for us. The false gospel that they received called them to earn God's favor and salvation. The gospel they received kept them in the identity of a slave of sin.
- ***A different spirit:*** They operated in a spirit of condemnation, fear, and bondage. The spirit of bondage never empowers our heart in love or imparts the power to obey God.

Tear down spiritual strongholds

Paul used God’s Word to dismantle spiritual strongholds in their lives by casting down the lies or stones of accusation against Jesus and the lies against who they were in Jesus. Paul did this by declaring to them that they were betrothed to Jesus, desired by God, and stood as virgins, clean before God. **As we confess that Jesus desires us and that we are the righteousness of God, we dismantle strongholds of darkness in our lives. As we do this, we have confidence to run to Him instead of from Him when we see our weakness and failure.**

Chapter 8 – End Notes:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ephesians 2:2-3 2. Romans 1:18-22; 25 3. 2 Thessalonians 2:7 4. John 10:10 AMP 5. James 4:7 6. James 4:8a 7. James 4:8b; Psalm 24:3-4 8. John 14:30 9. Colossians 3:3 10. 1 Corinthians 2:16 11. 2 Corinthians 10:5 12. Romans 12:2 AMP 13. Ephesians 6:10-18 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Romans 6:16 NLT 15. Luke 11:23a 16. 1 Corinthians 2:9 17. Matthew 25:41 18. Matthew 12:30 19. See below: pg 73 20. See below: pg 62 21. See below 22. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 23. Matthew 12:28-30 24. Ephesians 6:12; Daniel 10:12, 20-21 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Joel 2:12-17 26. John 14:30 27. Ephesians 6:16 28. James 1:14-15 29. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 30. 1 Peter 5:9 31. James 4:7 32. 2 Corinthians 11:2-3 33. Revelation 19:7-9 34. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 35. 2 Corinthians 11:3-4
<p>19. 20. <i>Prayer Altars a Strategy That is Changing Nations</i>, by John Mulinde and Mark Daniel 21. Following text edited from: Bridal Revelation and Spiritual Warfare (Corinthians 10-11) <i>Part 1 of the series Jesus, our Bridegroom God</i></p>		

CHAPTER 9

Kingdom of God – Preparing the Bride of Christ

The Bride of Christ: God’s Eternal Purpose

JESUS’ INHERITANCE: AN ETERNAL COMPANION

God’s ultimate purpose for His creation is to provide a family for Himself and a Bride for His Son as His eternal companion to reign with Him forever. 1 The guiding principle of the Father’s activity throughout history has been to raise up a prepared Bride for His worthy Son. He has been training the Bride to rule the earth with Jesus. 2

For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. 3

*To him who overcomes I will grant to **sit with Me on My throne**...* 4

And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. 5

The inheritance that the Father promised Jesus is a people whom He fully possesses.

*I will give You, the nations for Your **inheritance**, and the ends of the earth for Your **possession**.* 6

*For the LORD’s portion is **His people**; Jacob is the place of **His inheritance**.* 7

Jesus' inheritance: the mandatory obedience of all creation and the voluntary love of His Bride.

- **Mandatory obedience:** God will cause all creation to bow in obedience to Jesus.

*...that at the name of Jesus **every knee** should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that **every tongue** should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord.** 8*

- **Voluntary lovers of God:** Jesus' inheritance is to receive a people who fully love Him.

*I will give you a **new heart** and put a **new spirit** within you...²⁷I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes... 9*

*The **LORD** your God **will** circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, **to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul...** 10*

Jesus loves us to the same degree that the Father loves Him. We will love Jesus to the same degree that the Father loves Him. 11

As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 12

²⁶*...that the **love** with which You [the Father] loved Me **may be in them...** 13*

We will love God to the measure of the stature that He loves us.

*...till we all come...to a **perfect man**, to the **measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...** 14*

The saints will be equally yoked to Jesus in love. Jesus will not be unequally yoked to His wife.

Our “currency” in eternity will be the love that we cultivated for Him in this age.

*Do not be **unequally yoked** together with unbelievers. 15*

Paul prayed that we would know the riches of the glory we receive in being God's inheritance.

*...may **know**...what are the **riches** of the glory of **His inheritance** in the saints... 16*

From before the foundations of the world, God's ultimate purpose was to have a people who were blameless in their love for God.

*He **chose** us in Him before the **foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and **without blame** before Him **in love...** 17*

*...whom...He...**predestined to be conformed** [in love] to the image of His Son... 18*

Jesus will share some of His glory with His Bride because He so desires that she be with Him.

*The **glory** which You gave Me **I have given them...**²⁴Father, I **desire** that they also whom You gave Me may be **with Me where I am**, that they may behold My glory... 19*

*I will come again and receive you to Myself; **that where I am, there you may be.** 20*

REDEMPTIVE HISTORY CENTERS AROUND PREPARING A BRIDE

Human history began in Eden with Adam and Eve joined as a bridegroom and bride. 21

*God said, “It is **not good** that man should be alone; I will make him a **helper_comparable** [suitable NIV] to him” ...²¹The LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs...²²Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man...²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be **joined to his wife**, and they shall become one flesh. 22*

Paul interpreted Genesis 2:18-24 as speaking of Jesus and the Church. In the relationship of Adam and Eve, we see a prophetic picture of Jesus joined to His Church as a Bride.

*A man shall leave his father and mother and be **joined** to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. ³²This is a **great mystery**, but I speak concerning **Christ and the church**. 23*

*But he who is **joined** to the Lord is **one spirit** with Him. 24*

Natural history ends in an Eden-like city with Jesus and His people joined as a bridegroom and bride. 25

The New Jerusalem is called the Bride because it was prepared for the Bride and is where she experiences a face-to-face relationship with God. 26 The description of this city is given in **relational terms** or by our nearness to God 27 and then in **functional terms** as the ultimate Garden of Eden and Holy of Holies. 28

*I will show you **the Bride**, the Lamb’s wife. ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit...and showed me the great city, the **holy Jerusalem**, descending out of heaven... 29*

Natural history ends with the Church in a bridal identity. Revelation 22:17 is one of the **most informative and significant prophecies** in the Bible describing the end-time Church.

*The Spirit and the **Bride** say, “Come!” 30*

*It shall be, in that day...that **you will call Me** [Jesus] “**My Husband**”... 31*

- This prophecy describes the Church in deep unity with the Holy Spirit, in saying and doing what the Holy Spirit is saying and doing. **The Spirit is revealing the Church’s bridal identity as Jesus’ Bride.** The Spirit for the first time in history will **universally emphasize** the Church’s spiritual identity as Jesus’ Bride. Notice that John does not proclaim that the **Spirit and the family** say, “Come,” nor the Spirit and the **army**, nor the **kingdom**, nor the **body**, nor the **temple**, and not the Spirit and the **priesthood**.
- The generation in which Jesus returns will be the most sinful and emotionally broken generation in history. 32 Scripture describes it as having great anger, fear, cold love (selfishness), lawlessness (rebellion), betrayal (broken relationships), hatred, sexual perversion, and occult bondage.

*In the latter time...when the transgressors have **reached their fullness**... 33*

- The Holy Spirit's emphasis of Jesus as a Bridegroom God has been strategically reserved for the last generation to empower the Church to overcome the most lawless, fearful, demonized, and sexually perverted generation in history.

Natural history ends with a Bride who has been made ready for her marriage to Jesus. ³⁴ The history of the redeemed **before** the wedding feast is the preparation for their life **after** it.

*The **marriage** of the Lamb has come, and His wife has **made herself ready**...⁹He said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the **marriage supper** of the Lamb.'" ³⁵*

Jesus began His public ministry at a wedding, ³⁶ and He ended it declaring that the kingdom of God was like a wedding. ³⁷

Jesus began His ministry to the apostles by revealing Himself as the Bridegroom God ³⁸ and ended it by calling them to cultivate intimacy with Him as the Bridegroom God. ³⁹ Jesus' ministry was first introduced by John the Baptist functioning as a friend of the Bridegroom; ⁴⁰ it was ended by the Apostle John revealing the Bride. ⁴¹

ALL THINGS WORK FOR GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN

Salvation is an invitation to experience the deep things of God's heart that He planned for us.

*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has **prepared for those who love Him**. ¹⁰But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, **the deep things of God**. ⁴²*

All things work for God's ultimate purpose in preparing a Bride as Jesus' inheritance. The guiding principle of God's activity in creation and in leading history has been to use His power and wisdom to select, train and prepare a bride to reign with Jesus.

*For **all things** are yours: ²²whether...the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—**all are yours**. ²³And **you are Christ's**, and Christ is God's. ⁴³*

- **Life**: the life of humans, angels, animals, and plants are all for the benefit of the Bride.
- **Death**: the reality of death serves to develop the Bride in love.
- **Things present**: both blessing and challenges work together to train the Bride.
- **Things to come**: the New Jerusalem and the end of the age dynamics are for the Bride.
- **You are Christ's**: God gives all to the Bride because she belongs to Jesus.

It is inevitable that the Bride will be conformed to love like Jesus loves. All things work together for the benefit of those who love God. God overrules all for the highest good of the Bride.

*We know that **all things work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose... ⁴⁴*

God has orchestrated natural history so that God's people may seek, grope for, and find Jesus.

He has made from one blood every nation of men...and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him... 45

- **Boundaries**: God has determined the national boundaries of where each nation dwells
- **Times**: God has determined the times in which each nation will rise and fall in power
- **Grope**: God determined national boundaries and times to cause people to grope for Jesus
- **Find**: God’s ultimate purpose is that people would find Jesus and fully walk with Him

History is most often interpreted through the lens of significant events such as scientific breakthroughs, military crises, political developments or economic trends. However, we can only rightly interpret history through the lens of God’s purpose to prepare a Bride Revelation 19:7 and the Bride’s growth in love. Without understanding this, people have no way to accurately interpret the pains, struggles, and even the celebrations of this life. Many cannot see where history is headed or what purpose it accomplishes. They can see no definitive goals for the human race. History is so mysterious to them, often leaving them in despair and without hope by seeming accidental and even pointless. 46

The Bride of Christ, include those people who will freely chose to surrender to God and be prepared, cleansed, washed by the water and Word set apart as holy to the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish 47

Then they will be joined together with the Lord Jesus in an everlasting covenant of love, surrender, communion and partnership ruling and reigning as kings and priest with the Bridegroom King in His eternal glorious unshakable Kingdom of God forever!

Chapter 9 – End Notes:

1. Ephesians 5:31-32; Revelation 19:7-9	17. Ephesians 1:4	33. Daniel 8:23
2. Revelation 3:21; 5:10	18. Romans 8:29	34. Revelation 19
3. Revelation 19:7	19. John 17:22-24	35. Revelation 19:7-9
4. Revelation 3:21	20. John 14:3	36. John 2:1-12
5. Revelation 5:10	21. Genesis 2	37. Matthew 22:1-14
6. Psalm 2:8	22. Genesis 2:18-24	38. Matthew 9:15
7. Deuteronomy 32:9	23. Ephesians 5:31-32	39. Matthew 25:8
8. Philippians 2:10-11	24. 1 Corinthians 6:17	40. John 3:29
9. Ezekiel 36:26-27	25. Revelation 21-22	41. Revelation 19-22
10. Deuteronomy 30:6	26. Revelation 22:3-5	42. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10
11. John 17:23	27. Revelation 21:1-8	43. 1 Corinthians 3:21-23
12. John 15:9	28. Revelation 21:9-22:5	44. Romans 8:28
	29. Revelation 21:9-10	45. Acts 17:26-27

13. John 17:26 14. Ephesians 4:13 15. 2 Corinthians 6:14 16. Ephesians 1:18	30. Revelation 22:17 31. Hosea 2:16 32. Daniel 8:23; Matthew 24:10-14; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-5	46. See below 47. Ephesians 5:25-27
46. Edited from: <i>The Bride of Christ: God's Eternal purpose</i> Part 1 of Studies in the Bride of Christ (2010)		

CHAPTER 10

Kingdom of God – Destiny

God created you with a divine Destiny to be fulfilled in His restored kingdom of God.

Also each of our destinies are also dynamically linked to the destinies of others. God has plans and purpose that He will fulfill and He wants to use you to be part of His redemptive work.

You need to know the Lord's perspective on your life. Know that:

- You were created in the **image of God**. ¹
- **God knew you** before you were born as He formed you in the womb.

*You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ ...; Marvelous are Your works, ... ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When **I was made in secret**, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me... ²*

- He knew you and called you **before the foundation of the world**.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ³*

- God created **good works** for you to walk in.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. 4

- God has a **specific** plan, purpose and divine **Destiny** for you to fulfill. He has given you the calling, gifts, anointing, authority, resources and relationships to fulfill your **Destiny** in restoring His kingdom!
- You have a personal, family, corporate, community and national **Destiny**.

What is your God given Calling, Life-Mission and divine Destiny for your life?

Do you know your **Life-Mission**, your God given divine **Destiny**? Now is the time to pray, fast and ask the Lord to show you the **Calling, Life-mission** and divine **Destiny** that God created you to fulfill in His kingdom. *Ask, it will be given, seek, you will find, knock and the door will opened. 5* Ask God for His wisdom. 6

Divine Destiny is the purpose for which God made any creature and the course of fulfilling that purpose from the beginning to the end even into eternity

The safest, most blessed and powerful place to live your life is in the center of God's will.

THERE ARE 3 PARTS TO YOUR DESTINY:

1. The **Call of God** on your life
2. Your **Life Mission**
3. Your divine **Destiny**

Find your LIFE MISSION and DESTINY: Who am I? Why am I alive on earth now? What is my Life Mission? What fruit will I bear that will last and be rewarded? How will my life and mission impart future generations? 7

Take note of the special qualities inside your life, and you will begin to get a clue of what God intended your life to be engaged in on earth. Do everything prayerfully, trusting that God is more than willing to reveal this to you. 8

Will you fulfill the destiny that God created you for?

Will your community be blessed by your service?

Will your community be transformed into a kingdom of God community?

Will your work stand the test of fire at the time of judgment?

Will God be glorified by your life?

There is a continuity of works established on righteousness between this age with the age to come!

All the promises of God are Yes and Amen in Jesus Christ

Where is your citizenship? 9

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. 10

God will fulfill His plans and purposes

*And I am certain that **God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. 11***

*Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰ Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. **Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish. ¹¹ I have said what I would do, and I will do it. 12***

God has plans and purposes that He will fulfill and He wants to use you and your community to be part of His glorious work!

GOD GIVEN DESTINY

God will lead us guide us and empower us by His Holy Spirit to achieve our full destiny. The enemy hates our God given destiny and will resist us from achieving it.

We are to live our lives to please God and to make room for others to also fulfill their destinies.

Destiny answers the fundamental questions of your life.

- Who am I?
- Why am I alive in the earth today?
- What is supposed to be my mission on earth?
- What kind of fruit am I supposed to be producing and how is that supposed to impact my generation?

There is personal destiny and corporate destiny.

Seek God and establish prayer altars to draw the presence of God.

*I have done this so that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan. For **we are not ignorant of his schemes. 13***

Destiny is important to fulfill. Destiny influences not only ourselves, but also our generation and future generations.

The Bible records that God said that King David fulfilled God's purposes in his generation.

"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, 14

At the end of Paul's life he said,

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. 15

We need to know what we are up against, and then we will make it. We need to have a proper attitude and perspective. It is important to finish well.

Understand that all spiritual battles are about your Destiny.

The enemy attacks us so we will fail to fulfill our destiny. Be aware of diversionary battles that take our time and focus off achieving our destiny.

We need to know what our true battles are to overcome. We need discernment to know true battles and keep on task

It is important for you to know the purpose of your life. Seek God for His will be done and manifest the kingdom of God in around and through us.

You must fight for destiny and press on to the end and fulfill destiny. Paul said, "I have finished the race.' Have a spiritually fruitful life. Be one who blesses others.

Cry out to God to bring revival.

God has a remnant that He will use in each area around the world. God will bring revival to your city and region through His faithful and obedient followers.

Pray and prepare the priests to come to the altar and minister to the Lord and draw His presence. The time is due for revival. Prepare the ground and gather all together. Look at God who leading us to victory.

Destiny is very important. God has a destiny for you and your nation.

The enemy will resist destiny. Be prepared for attacks. The enemy will deceive and divert us.

Seek destiny, the kingdom of God and the purpose of God for your generation.

The kingdom is coming to pushes back the darkness. The kingdom of God is advancing.

We need to understand warfare. Warfare comes to us so we can be overcomers. Have the attitude, "I am going to the end." Don't stop. God is the victory for our lives, families and America. Like Queen Esther you were born, "*For such a time as this.*" You are called to do this.

The enemy has powers of darkness.

Prayer Altars draw the presence of God to come down. God met and made covenant with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Jesus. We are to be an altar to God to draw and host His presence.

The enemy fights in very subtle ways. The enemy makes you think it is you and your circumstances.

I have done this so that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan. For we are not ignorant of his schemes. 16

The enemy is the accuser of the brethren and the accuser of God. The enemy questions our ability to do what God calls us to do. He asks us, "Is this realistic?" If you agree with the enemy then you become an accuser and rebel against God. Then God becomes unworthy of honor.

Don't miss the work of the enemy.

KNOW THE 3 AREAS OF DARKNESS

God has redeemed us from darkness and into His kingdom. 17

PERSONAL DARKNESS

We are *continuing* to be saved from our old natures. We are to die to our old nature and become transformed and mature. We acknowledge that there is darkness and deal with it.

Examples of darkness:

- **Unrepented sin** – We are not to just confessed, but turn from it and completely change. Sins become patches of darkness in us.
- **Our carnal, flesh nature, our old man** – Our flesh works against our spirit. The nature of Christ is different from our nature.

"In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 18

Wisdom comes from God. The sin is of the enemy and of the world. You need to know this to deal with it.

Pray for revival of the spirit. We are to be different from the world. There are hooks in us that we need to resist and to overcome, press in. Go to a new spiritual level, be aware and rejoice. Breakthrough to new level, go from victory to victory, from glory to glory.

- **Spiritual wounds**

We are all wounded by others. It is the Spirit that maintains a man. A wounded spirit is weak. Remember that all things are possible with God. Also remember that Jesus was wounded for our transgressions and *by His stripes we are healed*.

- **Physical infirmities**

In the light of the prayer altar deal with physical issues with maturity.

- **Financial challenges**

Trust God as your provider and let Him lead you into His divine provisions.

These are all personal darkness. We fight both *true* battles and try to avoid diversionary battles.

SOCIAL DARKNESS

We have marriage challenges and with our children. Pray for your family to be revived. Our God is faithful to provide a way out.

“Be still and know that He is the Lord, 19 And thank God.

Build your faith and know God is faithful. Say, “I am going to overcome by the Holy Spirit.

“Call on Me and I will show you things you did not know.” 20

All things are possible for those who love God and are called to His purposes. Stay till the end of the prayer watch. It is all about Him. Say here I am because I love God. Surrender yourself to the Lord.

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that **you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.** 21*

Invite the Lord to set His fire on your sacrifice.

Prayer is the key to revival. Even David Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world’s largest church, says he struggles with prayer, so this should give us hope.

TERRITORIAL DARKNESS

People say it is easier to pray on the Prayer Mountain in Kampala. The spiritual atmosphere is different there. The spiritual atmosphere is different in different areas. Always remember that *“greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world”* Know that the enemy is trying to stop you.

The enemy uses 3 things

- Considerations
- Fears
- Obstacles

Considerations are reasons to believe you can't do what God calls you to do. You say that it is impossible.

Fears are feelings and emotions. Build your will to go on like a plane accelerating to take off.

Obstacles are real or perceived. You may believe that you need pastoral support to do the work. Have the attitude that is not negative, but that the King has called you so you can do it.

You will appear in the presence of your King one day. The prize is bigger than these obstacles. Accept these are part of the process. Like birthing a baby, discomfort is necessary. You will endure anything to birth the baby.

When we overcome we will be stretched and we will remain stretched. God is going to work in you. ***God is building, cleansing, purifying and maturing you.***

Invest on the inside and become overcomers, better vessels. (* End of *Destiny* message quotes)

Pray to God for His grace to listen and obey Him. Now make that dynamic connection with God to come into partnership with His plans and purposes. You do this by faith. Believe in the Word of God and position yourself to receive what God is doing now, in this day, in this hour, in this very minute. Connect to God's life, power, joy and peace, so that you may know fellowship with Him, and truly walk with the Lord. Today is a day of new beginnings for you, if you choose and act.

Walk in the ways of the Lord. Set an example that others can follow if they want to live in peace and blessing. Those that live and walk in the Spirit are able to access everything that is available to them through faith. It is worth it to make the changes necessary to live in righteousness and always do God's will.

Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. 22

King Solomon failed to fulfill his destiny

Solomon had it all, wisdom, wealth, power and training but he failed to fulfill his destiny to lead his nation to follow and obey the ways of God. He fell into idolatry and worldly ways.

*Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for **all is vanity** and grasping for the wind. 23*

Apostle Paul fulfilled his God given destiny

Paul began his life fervently opposing the Lord and His people, but ended his life fulfilling his God given destiny to preach the good news to the gentile nations. At the end of his life he said,

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have fought the good fight, **I have finished the race**, I have kept the faith. ⁸Finally, **there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the*

righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. 24

It is important to end well

*“Son of man, give your people this message: The righteous behavior of righteous people will not save them if they turn to sin, nor will the wicked behavior of wicked people destroy them if they repent and turn from their sins. ¹³ When I tell righteous people that they will live, but then they sin, expecting their past righteousness to save them, then **none of their righteous acts will be remembered**. I will destroy them for their sins. 25*

Live your life before and audience of One, Jesus is the true Judge. Work for the day when you will meet the King and He will say to you, *“Well done good and faithful servant.” 26*

The greatest in the kingdom of God is a servant to all.

But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 27

Fullfill your divine Destiny

- *Pray, listen and obey* the Lord
- Submit and surrender your life to the will of God
- Love and obey Him wholeheartedly
- Seek first the kingdom of God and focus on kingdom building
- Answer the **Call of God** on your life
- Focus on completing your divine **Life-Mission**
- Run a good race, finish strong and achieve your **God given Destiny**

As you pursue your divine destiny, by the grace of God, then you will become a faithful and fruitful servant of the King and citizen of the kingdom of God.

There is a continuity of works established on righteousness between this age with the age to come! Based on your choises and actions in this life, you will fulfill your divine destiny, receive your everlasting kingdom asignments and recieve everlasting rewards!

Chapter 10 – End Notes:

1. Genesis 1:26; Colossian 1:16	10. Philippians 2:20-21 11. Philippians 1:6 NLT 12. Isaiah 46:9-11NLT	19. Psalm 46:10 20. Jeremiah 33:3 21. Romans 12:1
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ephesians 1:3-4 4. Ephesians 2:10 5. Matthew 7:7-8 6. James 1:5 7. See below 8. James 1:5; Isaiah 45:18-19 9. See below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. 2 Corinthians 2:11 14. Acts 13:36 15. 2 Timothy 4:6-8 16. 2 Corinthians 2:11 17. Colossians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17 18. Genesis 3:5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Psalms 37:3 23. Ecclesiastes 2:17 24. 2 Timothy 4:6-8 25. Ezekiel 33:12 NLT 26. Matthew 25:21, 23; Luke 19:17 27. Matthew 23:11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Psalm 139:13-18 Jeremiah 1:4 Colossians 1:16 Ephesians 2:10 Jeremiah 29:11 9. Edited from: AWAKENING FLORIDA equipping “<i>Destiny</i>” messages May 8, 2014 and Africamp 2015 “<i>Contending for Destiny</i>” messages and the <i>Destiny Achievers 1</i> book by John Mulinde and Mark Daniel, World Trumpet Mission 		

CHAPTER 11

Kingdom of God – in the Millennial age to come

Heaven on Earth, the Millennial Kingdom

JESUS’ 1,000-YEAR REIGN ON EARTH

Understanding the biblical perspective of heaven is important, because it affects how we see our future, which affects how we live today. If we do not think rightly of heaven, then we end up not thinking of heaven at all. The reality of Heaven will come to earth at the time of Jesus’ return. Jesus will join the heavenly and earthly realms together when He returns. Ephesians 1:10 This truth is a key to understanding many end-time passages, including the saints reigning with Jesus over all nations.

There are over 150 chapters in the Bible focused on the end times. They reveal Jesus’ power and plans at the time of His second coming, when He returns to take over the leadership of the earth. The gospels, including 89 chapters, give us a record of Jesus’ power and leadership at His first coming.

This is an overview of the Millennium, a 1,000-year period in which Jesus will rule this world in righteousness. *Millennium* is from the Latin word *mille*, meaning a thousand.

*I saw **thrones**, and they [saints] sat on them...they **reigned with Christ for a thousand years**...⁶**They shall be priests of God...and shall reign with Him a thousand years.** 1*

At that time the kingdom of God will be openly manifest worldwide, affecting every sphere of life, including political, social, agricultural, economic, educational, media, arts and technology. 2 This period will be initiated by Jesus' second coming. The result will be 1,000 years of unprecedented blessing, as Jesus restores the agriculture and animal life to the conditions seen in the **garden of Eden**. 3

Jesus, the King of kings, will personally govern a worldwide kingdom from Jerusalem. In the Millennium, all the kings of the earth will be saved, worship Jesus, and base their national governments on the Word of God in Scriptures. 4

*Yes, **all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.** 5*

The millennial kingdom is one of the major revelations of Scripture. It pertains to God's destiny for the earth and His people living on the earth.

Jesus' core message was that God's kingdom is to be released on earth as it is in heaven. 6

The New Testament makes it clear that the kingdom is **already here**, in a limited way, but is **not yet fully here** until Jesus returns.

Daniel saw the heavenly coronation of Jesus as king over all dominions and spheres of society.

*One like the **Son of Man** [Jesus]...came to the Ancient of Days [Father]...¹⁴To Him [Jesus] was given...a kingdom, that **all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him**...²⁷The kingdom...shall be **given to the people, the saints of the Most High.** 7*

Jesus will rule in partnership with resurrected saints. 8

*...and have made us kings and priests...and **we shall reign on the earth.** 9*

GOD'S PURPOSE: BRINGING HEAVEN AND EARTH TOGETHER

*...having made known to us the mystery of His will...¹⁰that He might gather together in one ALL things in Christ, **both** which are in **heaven** and which are on **earth**—in Him. 10*

The centerpiece of God's eternal purpose is for Jesus to come back to establish His kingdom over all the earth and *join* the heavenly and earthly realms together.

God's purpose has always been to live with His people on earth. The earth continues forever. 11

*Behold, the tabernacle of **God is with men**, and He will dwell with them... 12*

God created the universe in two distinct realms. 13

Earth: This speaks of the physical realm, where human process and physical sensation reach their fullest expression.

Heaven: This speaks of the spiritual realm, where God’s power and presence are openly manifest. Heaven is where believers have gone when they die for the last 2,000 years since Jesus’ resurrection—as a “temporary holding pattern” before receiving their resurrected body.

- When Jesus rules the earth, the **natural human processes** will not be suspended, but will be significantly enhanced by the **supernatural dimension** of the Spirit.
- We see aspects of the natural and the supernatural dimensions operating together when Jesus appeared with His resurrected body to teach the apostles for forty days. 14

*He also presented Himself alive after His suffering...being seen by them during **forty days** and **speaking** of the things pertaining to the **kingdom of God**. 15*

*“Behold My hands and feet...handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have **flesh and bones** as you see I have...”⁴¹He said to them, “Have you any **food** here?”⁴²So they gave Him a piece of a broiled **fish**...⁴³And He took it and **ate** in their presence. 16*

THREE TYPES OF PEOPLE ON EARTH WHEN JESUS APPEARS IN THE SKY

- The **redeemed** will be *caught up* or raptured at the time of Jesus’ royal procession across the sky. 17

*The Lord Himself will descend from heaven...and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up** [raptured] together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18*

- The **reprobate**, who took the mark of the Beast, will be gathered, judged, and then killed. There may be billions of such people still alive when Jesus returns. They will not just disappear.
- The **resisters** are the unsaved survivors of the Tribulation who refused to worship the Antichrist. They can be saved, and then populate the millennial earth. These resisters will stand against evil governments, even without faith in God. As an example, in World War II, the French Resistance fought the Nazis. Scripture refers to “those who are left.” 19

NATURAL PROCESSES OF LIFE WILL CONTINUE ON EARTH FOR 1,000 YEARS

Jesus will rule the millennial earth that has both natural and supernatural dimensions. The **supernatural element** is seen in the length of life being restored to what it was in Noah’s time and the animosity between animals being removed. The **natural element** is seen in the fact of people sinning and in the activities of building and planting.

*“For the child shall die **one hundred years old**, but the **sinner** being one hundred years old shall be accursed. ²¹They shall build houses...and they shall plant vineyards...²²As the **days of a tree**, so shall be the days of My people...²⁵The **wolf** and the **lamb** shall feed together...” 20*

Animosity between animals and between animals and humans will be removed. 21

*“The **wolf** also shall dwell with the **lamb**...the **calf** and the young **lion** and the fatling **together**; and a little **child** shall lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze...” 22*

Jesus’ government will progressively spread to all nations of the world. The natural processes of life will continue in ordering and establishing the infrastructure for every sphere of life in every city and nation. This infrastructure will include **life support systems**; food, water, electricity, **building projects**; buildings, highways, bridges, **economic systems**; currencies, banking, education, agriculture, media and arts, technology, and all social institutions.

*the **increase of His government** and peace there will be **no end**...His kingdom to **order it** and **establish** it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even **forever**. 23*

People from many nations will come to Jerusalem to learn of God’s ways from Jesus.

***Many people** [nations] shall...say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord [Jerusalem], to the house of the God of Jacob; He [Jesus] will **teach us** His ways...”24*

Four aspects of God’s kingdom are necessary for His people to experience His fullness on the earth for all eternity. 25 These aspects will converge in the Millennium.

- The **New Jerusalem** coming down to earth will bring the **supernatural, eternal** dimension to the millennial kingdom. It will include the supernatural aspects of our resurrected bodies.
- The **garden of Eden** being restored will bring a **physical paradise** aspect to the Millennium age, with a fully renewed environment, agriculture, animals, atmosphere, with physical pleasures.
- The **kingdom of David** will bring the **political and social** dimension, including governmental, economic, social institutions, educational, family, arts. Righteousness and justice will be established in every sphere of life as every national government on earth is brought under Jesus’ authority.
- The **house of prayer** will bring a **spiritual and relational** dimension, in that the millennial temple will be a worship center for the nations. We will experience the fullness of intimacy with God, as we encounter and partner with Him in ruling the earth, based on worship and intercession.

*For My house [the temple] shall be called a **house of prayer** for all nations. 26*

THE HEAVENLY AND EARTHLY JERUSALEM BROUGHT TOGETHER

The New Jerusalem will descend to earth. 27 When this happens, heaven will literally be on the earth. This happens **both** at the beginning 28 and at the end of the Millennium age. 29 The New Jerusalem is where resurrected saints will live.

*“...the New Jerusalem, which **comes down** out of heaven from My God.” 30*

Jesus’ throne is both in the millennial temple in Jerusalem and in the heavenly New Jerusalem. It is **one throne** with two expressions. 31

The **throne** of God and of the Lamb shall be in it [New Jerusalem]. 32

The New Jerusalem will descend and connect to the millennial Jerusalem, creating what maybe viewed as a vast “governmental complex,” referred to as Jesus’ throne of glory. 33

*When the Son of Man comes...He will sit on the **throne of His glory**.* 34

There are **four reasons** to believe that the New Jerusalem is **close to** the millennial Jerusalem and accessible to it, yet **without being on the earth** until after the Millennium.

THE SAINTS WILL RULE WITH JESUS AS KINGS AND PRIESTS

The two functions most emphasized for the saints are **priests** and **kings**. 35 Saints with resurrected bodies will be made kings and rulers over different spheres of life. 36

*...have made us **kings and priests** to our God...we shall **reign** on the earth.* 37

As priests, resurrected saints will **worship, intercede**, and **communicate** the knowledge of God to others. Non-resurrected people will be on the millennial earth with the saints.

As kings, resurrected saints will judge, or **evaluate**, the past as part of ruling with Jesus.

*Do you not know that the saints will **judge [evaluate] the world?**...³*Do you not know that we shall **judge [evaluate] angels?*** 38*

The saints will occupy the **highest position** of government in the Spirit on the millennial earth. This will be parallel to the position or role of angels in the government of the nations in this age. Jesus will rule a worldwide kingdom in partnership with two types of kings: **kings of the earth** with non-resurrected bodies and **resurrected kings** with resurrected bodies. 39

Faithfulness in “*few things*” now leads to receiving “*many things*” in the age to come. Consider life as a 70-year internship, which prepares us for our assignment on earth in the age to come.

*“You were faithful over a **few things**, I will make you ruler over **many things**.”* 40
*“You were faithful in a **very little**, have authority over ten cities.”* 41, 42

Our relatively short human existence now can be seen as our apprenticeship to prepare for our everlasting life after this one. How we learn to love and obey the Lord in community now, will determine our position and responsibilities as citizens in the kingdom of God coming in fullness when Jesus returns to earth to rule and reign over all the nations!

Chapter 11 – End Notes:

1. Revelation 20:4-6	15. Acts 1:3	30. Revelation 3:12
2. See below	16. Luke 24:39-43	31. Jeremiah 3:17; Ezekiel 43:4-7; Zechariah 6:12-13; Revelation 22:3
3. Isaiah 35:1-8; 51:3; Ezekiel 34:29; 36:35; 47:6-12	17. Revelation 1:7	32. Revelation 22:3
4. See below	18. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17	33. Matthew 19:28; 25:31
5. Psalm 72:11	19. See below	34. Matthew 25:31
6. Matthew 6:10	20. Isaiah 65:20-25	
	21. Romans 8:20-21	

7. Daniel 7:13-14, 27	22. Isaiah 11:6-7	35. Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6
8. See below	23. Isaiah 9:7	36. See below
9. Revelation 5:10	24. Isaiah 2:3	37. Revelation 5:10
10. Ephesians 1:9-10	25. Isaiah 56:7	38. 1 Corinthians 6:2-3
11. See below	26. Ephesians 3:19	39. Revelation 1:5-6
12. Revelation 21:3	27. Revelation 3:12; 21:2, 10	40. Matthew. 25:21
13. Genesis 1:1	28. Revelation 21:10	41. Luke 19:17
14. John 20-21; Acts 1:3	29. Revelation 21:2	

<p>2. Revelation 20:1-6; Isaiah 2:1-4; 9:6-9; 11:1-16; 51:1-8; 60-62; 65:17-25; Psalm 2:6-12; 110:1-7; Deuteronomy 8; 28; Matthew 6:10; 17:11; 19:28; Acts 1:6; 3:21</p> <p>4. Psalm 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Isaiah 62:2; Revelation 21:24</p> <p>8. Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Matthew 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Luke 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:12; Romans 8:17</p> <p>11. Psalm 37:29; 78:69; 104:5; 105:10-11; 125:1-2; 1 Chronicles 23:25; 28:8; Isaiah 60:21; Ezekiel 37:25; Joel 3:20</p> <p>19. Isaiah 4:3; 10:20; 11:11; 49:6; 65:8; 66:19; Jeremiah 31:2; Ezekiel 20:38-42; 36:36; Amos 9:9-10; Joel 2:32; Zechariah 12:14; 13:8; 14:16</p> <p>36. Matthew 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Luke 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:12; Romans 8:17</p> <p>42. Edited from: 10-part series <i>Studies in the Millennial Kingdom: Heaven on Earth</i></p>
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