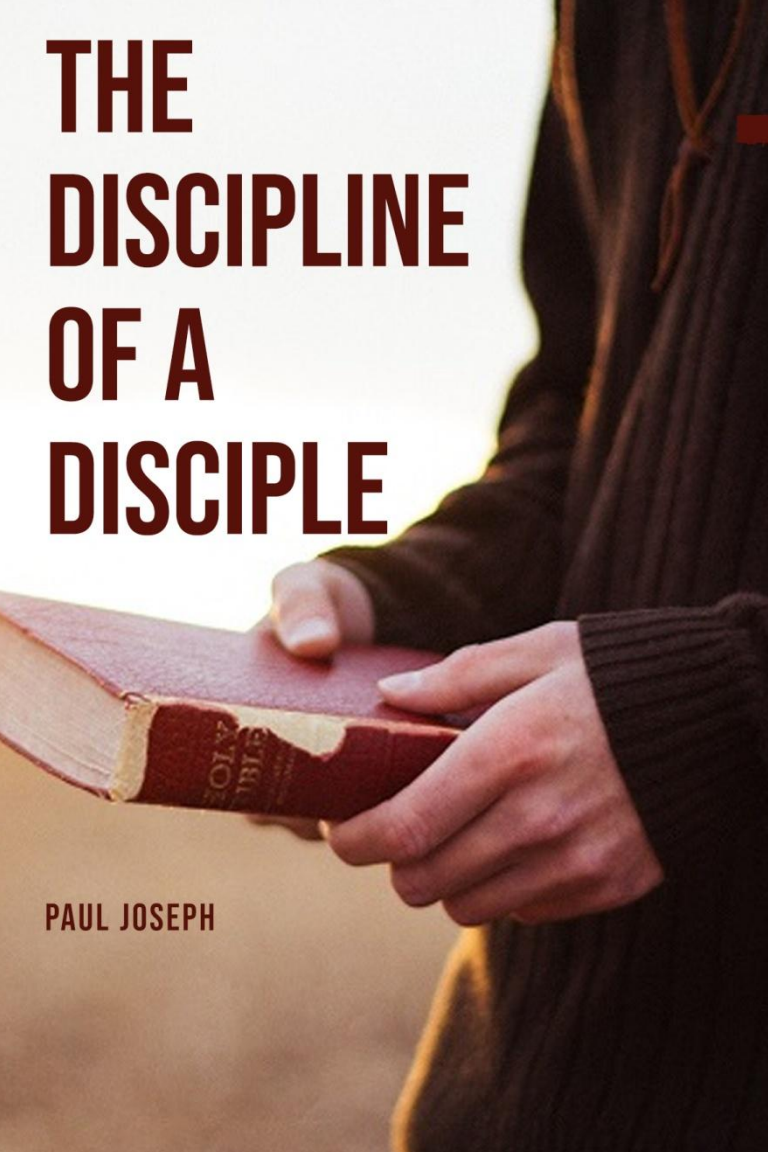


THE DISCIPLINE OF A DISCIPLE

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a worn, red leather-bound Bible. The person is wearing a dark, ribbed sweater. The background is a soft, warm, out-of-focus light, suggesting an indoor setting with a window. The Bible's spine is visible, showing some wear and the words 'SOLA BIBLIA' embossed on it.

PAUL JOSEPH

The Discipline of A Disciple

Paul Joseph

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Walk OUT Your FAITH

As Christians, we are born again, and when we are also baptized in the Holy Spirit, we are in essence fully possessed by Jesus. “And hereby we know that He (*Jesus*) *abides in us, by the Spirit which He (Jesus) has given us*” (1Jn 4:13). We’re totally new creatures, living in a different kingdom, bearing a different passport, no longer slaves, but sons and victors. “*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (2Cor 5:17). We walk in the new identity restored back to us by God's Son. “*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life*” (Ro 5:8).

We're a royal priesthood and are NOW enjoying the full inheritance of Christ: HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. “*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that we should show forth the praises of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*” (1Pet 2:9). And we

exercise His authority on earth, to destroy the works of the devil. We're empowered to enforce the will of the Father on earth as it is in heaven. *“Behold, I (Jesus) give unto you power over all the power of the enemy” (Lk 10:19).*

The life of a disciple of Christ means commitment and dedication. We cannot just be observers - just part of the curious crowd that did not last. In John chapter 6, verses 30 thru 56, Jesus is telling everyone that He is the Bread of heaven and that they would have no part in Him if they did not eat His body and drink His blood! Then, it says in John 6:66: *“From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.”*

When certain disciples left from following Jesus, He turned to those who had remained with Him and said, *“Doth this offend you? What and if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: the Words that I speak to you, they are Spirit and they are life” (Jn 6:61-63).* Jesus was letting them know that there would be some “hard sayings” ahead, but that it would be the Spirit of God that would give them the strength to meet those demands. He would not be asking

anything of the disciples that was not asked of Him by the Father. *“Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do, these also does the Son likewise”* (Jn 5:19) He was imitating the Father!

So, Jesus has commanded us to follow Him and to be IMITATORS of Him as He was of God. Jesus told the disciples, *“For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you”* (Jn 13:15). And the Apostle Peter said, *“For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an EXAMPLE, that you should follow in His steps”* (1Pt 2:21). That's the true meaning of discipleship.

Discipleship is not only to be a learner or student, but to put into practice the teachings and the discipline. You can study the gospels day after day, and dig into the meaning of every verse, and study Greek and Hebrew for months or for years, but unless you put those Words into practice, you will not experience the power of the Gospel in the lives of those around you and in your own life. There's more power in a newborn babe in Christ who's empowered with the Holy Spirit, and a DOER of the Word, than with a forty year

researcher/theologian who's NOT empowered by the Holy Spirit, but only a reader and a hearer.

Here are some guidance, so that each one of us can put our faith into greater ACTION. There will be a number of disciplines, different activities that we will do, in order to activate the "disciple" in us. These short stories will highlight ways to:

Love! *“A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (Jn 13:34).*

Deny! *“Whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be My disciple” (Lk 14:33).*

Witness! *“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom” (Mt 9:35).*

Shine! *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt 5:16).*

Heal! *“He gave them power to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease” (Mt 10:1).*

Deliver! *“And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My name shall they cast out devils” (Mk 16:17).*

It is a joy to “let your light shine! God's light and love can be poured out to others! We can actually show the love of Christ!--wherever we go, and with whomever we meet. We can be imitators of Christ, and we can apply His teachings in our life, not only in theory, but by being doers of the Word! Through the power of the Word with the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, witnessing can be done! Jesus promised His disciples that they would receive power! “*But you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me...unto the uttermost part of the earth*” (Acts 1:8).

You've Got the POWER

Before Jesus began His ministry, He was baptized by John the Baptist and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. *"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and he (John) saw the Holy Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him" (Mt 13:16).*

When Jesus' ministry on earth was finished and He was preparing to leave the disciples, He promised to send them the SAME Holy Spirit that had been given to Him, to live IN us, so that we could do the SAME works as He did, and that we would be comforted. *"He that believes on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these (what the disciples had seen Him do) shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth: you know Him for He dwells with you, and SHALL BE IN YOU. I will not leave you*

comfortless, I will come to you" (John 14:12, 16, 18). He was telling them that they already knew Him! –"It's ME!" I'm now dwelling with you, and soon I WILL BE DWELLING IN YOU.

Whaaaatttt???

How cool is that?

With the Holy Spirit LIVING IN US, we can live as Jesus and the disciples lived. The Holy Spirit in us makes it possible! This is the very reason why the Holy Spirit of God was given to us!

Jesus had His disciples WAIT in Jerusalem so that when the infilling of the Holy Spirit came, they would have the POWER to win many others to Him. *"And, being assembled together with them (Jesus was with His disciples after His resurrection) commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but 'wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, you have heard of Me, for John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. And you shall receive POWER after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me...*

unto the uttermost part of the earth'" (Acts 1:4,5,8).

That was the main purpose of the Day of Pentecost; not just the supernatural manifestations that took place. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples was to EMPOWER them. The Holy Spirit empowers us and gives us faith to STAND UP for the truth and boldly share our faith with others.

Jesus said that ALL believers can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit by simply asking the Father to give Him to them. *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" (Lk 11:13).*

Now, GET THIS: you not only have the POWER that the Holy Spirit gives you, to live as Jesus did, manifesting the kingdom of God, but the Holy Spirit also gives you ALL of THESE gifts as well: *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,*

longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22). So you're FULL of all that Jesus had!

READ and ABSORB the following scriptures to fully understand the transformation that the Holy Spirit brings you.

Lk 11:13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

Acts 1:8 You shall receive POWER when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Jn 14:26 But the helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will TEACH YOU ALL THINGS, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be STRENGTHENED WITH MIGHT through His Spirit in the inner man.

Lk 3:16 John answered, saying to all, “I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE.”

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they SPOKE THE WORD OF GOD WITH BOLDNESS.

Acts 2:3-4 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and **BEGAN TO SPEAK WITH OTHER TONGUES**, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Gal 5:22 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Lk 4:18-19 The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES and recovery of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Jn 7:38-39 He who believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow RIVERS OF LIVING WATER. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would

receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Ro 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not what is eaten and not what is being drunk, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

1Cor 12:8-11 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

2Cor 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is LIBERTY.

Eph 5:18b-19 But be FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, speaking to one another in psalms and

hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Jude; 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:17-18 And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall PROPHESY, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Jn 16:13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will TELL YOU THINGS TO COME.

The Gift of Boldness

Boldness is one awesome gift that the Holy Spirit empowers us with: unashamed boldness (Acts 1:8). We have the conviction to SPEAK OUT and to STAND UP for what we believe is right and true and loving, and that's why Christians must be bold in speaking out their faith unashamedly.

If you truly believe in something, it will *show* in the way you live and in your demeanor. Your belief becomes a CONVICTION of the heart and you stand by it. So the life of a Christian is a manifestation, an example of faith lived out. It will show the world Who you're in love with! Most people will only believe the Bible if it's bound in SHOE LEATHER--meaning if you 'walk it out'. They will only believe it if you live it. Once your heart has been filled with the love of God, you will want to do unto others as has been done unto you. Matthew 5:16 says, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*"

You want others to also partake of His loving kindness. It goes further than telling them about God's love. You can become the love of God expressed to them in many ways: helping, listening, understanding, forgiving, teaching, nurturing, healing, guiding, comforting, counseling, and giving...and the list goes on.

Here's the easiest way to start: Let's COMMIT today to encourage EVERYONE we meet.

ACTIVATE Your FAITH

I first met the Lord in 1972, traveling on my own throughout Europe. I was a hippie then, and decided to take one year out of college to try and find the truth. A series of events led me to Amsterdam and I met some "Jesus people". They were living together in one large house. I had been raised in "churchianity" and definitely had my reservations about anything to do with Jesus, but seeing them in action, I received the Lord and I was born-again!--And I received the Holy Spirit. What was so different about them was the fact that **they were DOERS**. They were talking about Jesus to anyone and everyone they met on the STREETS. They took the Bible literally and were LIVING the Words of Jesus.

During the first three months of my born-again experience, I had Bible classes and read the Word half of the day, and then I went out witnessing in parks, on public squares (and everywhere) the rest of the day. We went out two by two, as Jesus

commanded His disciples to do. "*And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits*" (Mark 6:7).

And I thank God for that training because, from the start, it impressed upon me my new purpose in life, in being born-again. I wasn't just saved and given a free ticket to heaven, but I was commissioned to bring as many souls with me as I could.

Going out witnessing was not an option in my training. Everyone was involved in telling others about Jesus...every day. And in the evening, we all shared individual testimonies! –Souls saved and even quite a few more young people wanting to also serve the Lord full time. The team grew in size every day and we were "making disciples", with those new converts!

I would like to encourage you to put this kind of action into your planned routines. You could pair up with someone, and make a concerted effort to

go out with the sole purpose of sharing the gospel with others. Try to go out two by two, whether with your spouse, your son/daughter, a friend, or a new convert that you are teaching.

Here's are two reasons why it's important to go two-by-two:

1. Jesus sent His disciple two-by-two, so that, should one “fall” (that is to be distracted from the goal), the other one would be there to lift him up and help him stay focused. *“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up (Ecc 4:9-10).*
2. Jesus explained the power of two when saying, *“When two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them” (Mt 18:20).* And, *“When any two of you agree on earth as touching*

anything that they should ask it shall be done of My Father" (Mt 18:19).

Having at least one partner firms up your commitment and your decision. It's not just a commitment before the Lord, but there's a witness going along to help you stay true to it, and to fight the devil's compromises.

Witnessing is actually launching war against the strongholds of the enemy (the devil). *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2Cor 10:3,4).*

So, because the enemy fights against you, you will be hit with all kinds of reasons why you and your team should NOT GO OUT! *"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2Cor 2:11).* You might be tempted with other "important" things to do, or you'll find the sudden inspiration to attack some other tasks

you've been procrastinating about, etc. The enemy will try so hard to keep you from being a DOER. But just commit in your heart, and do not allow yourself to deviate.

The goal is to eventually make it a HABIT to shine your LIGHT regularly. You want to get to where you'll always let everyone you meet know that God loves them; and you will find ways to let the Lord manifest that love in being a listening ear and giving guidance or encouragement or giving prayer for healing or deliverance. *“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard”* (Acts 4:20).

Here are a few tips about approaching people. There are many scenarios when meeting people for the first time. The most important thing is to be led of the Holy Spirit. But here are a few tips to help you be a lightbulb out there. *“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it gives light unto*

all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt 5:14-16).

I put myself out on a limb by saying things that will lead me to share about the Lord. People usually ask, "How are you doing?" I take that greeting as a real question. I'll say things like: "I'm happy! Be careful, it's more contagious than the virus..."

"I'm living the dream... and I dream BIG."

"I'm blessed to BLISS... every thing I touch turns to gold."

"I've been hearing nothing but good news..."

"Busting with JOY, unspeakable joy..."

"I found the LOVE..!"

I start the conversation with something that'll throw me in the DEEP END to where I have to explain more, or they have to ask me what I mean... and I usually talk about one of God's wonderful spiritual laws:

The POWER of words. *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Pro 18:21).*

The POWER of praise. *“Whoever offers praise glorifies Me” (Ps 50:23).*

The POWER of generosity. *“Give and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over shall men give into your bosom” (Lk 6:38).*

The POWER of forgiveness. *“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mat 6:14-15)*

The POWER of love. *“Love is patient, kind, does not envy, it does not boast, not proud, does not dishonor others, is not self-seeking, not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs, does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails”. (1 Cor 13:4-8)*

The POWER of humility. *“for God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble” (1Pt 5:5)*

See: ([Make Those Laws Work for You](#)) in the Daily Meds.

God has put many spiritual and physical laws into motion in our universe, for us to avail ourselves of, to BLESS us and those around us. Using Scripture to back up what is being said is the most powerful witness! *“The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb 4:12)*. For this reason, I carry my booklet, “Handbook for a Disciple of Jesus”, in order to show the verses and even read them together. Letting them read the Word with you helps prove the laws of God, by explaining how they work in our lives. This way the conversation will always come around to talking about Jesus.

It is important, of course, to find a moment to PRAY for that person before leaving them. You can find out if they have a health problem. If so,

then ask if you can lay hands on them, and command the sickness to leave them, or for any disability to be removed. If they have no personal needs, they may ask for prayer for a friend or relative. When we allow the Holy Spirit to get through in prayer for those you are witnessing to, He reaches them in the most personal way.

Bringing someone to the Lord who is not born again is so important, so ask them if they would like to ask the Lord to reveal Himself to them. “*A true witness delivers souls...and he that wins souls is wise*” (Pr 14:25a; 11:30b). I usually ask them if they'd like to turn over the steering wheel of their life to the Lord, and make Him the captain of their destiny.

I also try to bless them with a GIFT. Remember God is a giver, and when you give to the needy, (everyone has needs) you're lending to the Lord, and He will repay. “*He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again*” (Pro 19:17).

Are you ready? Are you willing? Are you thankful for all that Jesus did for you, and consequently are eager to share His love with others? Commit NOW! Decide now! Pair up with someone, decide on a time, and make a plan. You may want to avail yourself of some fantastic tracts at: antracts.com

Let's do it! As you step out, you'll be amazed at what God will do to show you how much He wants to love on this world. Remember, we've already won! And it's an ONGOING win-win! There's a harvest to be gathered.

How YOUR Miracles will HAPPEN

I learned a very important lesson from the Word in recent years. It is in regards to how much weight our WORDS carry. This lesson was specific in the area of my finances. I would say derogatory things about my lack of finances. –And particularly about my ability to make money. I started so many businesses and ventures, and still I could not get ahead.

For the longest time, I saw myself as a begging missionary. I was involved in different aspects of missionary work for a number of years, but I always saw myself "in need". Never could I have conceived the thought that I could be a GIVER or a LENDER, yet the Bible says very specifically that we are supposed to be: "*The head and not the tail, givers and not beggars, lenders and not borrowers*" (Deut 28:13).

However, speaking that fear of financial lack and that troublesome worry caused my wife and I to

accumulate debts which we just didn't know how we could ever repay.

So, after delving into the Word on the subject of faith for finances, I made a concerted effort to totally CHANGE my attitude, and especially the words coming out of my MOUTH concerning my finances, and I learned to CALL on things that were NOT as though they were.

In Mark 11:23, Jesus mentioned three (3) times the word "SAY" when speaking to the "mountain" to be moved. *“whosoever shall SAY unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he SAITH shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he SAITH.”*

The material world actually responds to our words. You can speak what you desire. *“Whatsoever things you DESIRE, when you pray believe that you receive them and you shall have them”* (Mt

11:24). Notice that it says to believe when you pray. In other words, believe right there and then that you have already received it. CALL them to you in FAITH. When you make an Amazon order, it doesn't come to you immediately, but you don't doubt that you will receive them. The same principle applies when in prayer.

Unfortunately, we tend to look at the circumstances with our physical eyes and we limit our faith to that. But we're supposed to CALL on the things that are NOT, to make them MATERIALIZED! WOW! This truth from the Word was a revelation to me.

In the book of Romans, Paul spells out this principle very clearly. Paul refers to God talking to Abram, before he was named 'Abraham' (meaning the 'father of many nations'). "*Neither shall thy name anymore be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee*" (Gen 17:5) Paul is explaining that God called into existence the things that did

not exist yet. *"I have made you (notice the past tense) a father of many nations. And He called those things which be not as though they were"* (Ro 4:17). God had already settled the matter when speaking it to Abraham. Words are seeds and they will bear fruit in their due season.

This is so important to understand, because that's HOW continual blessings are manifested in our lives! When Jesus taught the parable of the sower and the seed, He told the disciples that this truth is the most important parable of the Bible. *"And He said unto them, 'Know you not this parable? And how then will you know ALL parables'"* (Mk 4:13). Why? Our words (the seeds we sow in our lives) bear fruit. Words are seeds. WHAT WE SAY COMES TO PASS, and we will find ourselves living our lives in accordance to what we speak!

This is especially true when we use God's Word to proclaim His promises into our lives. When there's nothing in sight, you can plant a seed and it will grow. Of course as the parable says, your heart has

to be fertile with FAITH. *“He that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the Word, and understands it; which also bears fruit, and brings forth some a hundredfold and some sixty, and some thirty” (Mt 13:23).*

So, to complain about our finances, is to look at the parched ground and say, “Nothing's ever going to grow here!” Rather, change your speech into speaking well about your finances and how God prosper you, and how everything you touch turns to gold! Simply put seeds into the ground for your finances to flourish. It's part of renewing our mind. You've got to renew your mouth too. You've got to ONLY say the things of God. *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8).*

Jesus used that same “speaking” law when He called the water “WINE”. *“Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And He said unto them, ‘Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast’” (Jn 2:7,8).* He also called the few loaves and fishes into a large quantity that was enough to feed over 5,000 people. *“He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full” (Mt 14:19, 20).*

He even called Lazarus from death to life. *“Said I not unto you that if you would believe, you should see the glory of God? Father, I thank Thee that You have heard Me. And I knew that You heard Me, but because of the people which stand by I SAID it, that they may believe that You have sent Me. Lazarus, come forth” (Jn 11:40-43).*

He also SPOKE the desired outcome to the fig tree and in the same manner. *“And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and SAID unto it, ‘Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever.’ And presently the fig tree withered away”* (Mt 21:18, 19).

He SPOKE to the sea and calmed a storm. *“And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, ‘Peace, be still.’ And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm”* (Mk 4:35-41).

He SPOKE to the lady with an infirmity of eighteen years and she was healed. *“And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, ‘Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity’”* (Lk 13:12). All throughout His ministry, Jesus called the desired results (of healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead and cleansing lepers) into existence.

Remember when Jesus "marveled" at the centurion's saying to Him to, "speak the word only, *and my servant shall be healed.*" Jesus then marveled not only at the fact that he understood the power of words, but also the power of authority. "*I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, 'go, and he goes; and to another, come, and he comes; and to my servant, do this, and he does it.'* When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him" (Lk 7:7-9). We have authority through our words. This is the law of "binding and loosing". "*Verily I say unto you, 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'*" (Mt 19:18). You must SPEAK it.

You make your Christian life work for you by speaking the desired outcome in faith. As a Christian disciple you're speaking with the authority of Christ. Let's commit to changing our speech! From hereon, we will call the desired end into existence and believe.

CALL your body into full health! Here is a sample prayer from Charles Capps: *“Body, I speak the Word of faith to you. I demand that every internal organ perform a perfect work, for you are the temple of the Holy Ghost; therefore, I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ and by the authority of His Holy Word to be healed and made whole in Jesus’ name” (Pr 12:18).*

Call your wallet to be abundant. *“Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, oh you of little faith? But seek you first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt 6:30,33).*

CALL your children/loved ones into God's destiny. *“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then said He unto His disciples, ‘The*

harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest'” (Mt 9:36-38).

CALL whatever harvest you want. *“Therefore, I say unto you, ‘What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them’” (Mk 11:24-26).* This is how God’s blessings and miracles happen. You speak them into existence. When you are speaking God’s will into your life, directed by His Word, you can expect those things to happen.

But you must speak these outcomes with your voice. It’s not enough to just wish for the results. It’s your voice that has the atomic power. God created the world by words, remember. *“And God SAID, ‘Let there be’” (Gen 1:1-29).* And we are made after the image of God. As born again Christians, and filled with the Holy Ghost, we have the same abilities and powers as God gave to Jesus

and that Jesus gave to His disciples (which includes us)!

Rom 10:8 says, "*The Word of God is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart.*" That is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim.

The Word of God in your mouth, when mixed with faith, is as powerful as when Jesus spoke it. And it is one of the most powerful tools in the disciple's arsenal.

To further enforce this point read: "[The POWER of PROCLAMATIONS](#)" in the [Daily Meds](#).

Jesus Took LOVE to a Whole NEW LEVEL!

Jesus said, *"I give you a NEW commandment: Love one another. You must love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are My DISCIPLES, if you LOVE one another"* (Jn 13:34-35).

After the fall of Adam, man still had the love of God that we all recognize as "human" love. "*God IS love*" (1Jn 4:8b). God is always reaching out to us, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, to show and manifest His eternal love. "*I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee*" (Jer 31:3). Jesus brought that NEW kind of love, that which had been LOST through Adam. –The AGAPE love. The very nature of God.

Love that is manifested in our human nature is called "feleo" love. This love is so powerful, simply because all love comes from God. But it is

so rich as in the mother's heart towards the child she loves, and so passionate in the husband's heart towards his wife.--The love between brothers and sisters and family. However, this “human” love, even though deep and sincere, is so limited without the love of Jesus being manifested in our lives.

Without the Lord’s love, all love can turn to division and hate, because of the fall of man.

These human emotions can turn to negative reactions as in divorce courts, criminal acts and family divisions, unforgiveness and lives lived in remorse and condemnation. Human love is very feeble as to call for human sorrow and suffering; this kind of love is also responsible for squeezing the tears out of agonizing hearts. It’s the frail love that turns to jealousy and murder, the love that causes more failures through selfishness and self-gratification. So powerful and yet so limited.

SELF is at the center of human love. But God is at the center of AGAPE love. Human love fails, but agape love never fails. But you can’t have AGAPE love without God’s divine nature. It can’t

be put on, it can't be synthetic or fake, for it is the heart of God throbbing in a RENEWED born-again heart. *"We love Him because He first loved us" (1Jn 4:19).*

Jesus brought in a love that seeks not her own. A love that is tender, forbearing, long-suffering, kind and unselfish. A love that seeks the joy and the welfare of OTHERS. A love that mirrors the very nature of God. A love that can't operate out of the natural heart, but from the RE-CREATED heart. – The manifested love of God in the heart of the "new man". *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1Jn 4:9).*

AGAPE love is the badge of true Christian discipleship. It's the kind of love that elevates Christianity above religion.

The apostle Paul really understood this NEW LAW of love. He spells it out so clearly in 1Cor

13. *“Love suffers long and is kind; love envies not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked and thinks no evil. Love rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth: bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails” (1Cor 13:4-7).*

Paul is basically saying that, *“Without AGAPE love, all teachings, all preaching, all knowledge, all solutions and revelations, all discoveries and all prophecy and all learning is NOTHING” (1Cor 13:1-3).* And he goes on to say that that kind of love of God in us makes it possible for us to suffer long, to not envy and to not vaunt ourselves, nor operate in pride. To not be selfish, but to think of others' needs, to not behave unseemingly, to not seek our own, to not be dishonest or rude, to not be easily provoked, nor be so sensitive, to not be scandalous or gossiping and never to rejoice in lies.

Agape is the NEW LAW! *“A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (Jn 13:34).*

Agape love brings joy, beauty, peace, understanding and compassion in one's life. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal 5:22).*

It's AGAPE love that forgives enemies: *“Then said Jesus, ‘Father forgive them for they know not what they do’” (Lk 23:34).*

Agape love gives you a heart to pray under persecution, without fear. *“You have heard that it has been said, ‘you shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.’ But I say unto you, ‘love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and PRAY for them which despitefully use you and persecute you’” (Mt 5:43-44).*

It's AGAPE love that clothes bravery in humility, strength in gentleness. *“The eyes of the Lord run to and fro thruout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him” (2Chron 16:9).*

It's AGAPE love that makes the strong bear the burdens of the weak. *“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Ro 15:1).*

It's AGAPE love that will make someone care for the poor or the educated be a companion to the simple. *“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessings of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee” (Deut 16:17).*

It is AGAPE love that manifests Jesus amongst men. *“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Mt 22:39).*

It's AGAPE love that takes jealousy out of love, envy out of competing, anger out of conversing and pride out of teaching. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"* (Gal 5:22,23).

It's AGAPE love that brings unity in families, strengthening them for all that God has created them for.

In conclusion, let's not live within the limitations of human love. We've been empowered with a GREATER LOVE. *"Greater love has no man than this than a man gives his life for his friends"* (Jn 15:13). Let's operate in the AGAPE kind of love. Let's deny ourselves, let's lay down our life for others. It's the love of the Holy Spirit of God. *"Because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the HOLY SPIRIT Who has been given to us"* (Rom 5:5).

You CAN'T Play Both ENDS

“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord” (Mt 10:24). “For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” (Jn 13:15). We will look more closely in the Word as to understand more intimately what Jesus Christ asks of His disciples. –What it means to be like Him! He would often say, *“It has been said,...but I say unto you!”* He taught a new way, and when we understand it, we can affect the world around us for the Kingdom of Heaven.

When we look at the many requirements for discipleship that Jesus taught, His message seems to polarize everything. His teachings in the natural can seem extremely constraining and stringent....but are they? Or was He teaching a principle or a law of the Kingdom through each one? Let's look at some of them:

When Jesus was choosing His followers, He required them to follow Him right away. *“Now as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, ‘Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ And straightway they forsook their nets and followed Him”* (Mark 1:16-18). **Why?** Because a decision not acted upon right away is indecision.

He re-defined parents and family by telling people not to love their family more than Him. *“He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me”* (Mat 10:37). He even re-defined His own family by saying, *“Only those who do the will of My Father are My brothers and sisters”* (Mat 12:50). **Why?** Because once you're in the kingdom of light, you have a different family and the love for your natural family pales by comparison to your love for the Father, for Jesus and your new brethren. We're now born AGAIN and children of our Father in

heaven. Our brothers and sisters are those of the kingdom.

He said to one man, “*‘Follow Me’, But he (the man) said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God’*” (Lk 9:60). **Why?** Because our commission and first priority is to bring LIFE eternal to those who are lost and dying spiritually.

He then told the same man, “*‘No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God’*” (Lk 9:62). **Why?** Because, if you look back, you'll go back.

Jesus clearly based the spiritual precedent of putting God and His laws first on what God had commanded His people: “*I am the Lord thy God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me*” (Ex 20:1-2). **Why?** There are many gods of this world (materialism, media

distractions, false religions, etc.) and “worshiping” them, spending our time on them, draws us away from worshiping God.

Jesus said that you can't serve two masters. *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (money)” (Mat 6:24)*. You can't “serve” money in your work, that is making it a god, making the service for money more important than your work for God. **Why?** Because money is to be a servant for the use in God’s Kingdom, not a god to be worshiped.

If you want to follow Jesus, you have to deny your own life. *“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, ‘If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow Me’” (Mat 16:24)*. **Why?** Because it's by DYING to yourself that you live. *“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and dies, it cannot bear fruit” (Jn 12:24)*.

In 1Peter 1:15-17 Paul referred to God's commandment in Leviticus: "*But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, 'be ye holy; for I am holy'*" (1Pt 1:15,16) **Why?** Because, as Paul says in verse 13 of the same chapter: "*As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.*" Disobedience, in turning again to what God has delivered you from, brings compromise and then rejection of God and His ways.

We need to learn to live humbly before God and others. **Why?** Pride makes us ignore and forget God and as a result God will distance Himself from us. "*The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts*" (Ps 10:4). "*Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly: but the proud He knoweth afar off*" (Ps 138:6). Remember, pride is the sin of Satan and when we yield to pride, we are not close to God and His will

in our lives. “*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (Ja 4:6).*

We live and work together as a “body” with Jesus as the Head of that body. **Why?** “*May we grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: From Whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eh 4:15,16)*

You can't live solo-discipleship and fulfill God's plan for His body, His Bride.

If you are really living in obedience to the Word, being a doer of the Word, you are promised persecution. “*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*” (2Tim 3:12). **Why?** Because the kingdom of darkness fights the Kingdom of light. “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this*

world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph 6:12).

You must forgive. “Then came Peter to him, and said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?’ Jesus said unto him, ‘I say not unto thee until seven times: but, until seventy times seven’” (Mat 18:21-22). **Why?** Because “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mt 6:14,15). Unforgiveness causes bitterness which keeps us from showing the Lord’s love. “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Heb 12:15). And remember, Jesus died to forgive all of us!

We are admonished not to judge our fellowman. **Why?** There's a beam in our own eye. “And why do you behold the mote that is in your brother’s

*eye, but you don't consider the beam that is in your own eye? Or how will you say to your brother, 'Let me pull out the mote out of your eye;' and, behold, a beam is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First cast out the beam out of your own eye; and then you shall see clearly to cast out the mote out of your brother's eye" (Mat 7:3-5). **Why?** Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. God is our judge. "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mt 7:1,2).*

*"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Mat 5:44). **Why?** Because Jesus is teaching us to be like Him. He said, "That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust...Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Mt 5:45,48).*

Don't hide your light! Let your light shine! “*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light unto all that are in the house*” (Mat 5:14,15). **Why?** Because, “*That they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven*” (Mt 5:16).

Don't fear man. Fear God! “*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*” (Mat 10:28). **Why?** Because it brings a trap. “*The fear of man brings a snare: but whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe*” (Pro 29:25). Fear of man detracts from reverencing and trusting God.

He said not to be ashamed of Him and of His Words. “*For whoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My Words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory,*

*and in His Father's, and of the holy angels” (Lk 9:26). **Why?** Shame and hiding makes you deny your convictions.*

Beware of social media, when all men think well of you. *“Woe unto you when all men speak well of you” (Lk 6:26). **Why?** Those compliments and praises may only promote surface values! There's little worth in the praises of man, because those praises are fleeting and temporal. *“For if a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself” (Gal 6:3). Only in obeying God will we find encouragement on which to build our lives. *“Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another” (Gal 6:4). Man generally looks at outward appearances and surface, even temporal accomplishments. *“For man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart” (1Sam 16:7).****

Jesus said, *“Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that*

*you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Ro 12:2). **Why?** Because the only way to stay separate from the world (after being born-again and having received the Holy Spirit) is to have a “renewed mind” that is filled with and guided by God’s Word. “*Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1Pt 1:123).*

Jesus revealed the true Gospel in every aspect of our lives: money, career, personal relations, spiritual laws, prayer, government and ambition, and more... **Why?** Because He was teaching us to: “*Seek FIRST the kingdom of God and everything else will be added to you*” (Mat 6:33). When you stop and think about it, He was only telling people to get rid of all the WRONG doings and WRONG priorities that were killing them. He was teaching them values and principles to LIBERATE them from the shackles that were holding them back. “*If you continue OBEYING My Word, then you are*

TRULY My disciples (Kingdom citizens), because you will know My liberating TRUTH and that's what will set you FREE" (Jn 8:31,32).

His laws are not constraining and stringent, but they are liberating and guiding. They're setting us free to advance the kingdom.

He was teaching the laws of the Kingdom that are making it possible for people to live in FREEDOM; to no longer be captives of the kingdom of darkness. He was teaching people to focus on the most important things and to stick to the priorities that would make their lives worth living for Him and for others.

We should not see discipline as strenuous and constraining, but as instruction, teaching and training that is LIBERATING and emancipating. Discipline creates room for growth and progress.

Once you take religiosity out of the Gospel, it all comes down to OBEDIENCE, to a healthy

discipline and walking in the new identity He has given to us. Once we are born again, we live in a DIFFERENT kingdom and we have a different passport. Jesus preached the Kingdom of God; He advanced the Kingdom by His life, His works, His everyday sample, and His teachings.

Jesus then said, "*I give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven*" (Mt 18:18). Basically, He gave us the authority to advance the Kingdom of Heaven on earth against the kingdom of darkness. This means that once we know the truth, we're empowered and we can perform the works of God. That new man comes with a new citizenship. It also comes with a big responsibility. **Why?** Because once we know these things, we are accountable. We've been given responsibility to set the captives free. That was Jesus' main mission to bring the Kingdom of Light, and to set the captives FREE.

A weakness in our Christian lives comes when we try to hold on to TWO IDENTITIES. –Two passports for two different kingdoms. Jesus prayed for the disciples (and us) that we would be separate from the world. *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou should take them out of the world, but that Thou should keep them from the evil” (Jn 17:14-16).* While we are "in the world" the challenge is to operate in the principles of the Kingdom without flip-flopping between the two worlds. And one takes away the authority of the other. But Jesus knew how important it would be for the disciples to be single-minded because of all that was to be expected of them.

That's why discipleship cannot be confused with religion. *"How terrible for you, teachers of the law [scribes] and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You close the door for people to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (by your lack of example). You yourselves don't enter, and you stop others who are trying to enter" (Mat 23:13).*

They say "the best leaders lead by EXAMPLE". We've got to DEMONSTRATE the laws of the Kingdom; not by religious principles, but by RESULTS. The WORKS that Jesus does, shall you do also. How? By OBEYing Jesus' teachings.

OBEDIENCE to the Word brings understanding and clarity. Understanding is so important. *"Those who have understanding will be given more, and they will have all they need. But those who do not have understanding, even what they have will be taken away from them"* (Mat 13:12). If we don't understand, the enemy comes and steals the Word. *"And with all thy getting, get understanding"* (Pro 4.7). It's by DOING it that you GET it.

Operating according to the laws of the Kingdom should become second nature to us. Obedience to the Word has to be our default position...plain vanilla simple!

In the Kingdom of God, we don't have to fear.

Why? *“So that we may boldly say, ‘The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me’” (Heb 13:6). And, “He has not given us a spirit of fear, but of (powerful AGAPE) love, and courage and a sound mind” (2Tim 1:7).*

We don't concern ourselves about money. **Why?** Because when we “put the Kingdom first”, the Lord will take care of our financial needs. It is born out well in this illustration: *“Go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first comes up; and when you have opened his mouth, you will find a piece of money: that take, and give to them for Me and you” (Mt 17:24-27).*

We LIVE the Kingdom, we walk differently, we talk differently and we SHOW the Kingdom. *“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1Pt 2:9). Jesus*

came to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and He demonstrated it.

We have a new set of rules and laws and they WORK. We can be blessed to BLISS. And it's TRUE! And it WORKS! We have access to so much power, so much wisdom, so much revelation. We've been made righteous. AWAKE to your righteousness.

People have to SEE the Kingdom in YOU. Let's be full of testimonies. Full of the ACTS of the apostles.

LIVING HOLY!

There was a transformation in the SPIRIT when we were born again! It is our spirit that is born again and our old man (our sin nature) is dead in the Spirit. *“For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col 3:3).*

However, we still have to control our mind and our emotions along with our body. So, while we have a born-again SPIRIT and are empowered through Christ in SPIRIT, we have to make our soul (mind and emotions) and our body line up with our spirit. *“And be not 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” (Ro 12:2).* The Bible calls it mortifying the flesh, living holy, living sanctified, separated unto God. *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Ro 12:1).*

In the first part of the book of Romans, Paul takes quite a bit of time explaining the death of the old law, how the old testament is done away with, along with the old man. In parallel to that, he also elaborates on the birth of the new man. Starting in Romans 6, he then goes after the soul and the body and how those too need to fall in line with the new identity.

"We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the BODY of sin might be brought to nothing (done away), so that we would no longer be ENSLAVED to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin" (Rom 6:6,7).

"So you also must consider yourselves DEAD TO SIN and alive to God in Christ Jesus. LET NOT SIN THEREFORE REIGN in your MORTAL BODY, to make you obey its' passions. Do not present your members (of the body) to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For SIN WILL

HAVE NO DOMINION OVER YOU, since you are not under law but under grace" (Rom 6:11-14).

What he is saying is that we must CONFORM our body/soul to obey the new identity of the newborn spirit. In Romans 12:1,2, he further explains this: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present YOUR BODIES a living sacrifice, HOLY, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. and be not conformed to this world: but be ye TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your MIND, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

“HOLINESS” means living transformed, "separated unto God". It means that we must submit our body and soul to the will of God. "Acceptable unto God" means well-pleasing to God. Unfortunately, because we were born in the kingdom of darkness, our minds, our emotions, and our bodies default to bad habits. Unclean habits corrupt the spirit. There lies the war between the

body and the spirit. "*The carnal mind is ENMITY to God*" (Ro 8:7,8).

The blood of Christ cleanses our SPIRIT, but WE must cleanse our MINDS (thoughts), and our BODIES (habits) with the Word. "*Now you are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you*" (Jn 15:3). The Holy Spirit cannot keep evil thoughts out of our minds nor bad habits out of our body, unless we cooperate with Him! He's a HELPER, not an initiator.

Most BATTLES in the life of a believer are caused by the bad habits of the mind and of the body. That's what we brought out when talking about using two different identities. One foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom. It cannot work.

Romans 6:12 through 14 says, "*Therefore do not let sin REIGN (as king) in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. **DO NOT OFFER ANY PART OF YOURSELF TO SIN** as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as*

those who have been brought from DEATH TO LIFE; and offer every part of yourself to Him as an instrument of righteousness. For SIN SHALL NO LONGER BE YOUR MASTER, because you are not under the law, but under grace."

In other words, let not any member of your body lead you into sin. Jesus went further than that. He said, "*If your right eye causes you to stumble, GOUGE it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell*" (Mat 5:29). He was explaining graphically the importance of keeping every member of your body in subjection to your new identity. That's called developing strong habits that will contribute to your spiritual health.

Remember, God is holy, and cannot have fellowship with unrighteousness. That's why we must live HOLY, separated and devoted unto God and make our mind/emotions, and bodies fall in line with the disciplines of a disciple.

“HOLINESS”, or to be holy, means total devotion to God. Close to this word, is the word “INTEGRITY”, which means having strong moral principles; or being TRUE, through and through! As we are renewed in mind, body and spirit, our ‘holy’ nature develops integrity of character, which leads us to greater loyalty to living the Word of God.

Paul puts it clearly in Romans 8:13: *"For if you live according to the FLESH you will die, but if by the Spirit YOU put to death the deeds of the body, you will live,"* Notice that YOU are the one who MUST put to death the deeds (habits) of the body. YOU must DISCIPLINE the mind and the flesh.

Paul goes on to say, *"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as SONS, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father'"* (Rom 12:14).

Let's take some time to go over our character, our inner self, and take a look into the different habits and thought patterns that we entertain to see if they fall in line with the Word of God. If not, let's commit to disciplining our mind and our body according to the "discipline of a disciple". Gym in the Spirit. It can be a real challenge to go to the gym, but not once do you regret it.

Surely, we understand the need to discipline our bodies to stay in shape and healthy. For us to live HOLY, we have to discipline every area of our life according to the teachings of Jesus. He did not abolish the old law in the sense that we don't have to obey the ten commandments. To the contrary, He raised the bar! One example is when He told us that adultery can be committed even in our thoughts. *"But I say unto you, that whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Mat 5:28).* And that being angry at your brother can be as bad as murder. *"Whoever hates his brother is a*

murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (1Jn 3:15).

So, our every thought, our every habit has to be revisited to make sure that they fall in obedience to the teachings of Christ. It even goes further than that. Even our own convictions have to be revisited. To stand up for Christ, you also have to clarify what you **STAND AGAINST**. The opinions of man that contradict the Word of God can influence us a great deal. Here are four areas in our life that we must investigate:

Money: Materialists measure their success by wealth. But that's not God's view. We didn't bring anything into the world, and we won't take anything out of it. We were made for more than just things. *“Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions” (Lk 12:15).*

Self-indulgence: "Whatever feels good must be good." Pleasure can easily become a god. Comfort and fun can be very appealing, however, it is only

lasting when it is a by-product of living out our purpose. Holiness creates happiness. *“Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit” (Gal 6:8).*

Politics: Politics can be like a form of religion for people who don't know God. They put their hope and trust in the government to solve all of their problems, meet all of their needs, give them all of their answers and protect them! Being part of the Lord's Kingdom, He takes care of everything! *“My God shall supply all of your (our) needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:10).* And, *“Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:20).*

The corruption in our businesses, the crisis in our schools, the chaos in our government, the divisions in the body of Christ, the confusion in our families, and the conflicts in our personal lives all

contribute to the crumbling of our way of life. When we don't follow the Owner's manual, in other words, when we fall away from God's Word and guidance, we suffer the consequences. *"You shall observe to do as the Lord your God has commanded you: you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land"* (Deut 5:32,33).

To be able to counter these prevalent worldviews, and stand up for God's truth, we have to live HOLY and be true to the Lord and His Word, His ways and His views first.

FIRST Love!

God created man to love Him. *“And now..what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to love Him...with all thy heart and with all thy soul”* (Deut 10:12). He is jealous of our relationship and intimacy. Why? Because in Him are all the right values for life, and He doesn't want us to deviate after other gods and idols. *“You shall not bow down to them nor serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God”* (Ex 20:5). As a good Father, He wants to guard our attention and our heart from going astray.

God wants a genuine relationship with His children. *“But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship in Spirit and in truth”* (Jn 4:23, 24). In His last prayer before leaving His disciples, Jesus asked the Father that we all be ONE. One with Him and ONE with each other and ONE with

the Father. That we as His followers may have an intimate relationship as deep as He had with His Father. *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be ONE, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am... in order that the LOVE You have for Me may be in them and that I Myself may be in them"* (Jn 17:21-23).

Intimacy is a very big part of our relationship with Jesus and with the Father. Real Christianity should be a union, an intimate relationship.

God does not want formalities. Jesus addressed the religionists of His day and said, *"You nullify the Word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 'These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules'"* (Mat 15:8-9).

We can be as close to God as we want to be. We decide! James says, *“Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you”* (Jam 4:8) The closer you are to someone, the more you know that person and the more intimate you are with them. Intimacy brings trust, great love, great surrender and interdependence. It is the greater closeness, the desire to know all, without any reservation. This closeness is as in a marriage when we desire to know each other to the core. It is total acceptance and total surrender. A melding of hearts and of wills.

All of the essential values of discipleship are built on intimacy. *“Jesus said unto them, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets’”* (Mt 22:37-40). Therefore, discipleship

is to be a “Christian to the core”. No neutrality, but passion. Total ONENESS.

The more you meditate on God's Word, the more you receive His love, and the more of His love you discover. Intimacy offers more and more. We can always get closer and go deeper in our relationship with God. Psalms 119 expresses the passionate love that David had for God. *“My soul breaks for the longing that it has unto thy judgments (Word) at all times. I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for Thy commandments” (Ps 119:20; 131).* God called him *“a man after His own heart” (1Sam 13:14)*. You can get to know God more and deeper, and be more consumed in His love through loving His Word. His Word must be your FIRST LOVE.

And when you're FILLED to overflowing, you overflow on others. *“We love Him, because He first loved us. If a man say, 'I love God,' and he hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love*

God whom he has not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loves God loves his brother also" (1Jn 4: 19-21).

He's made Himself ever so close and available to us. *"As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you" (Is 62:5). "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name" (Is 54:5).* He made Himself our provider, our peacemaker, our healer; comforter, guide, Savior, King, protector, counselor, Master, servant, Light, voice, strength, breath, Creator...and so many more! All of His attributes are for OUR benefit

Steadfast, Immovable and FAITH-full

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1Cor 15:58).

Steadfast means: immovable, relentless, faithful unto the end, standing firm in faith and holding onto the truth, fixed, enduring, committed, devoted, dedicated, dependable, resolute, unwavering. These qualifications could all be attributed to an outstanding warrior, and yet the Bible uses all these attributes for a disciple of Jesus.

The life of a disciple is not always an easy life. It's a life of battle, difficulties, and hardship. In a nutshell, we're at war. –And we live the life of a warrior who represents the kingdom relentlessly. One who must be depended upon and faithful unto the end. Paul relates it to "wrestling" and "warring". *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the*

Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph 6:10-17).

Peter also admonishes us to stand steadfast in the FAITH, fighting against the attacks of the enemies of God. “Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1Pt 5:9).

But what is the war actually about? If Jesus won the victory, if He's the Name above all names to which every knee should bow, why is there still a war?

First we must understand that there are two kingdoms, ever since the garden of Eden. The kingdom of Light controlled by God and the kingdom of darkness, through which the devil, Satan, gains accessible power through man.

Christ disarmed Satan and paid that penalty through the cross for those who believe. Paul explains, "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*" (Rom 10:4) It means Christ paid the price for your righteousness.

However, it is not the end of the law in every sense. It says "for righteousness". Grace has replaced the law as a means for us to obtain

righteousness with God. But the law still exists. It still condemns those who aren't born again.

Remember also that Jesus said that He came to fulfill the law. He even raised the bar of the law by showing the spirit of the law so that we no longer obey the law through legalism (hoping to have enough "points" to save us), but rather, from the heart.

Our spirit is redeemed. Satan can't do anything about the fact that our spirit is born-again. However, Satan continues to attack us in so many ways, but for the most part in the MIND through fear, guilt, condemnation, confusion, worry, etc. He's the accuser of the saints.

But Paul explains how our war is a spiritual war. He says, *"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds."* (2 Cor 10:4)

Those strongholds are in the mind. They're prejudices and preconceived ideas in the minds of men. Paul says in 1Cor 1:26, "*Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.*" Why? Because God doesn't like these people? No. But because they trust in themselves.

Here are the main "distractions" that man goes after:

1. wealth
2. nobility or social position
3. education (knowledge, science)
4. power
5. religion

In the garden, when the devil told Adam and Eve that if they should eat of the fruit of knowledge, he told them, "*You shall be like God.*" (Gen 3:5) Now, there's nothing really wrong with wanting to be like God. **We all want to be like God.**

But **Satan's insinuation** was, "And you **will not need** God. You will be independent, better yet,

you'll be **SELF-dependent**. You won't be a slave to God." But we became slaves to our EGO, slaves to trying to be good enough, and to lift ourselves up with our own bootstraps. This is really the root of sin: **self-dependence**.

And there lies the war between self-dependence (the devil's plan) **and God-dependence** (grace). **GRACE brings you in direct relationship with God** through intimacy and dependence on God. *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us."* (Tit 3:5)

The key verse about Jesus's ministry is, "I do nothing of My Own, I only do what the Father tells Me." (Jn 5:30) Jesus was totally dependent on the Father. Total dependence on God leads to righteous living. We're already made righteous in the Spirit, but **living holy comes through obedience, full-on dependence, full-on intimacy.** (John 15)

So **the key to winning the war** in the Spirit, is we must hide ourselves in our new identity, belonging to Christ, because **He has already won the war**. The devil cannot touch you for as long as you fully put on the identity of Christ. You are hidden in Christ. Col 3:3 says, "*You died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*"

The WILES of the Devil

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the WILES of the devil." (Eph 6:10-17)

What are those "wiles" of the devil? If you are born again, the attacks of the devil against you are probably going to come in one of 3 ways.

- He is going to try to make it impossible for you to be a militant Christian;
- Or he is going to try to get you to return to your old life;
- Or he is going to try to make you feel good and righteous about what you're doing, to rob your dependence on the Lord.

Today, we'll go over the first line of attack.

His most frequent attack is through FEAR. It can be "fear of man" whereby we won't speak up when we know something is wrong. If you don't stand up, then the devil has won, and he took note that

your muscles are flabby, and that you most likely will not stand up at the next opportunity either.

Fear of failure is also a big attack. The devil tells you, "Why even bother, it won't work, the person won't want to hear me and I may not be able to answer all of their questions," etc. Anything to get you NOT to DO God's command.

He can also come through a physical attack, such as a severe headache, which will cause you to lose focus, and then you fear going out until you feel better. So the devil, with this kind of an attack, where you yield to it, has found a weak spot, and he will keep giving you headaches so that you don't go out and lay hands on people so that they can be healed.

One more distraction of the devil is being "entangled" in the affairs of this life. Every time you have an opportunity to shine, he reminds you of something "important" you've got to do. There

can always be distractions, but obedience sets priorities.

One other trick of the devil is CONDEMNATION over the past. The Salvation Army used to have a practice of sending their born-again recruits back into their old life, right where they came from, as a testimony to the people that they lived with before their new life. So, we should not be afraid nor condemned about our past. It's past, and we don't want to go back to it except to tell our former friends how to be free too.

“Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” (Eph 2:2,3)

The change in our lives, that our friends will see, is by the grace of God, through salvation: *“For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.”* (Eph 2:8,10)

One of the greatest signs of our freedom is the fact that we hate the shackles of our previous lives. Jesus made this clear when He said, *“He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”* (Jn 12:25) It is important to understand that this ‘hate’ is a comparison. Our love for God and His will is more important to us than the ‘affairs of this life’ and we ‘hate’ the distractions of this life that keep us from God’s will in our lives. Being saved has little to do with a little prayer. In fact, nowhere in the gospels does it talk about a prayer of salvation, but it does talk about getting set free and total deliverance, to where people couldn't recognize the formerly demon possessed person. That's what the water baptism is supposed to represent. You go

down as a sinner, and you rise as a born again, changed and delivered militant for Christ

We can call ourselves Christians if we want to, the devil doesn't care. But it is when we are actively changed that the devil fears, when we DO the Lord's commandments. Jesus said when asked about His personal family: *“For whoever shall **do the will** of My Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”* (Mt 12:50) Conversely, Jesus said, *“Why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and **DO NOT DO** the things that I say.”* (Lk 6:46) Christianity is not just a name tag and a quick prayer. It's total freedom from the shackles of the past and a militant decision to walk into your new life. *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be **free indeed.**”* (Jn 8:36)

A major attack and tactic of the devil is to get you to either return to the world or live a life of compromise.

Jesus expects us to be focused and determined in our discipline. He said, *“The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his lord. It is*

enough for the disciple that he be as his Master.” (Mt 10:24,25) And James warned the believers not to be double-minded. *"For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. That man should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."* (Jam 1:6-8)

John talks about the "lures" of the world and says, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world."* (1Jn 2:15,16)

If you have a lust for the world you need to study the effects of sin. James says, *"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death."* (Jam 1:14,15) Sin is no small thing. Sin leads to death. It leads to destruction. The sin

of Cain, which appeared to be simple anger against Abel, led to murder.

Nowadays the churches tend to be soft on sin. They call it a "problem". People are allowed to say, "I have a problem with pornography." --Or with anger, or jealousy, or with drinking. These aren't just little "problems"! "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.*" (1Pt 5:8) The end-purpose of the devil is to hurt as many people as possible and then to take you OUT. That's why the life of a disciple is called WAR!--And not to be taken lightly! This is serious!

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph 6:12)
It's a spiritual war. The enemy is out to render you useless spiritually. Jesus calls us to be separate

from the world. *“Come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord.”* (2Cor 6:17)

You don't want the world to have any part of you. *“We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”* (1John 5:19) The world draws us into so many different distractions that are very appealing: sports, politics, fashion, comfort, TV and on goes the list. John is pretty adamant about staying clear of the things of the world. *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him”* (1 Jn 2:15).

If you want to be dedicated and live fully for God and abide in His protection and blessings you need to draw the line between the world and your commitment for God. *“Pure religion and undefiled before God, the Father, is to keep oneself unstained from the world”* (Jam 1:27).

God gave us the authority to destroy the works of the devil, even in our own lives. In the garden,

unfortunately, man gave the dominion of his life to the devil, but at the cross Jesus took the dominion back, and gave it back to us. So, we have full authority over the works of the devil. *"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy"* (Lk 10:19). That is part of the new man's inheritance.

We have a big part to play with this inheritance, in bringing the will of God on earth as it is in heaven. And we can't do that with one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom of God. *"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier"* (2Tim 2 4-6).

But you say, "How can I fight against the pulls of the world and my own weaknesses?" The answer is fairly simple. As in any war, you can't win a defensive warfare, you can't be undecided! Attack, Attack, Attack. *"Attack the devil and he will flee from you"* (Jam 4:7). Make a concerted move

against the pulls of the world, and those weaknesses in your life. **Focus until you win.** If you fight, you'll win, but you have to fight **until** you win.

We're not to turn our back on the enemy. *"I give you power over all the power of the enemy."* (Lk 10:19) **We face him and rebuke him and cast him out!** We go after our weaknesses and sins with God's Word and we get delivered. And **we fight till we win.** Faith is not passive. It is aggressive and on the offensive. Faith speaks of the victories ahead, in the past tense. It is knowing that you will be winning, therefore it is considered done. You cannot just try out faith. You have to commit to a victory and attack until you win. *"This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."* (1Jn 5:4)

When we are FOCUSED is when the mind is the most powerful and productive. That is why we have to be single-minded and not double-minded. *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be*

transformed by the renewal of your mind." (Rom 12:2)

"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make My dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you.'" (2 Corinthians 6:14-17)

How to be More than Conquerors

The authority of Christ has been given to every believer. Jesus said, "*Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you*" (Lk 10:19).

So the most important thing for us is to appropriate and take on the power and dominion which has been embedded in our new identity and inheritance. "*For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*" (1Jn5:4). There's no condition to "whosoever". It means all of us who are born again have that victory made available to us.

Most Christians don't believe that they have power. I know I did not really believe it for many years. I read Mark 16:15 "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*", as the great

commission that we must believe and OBEY, and I did. I witnessed plenty, but I gave no regards to the following verses that were in the same sentence when Jesus gave them the commission, he said, *"And these signs will follow those who believe: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."* (Mk 16:17-18.).

Jesus gave us the AUTHORITY to enforce the victory of the kingdom God on earth. He said, *"And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever YOU bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever YOU loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"* (Mt 16:19). That power was given to EVERY believer.

**It is not only an ability but also a
RESPONSIBILITY.**

In other words, because Jesus lives in us, we can do those "works" that He did. And it works. It says, *"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name'"* (Lk 10:17). It worked then, and it works now.... but our faith only works if we work it. *"Faith without works is dead"*. It only can work if we practice it.

The way to be more than a conqueror, is to exercise and make use of the weapons of warfare that God has given us. The main one of course is the Sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God. Heb 4:12 says, *"For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"*.

Jesus won the war. *"God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and*

of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:9-11). We possess the power of attorney of the highest authority in the world. It may be hard to believe, but that's precisely the key: If and when we believe it and exercise it, we bring about the victories.

John said, "*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil"* (1Jn 3:8). And Jesus did so throughout His life by healing and casting out demons, but He also destroyed the purpose of Satan in the end, by paying the full price for the redemption of man. The enemy is defeated. The Word says, "*who is he who overcomes the world, but he who BELIEVES that Jesus is the Son of God?"* (1Jn 5:5).

The new covenant made it possible for Christ to live in you. But the devil will try to pester you with lies, doubts and fears to dissuade you from letting Christ live through you. Jesus said, "*He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also;*

and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (Jn 14:12).

So, the key is to believe and exercise that victory. We have Jesus abiding in us. *"The Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one" (1Jn 2:14).* But our *"FAITH is the victory that overcomes the world" (1Jn5:4).* Through the victory of the cross, Jesus has empowered all of us to operate with His authority on earth. So instead of one Jesus fighting the devil, now there are millions of us with the same power and authority.

But we must be fully mindful of the power given to us by God's Word. 1Jn 4:4 says, *"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."*

So when we are under attack, "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him" (Isa 59:19), that's when we raise our badge. That's when we enforce the

kingdom of God and destroy the works of the devil. We've ALREADY been brought into the victory "*He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*".

So we CAN'T lose because He's already WON... But it says, "*ABOVE ALL, taking the shield of FAITH with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*" (Eph 6:16). This is so powerful if we can get to FULLY understand it. It's our FAITH in God's Word and USING the Word against the enemy. Nothing is impossible if we believe.

We're MORE THAN CONQUERORS through our (exercised) **FAITH** that overcomes the world.

Let's be FIGHTERS

You have to have conviction or you can't live. When you're serving the Lord, you have got to be convinced that you are right, and try to convince everybody else of the same. And be willing to fight for what you believe in. Faith is not passive.

The devil will do everything he can to tempt you to forsake God's way. If he cannot get you to stop trusting God, he will try to get you to compromise and be so weak, you won't STAND for anything.

He usually tempts you with half-truths that make you doubt your conviction and not live up to them. Most people don't realize that one little disobedience leads to another, one little refusal and denial leads to another, and one bit of selfishness leads to more.

You may think, "oh just this one little tiny sin, it's no big deal and no one will know." But that little crack in your armor is where the devil begins to

seep in, and then his gas of deceit begins to poison your mind because you disobeyed and pretty soon you're totally off the track.

And if you don't really repent and stop, you could eventually go all the way back on the Lord. Don't let it happen to you. Be faithful to the Lord, be faithful to His work and your ministry. Be loyal. "Resist the enemy and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). *"Give no place to the evil one" Eph 4:27.*

God likes wholehearted, stout-hearted men and women. You've got to know what you're going to believe in and serve him no matter what anybody else says. *"He that rebuketh to man, afterwards I'll find more favor and he don't flatter it" (Pro 26:5).*

Take a stand like Martin Luther took on salvation by grace before the Diet of Worms. He said "Here I stand, I can do no other; I'm willing to die for this truth, I'm so SURE of it."

You cannot stop a man of faith. You cannot dissuade him. You cannot divert to him. He'll go on with or without you. Why? He is determined to go blindly on faith alone, because he has found the truth. He is of one mind, one heart, one spirit, one purpose and will not quit until he's made it.

God help us to be fighters and willing to do anything for the Lord, in just plain thanks for salvation. We must do what we know is right and be willing to live and to die for what we know is the truth.

"If anyone will come after Me...."

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me'" (Mt 16:24).

The main reason that it is important for us to address the topic of genuine discipleship is because we're going towards TOUGHER TIMES as Christians.

It is just so amazing to understand WHO JESUS TRULY IS, and the WHOLE PLAN of God to redeem mankind from this hellish confusion that the devil has this world trapped in. --And to realize what an amazing, awesome, tremendous, eye-opening and truth-filled REVELATION the truth of God's Word is! *"I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil" (Ps 119:162). "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Ps 19:8).*

The reason why receiving and following Jesus is so powerful and so important in anyone's life is because it brings us back into the original purpose of what we were created for!

Some people say, "Why can't I just be a Christian without having to be a DISCIPLE--and a militant one at that?" The answer is simple: A Christian is supposed to be a disciple. Jesus said, *"And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me" (Mat 10:38).*

All that Jesus is asking of us is to forsake and surrender all of the sins, deviations and horrible habits that we've learned in the world. *"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another"* (Tit 3:3). All of those things that kept us in shackles and negated our destiny, purpose and effectiveness.

Jesus said, *"For whoever wishes to save his life (and his bad habits and addictions) will lose it (all), but whoever loses his (worldly) life for My sake and the gospel's will save it"* (Mark 8:34-35).

What makes us followers of Christ is the fact that we apply the teaching of the teacher. A disciple is essentially a practitioner of the discipline. Reading the Bible is only the beginning step to being a disciple. Then we must obey the teachings of Jesus to be an active disciple. *"For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you"* (Jn 13:15).

Unless a Christian is able to obey closely the teachings of Jesus, can he honestly be viewed as a Christian? There has to be more commitment. The Word of God is meant to be bread for daily use, not cake for special occasions. *“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continuing in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1Tim 4:15,16).*

We cannot be shy about calling a spade a spade. There are some basic principles and disciplines in following Christ that are essential to keep us separated from the world and free from its' bondage. *“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is you than He that is in the world. They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1Jn 4:4-6)*

With Persecution...

“Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2Tim 3:12).

I read a story about a certain Christian pastor who witnessed his faith in Jesus to a lumberjack that had come to town for a few days, from way out in the virgin forests of northern Canada, and he received Jesus. "Now that you've made Jesus your Lord, Jake, your life is going to change," the pastor said. "How's that?" asked Jake. "Well, look, it says right here in God's Word, *'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, all things have become NEW!'* (2Cor 5:17). So, I want to warn you, Jake, that when you go back to that lumber camp, it's going to be very difficult for you!" "Why's that, pastor?" replied Jake. "Because, as you know, most of those lumberjacks are tough, hard, wicked men, and they don't like Christians! You'll no longer be the same as you were before, cursing God, speaking foul language and doing

evil things!--You're going to be so different they're going to PERSECUTE you!"

So Jake went back to the camp and a few months passed before he came back to the town for his next leave. He wondered if he'd run into the pastor again, and sure enough, there he was, standing on a street corner passing out tracts.

"Hey, pastor! Nice to see you!" "Hi, Jake!" exclaimed the pastor.--Very glad to see the converted lumberjack again. "Tell me, how did it go at the lumber camp?" "Oh, fine, just fine!" The pastor said, "I told you it was going to be difficult to live a Christian life there, didn't I?" --"No, no," replied Jake, "it wasn't hard!--Not at all!"

"You mean they didn't persecute you or make it tough for you?" The pastor asked, surprised. Jake replied, "Oh, no! You see...they never **EVEN FOUND OUT** that I **WAS** a Christian!"

THAT kind of a sample is NOT being a real CHRISTIAN! Something you BELIEVE in, you TALK about! If you believe in your football team, you talk about them! If you believe in your political party, you talk about it! If you like your work, you talk about it!--And if you really believe in and love JESUS, you're going to talk about HIM and share His Love with OTHERS!

Like the old washer-woman who was made fun of one day by someone who said they had seen her talking about Jesus to a wooden Indian in front of a cigar store! She perked up and replied, "Maybe I did! My eyesight isn't so good any more! But talking to a wooden Indian about Jesus is not as bad as being a WOODEN CHRISTIAN and never talking about Jesus to ANYONE!"

When Christian faith is not active and strengthened by an ongoing personal relationship with Jesus, then like in the parable of the sower, faith doesn't last long: "*They have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation*

or persecution arises for the Word's sake, immediately they stumble" (Mk 4:17). Facing persecution would be very difficult in such a case. When we genuinely love and serve the Lord we will be challenged by others about our faith. That is a promise! "All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2Tim 3:12) It would be a lie to say that taking a stand is easy. It's not. But once we've made the decision to deny ourselves, it's not about us anymore. "Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me" (Mat 16:24).

We ALSO know that those who refuse to take up their cross and follow Christ are "not worthy" of Him and cannot be His disciple (Mat 10:38; Lk 14:27). We also believed the warning that says, "*Everyone who wants to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*" (2Tim 3:12). And we understood that, "*If [we] falter in a time of trouble, how small is [our] strength*" (Pro 24:10).

We are too weak to do it in our own strength. Jesus assures us: *“My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness”* (2 Cor 12:9).

Jesus said, *“If men have a candlestick, they don't hide it under a bowl or a jar”* (Mt 5:15). They don't sit alone in some corner and hope nobody will find out that they've become a Christian. But, *“They put the candlestick on a STAND so that it will give light to the WHOLE HOUSE”* (Lk8:16).

Christians should stand up and TELL others why they've had such a miraculous change in their life! Once you're saved it should be IMPOSSIBLE to hide the love of God and the truth of Jesus! If you have given your life to Him, He wants you to SHOW it and to try to SHARE it with OTHERS! It's the LEAST you can do for Him Who gave His LIFE for YOU! Let's shine His light.

The Resoluteness Of A Disciple

This One Thing I Do

Discipleship is a commitment. And it is a discipline to the teachings of Jesus that we ardently adhere to. Having seen the light of the Word, having enjoyed the peace that God gives, having been thrilled by the joy of our salvation, it becomes obvious that there is only one direction to walk. Discipleship is a definite decision. There is no more wavering, wondering, nor wandering.

We become fixed in our purpose and adamant about spreading that light of God's love and His Word, so others can ALSO be enlightened. The bottom line is, that it is a total commitment to LOVE. --Living for love, in love, to give love, that we may all love and live in love with the God of love.

The apostle Paul was one awesome example of one who stood by this firm commitment. He

said, *"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil 3:13).

And he went on to say to the Ephesians, *"You must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart; they have become callous and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness. Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness"* (Eph 4:17-23).

James also stated his position when he said, *"A double minded man is unstable in all his*

ways” (*James 1:4*). And Jesus explained: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (*Mat 6:24*). Even king David's heart was fixed. He said, “One thing I ask of the LORD, this alone I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life and gaze upon the beauty of the LORD” (*Ps 27:4*).

And Peter also admonished us by saying, “Therefore, brothers, make every effort to make permanent your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble” (*2 Peter 1:10*).

The Commandments of Jesus

Disciplines of a Disciple

Daily Reading (Studying) God's Word
The Psalmist David blessed us with the psalms, proof throughout that he did spend

time with the Father. He wrote: *“His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper”* (Ps 1:2,3). We read the Bible to fellowship with the Lord, we study it to apply His Word to our lives.

Denying Yourself

This denial of all, including ourselves, is the deepest discipline of discipleship. We have committed ourselves to put Him first before other earthly pleasure—it becomes Jesus ONLY! Jesus tells us to count the cost (Luke 14:28-33), concluding, *“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.”*

Hanging Around Other Believers

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more

as you see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25).

We are all parts of a body. There are over thirty “one another” commands that we cannot obey unless we are in a community of believers. You become who you fellowship with. 1Cor 15:33,34 states: *“Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.”*

Daily Praying (Talking) to God

Matthew 6:5-6 states: *“But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly.”* Prayer is an important part of communicating with the Father.

Regularly Worshiping Together

It glorifies God when His sons and daughters gather together before Him in one place to thank and praise Him. It is also a faith statement to the world that we believe in God

and that He loves us and He has always blessed His people. *“And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because He is good, for His mercy endureth forever. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid” (Ez 3:11).*

Honoring God with Your Finances First

From the very beginning, God gave commandments about tithing and we read this about Abram giving tithes (10%) to Melchizedek, the king of Salem, the priest of the most high God. Tithing is showing God that He was the One Who gives us everything we have. *“Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase.”*

We are Called to Service

Jesus made it very simple. As we love Him first, our love for others and bringing them to

Him comes naturally. *“For the love of Christ constrains us” (2Cor 5:14a).*

Serving the Lord means shining our light!
“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt 5:14-16). Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all nations: *“Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples” (Jn 15:8)* *“And He said unto them, ‘Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15).*

A Forgiving Heart

2Cor 2:10-11 states we need to always maintain a forgiving heart: *“If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I*

have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.”

Satan enslaves us with an “offended heart”, a “blaming spirit” or a “root of bitterness”.

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Hebrews 12:15). The only way to fight against the enemy in this area of unforgiveness, offense, blame and bitterness, is with a clear heart, washed clean with the Word of God. *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Pr 4:23).* Jesus simply tells us to forgive!--It really is a choice! *“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mt 6:14,15).*

Cross-bearing

Jesus said, *“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily,*

and follow Me.” (Lk 9:23) “*And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple*” (Luke 14:27; Matt. 16:24). What does that mean, to “take up your cross”? Here are a few guidelines given by Jesus for us to understand what it means:

- To follow Him: “*The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord*” (Mt 10:24-25a). “*For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you*” (Jn 13:15).
- To abide in Him: “*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in Me*” (Jn 15:4).
- To serve in love and gratitude: “*He that hath My commandments, and*

keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him” (Jn 14:21).

- Love Jesus above all else: *“He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that takes not his cross, and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that finds his life shall lose it, and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it” (Mt 10:37-39).*
- Win souls for Jesus! *“And He said unto them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men’” (Jn 4:19).*
- Train more disciples! *“Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the*

Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19).

- Abandon other pursuits to follow Jesus! *“The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man has found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” (Mt 13:44).*
- Forsaking worldly and materialistic ambitions: *“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful” (Mk 4:19).* *“Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for the meat which endure unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed” (Ja 6:27).*

- Be single-minded and don't look back:
"And Jesus said unto him, 'No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God'" (Lk 9:62).

Be On Guard

For as long as we live in this world (the kingdom of darkness), the prince of this world will continue to attack and distract us from accomplishing what God has purposed for us.

"Be sober, be vigilant for your adversary, the devil walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1Pt 5:8). This is why we must constantly be aware of the devices of the devil and be "on guard", as a warrior should be! It says, *"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41).*

It takes consistent discipline to guard our mind, emotions and actions against the tricks and the devices of Satan, but that's what resisting the enemy and being sober and

vigilant is about. *"You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*

Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation" (1Thes 5:5-8).

And the best tool to resist him with is quoting the Word of God. We're fully armed, we have armor to be able to stand. *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate*

of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:10-17).

That's how Jesus resisted Satan in the wilderness. He resisted every temptation with "it is written". (Lk 4:1-13). Let's remember God has given us the incorruptible seed of His Word as a means to escape every temptation and battle of the enemy.

Jesus used the Word, why shouldn't we. Paul says in Ephesians 6:14-17 *"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."*

Train in its use. And take it into the battle with you, advancing against the enemy who is powerless against it. It says, *"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which*

is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (1Pt 4:12-13).

1Cor 10:13: "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but 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 (the Word), that you may be able to bear it.

Paul said that he's in this, to win: "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb 12:1-2).

"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2Tim 2:3).

Stand Up And Stand Out For Jesus!

Unfortunately, the vast majority of so-called Christians today are afraid to do anything that would make them stand out as being peculiar or different from the crowd. They've lost their BOLDNESS to take a definite stand for Jesus and be utterly fearless about what people say or think about them! So many try to figure out just how far they can go and yet not hurt their reputation. They're like some of the man-pleasing Jews in Jesus' day, of whom the Bible says, *"Among the leaders, many believed on Jesus. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise from MEN more than the praise from GOD!" (Jn 12:42,43)*. They don't want to be real outstanding Christians for fear of being called fanatics, or "fools for Christ's sake" (*1Cor 4:10*).

Many Christians rarely dare to be different, or venture to vary from the norm. They try to tiptoe along very daintily in their walk with the Lord and not disturb anybody! How unlike the Christians of the early Church, of whom it was said, *"These are*

they that turned the WORLD UPSIDE DOWN!"
(Acts 17:6).

They were called “disturbances” alright! But names like Paul and Peter and Stephen and Philip live on to this very day, and their influence is still felt, while the passive compromisers just faded into oblivion!

Naaman is a dandy bad example of just such a compromiser: He was a man who, if he had stood up for his faith, could have converted the entire nation of ancient Syria to faith in the true God. Naaman was the second most important man next to the King. He was the top general, the Minister of Defense. He had gotten miraculously healed from leprosy when he went down to see Elisha in Israel, and he even started witnessing to his wife and handmaid and a few close friends that there was no other God but the God of Israel. But when the King of Syria asked him to worship with him in the Temple of Rimmon, the heathen, pagan, devil-god that the Syrians worshiped, **he failed to stand up for his new-found faith**, and he weakly apologized to Elisha, "*The Lord pardon thy servant in this one thing that I do*" (2Ki 5:18).

What kind of witness was that to the nation when they saw him walking into the Temple of Rimmon with the King? They must have doubted the stories they'd heard about him being healed by the God of Israel. *"Maybe it was the god, Rimmon, who healed him. After all, we see him worshiping there every day with the king" (2Kings 5).*

There is no such thing as "neutrality" or compromise in the Christian life! Jesus said, *"He that is not FOR Me is AGAINST Me"* (Mat 12:30). The Christian life should be an on-fire, all-out, one hundred percent, dedicated life devoted to the cause of winning the world for Jesus! The day has now come for Christians to stand up and give bold expression to their convictions, to rise up and FIGHT the forces of darkness that are at work in the world and that are pressing in on us at such an alarming speed!

But there isn't any place in this battle for "chameleon" type Christians who change color with every crowd and melt into the surrounding world without any convictions or moral courage! That's the real problem of Christianity today--all the supposedly "secret" Christians who are merely trying to smuggle their own souls into Heaven

without anyone else finding out!

Do YOU practice your religion secretly for fear of the opinions of men?--Or do you have the conviction and Christian courage to stand openly with the other great Christians of all ages, to stand up for your faith at every opportunity no matter WHAT the cost in popularity or position! Jesus says, "*I wish that you were HOT or COLD!--But if you are LUKEWARM, I will spew you out of My mouth*" (Revelation 3:15,16). With God, it's usually ALL or NOTHING at all! There's no halfway with the Lord! He abhors the halfhearted, the lukewarm, the indecisive, the compromisers, the "so-far-and-no-further" folks!

Jesus Himself "*made Himself of no reputation, was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was despised and we did not esteem Him*" (Isaiah 53:1-3). Yet most Christians today are not willing to be the least bit despised for Him and speak out when and where they should for Jesus, to shun the opinions of men and to dare to take a stand for the right, for the TRUTH of God's Word! Look how much JESUS suffered for US, and yet how little many of us are willing to suffer for Him!

The Bible says, *"This is how we know what God's love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And WE ought to lay down OUR lives for our BROTHERS!"* (1Jn3:16). We ought to be willing to lay down our lives to do **WHATEVER** we can to win as many lost souls as we can while we still can in these last dark days! There's **NO** greater work in the world than to witness the Words of God, to preach the Gospel, to tell people about God's love, to show them the love of Jesus!

There is a very meaningful true story about an old lady whose son was appointed "the Ambassador to the Court of St.James", meaning he was appointed to be American ambassador to England. That was always considered to be the greatest ambassadorship in the world, especially in the days of the zenith of the British empire's glory. But when friends came to her with the great news, instead of being overjoyed she nearly wept.

She just sadly shook her head and said, "To think that he might have become an ambassador of the **GOSPEL**, and he dwindled down to nothing but an ambassador to England!"

Think of that! He could have been an ambassador, not of the United States, but of the Kingdom of HEAVEN!--Of the GREATEST King of all, the King of Kings, JESUS! He could have been an ambassador not just to a single country like England, but to the whole WORLD, an ambassador from the greatest Kingdom there will ever be, and could have had a palace forever on high!

THAT'S an appointment that's open for YOU! Will you TAKE it? In this whole world there is no higher position than to be a child of God, and no greater honour than to stand up for Jesus and be a witness for Him!

How can you SPOT Those Christians?

How can you recognize a Christian from anyone else in society? What's different about them? Don't they live amongst other people and work in the same workplaces? If so, what makes their faith special or how are they different?

Here's a story about a conversation that took place shortly after Jesus died, between some Roman officers. It took place shortly after the disciples had been baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

A new Roman governor was appointed in Jerusalem, by the name of Julius Alexis. When he arrived he met with his predecessor to find out more about the stories that he had been hearing regarding this group of religious fanatics, called the Christians. He had never met one, but had heard that they were followers of a 33 year old man who had been crucified a few years previous by Pilate who was governor of Jerusalem, who had been enticed by the religious leaders to do away with him. Yet this one man alone had started a movement which was spreading throughout the whole Roman empire.

Those Christians were said to have **POWER** given to them by this Messiah of the Jews.

Troubled about this revolutionary group who played an important part in Jerusalem and the surrounding provinces, he asked his predecessor, “What is a Christian? What makes them a Christian? How do they act? And what power do they have?” In other words, how can one recognize one of those people?

He said, “I have heard all of the bad about them. I have heard that they are fanatics, bigoted, not interested in the power of Rome, but I have also heard that they are not violent, they ban together...and what else do you know about them?”

Ben Hur replied, “Not only are they not violent, but they are compassionate and merciful. Not only towards each other, but even towards their enemies. They are long-suffering. Most of them are happy, joyous, exceedingly in fact.

“You try to catch them in the wrong, but to the contrary, they are truthful, good citizens, they're honest and have integrity. They aren't greedy. And most of them are self-effaced even though they speak with boldness and authority. They sit in the lowest place at meetings, but none-the-less it is as though they shine, as if they carry a light, a wisdom in their speech.

“They speak in love as if they look at the heart when speaking to people, rather than the exterior of a man. They themselves seem to possess so little, yet they say they are extremely 'rich' in love, in freedom.

“I met one of their leaders recently...a humble woman with kindness in word and in deed. She greeted me with a blessing. We ate together and she explained to me something about a corn of wheat dying in order to bear fruit. She was telling me how that is a principle, a moral law to live by--And they live to die to themselves so that their Christ...who

apparently is resurrected...may live in them and through them.

“They live in hope, separated from the riches and the lusts of this world, as if they look at things that we cannot see. They believe in a spiritual world outside of the world that we see. They pray together, and they receive much persecution, but they have no fear. They are willing to die as martyrs for the sake of that Kingdom of the Spirit. They call Christ, their King, that man who was crucified, whose body our soldiers could not find after three days.

“They say they are of royal blood, having been accepted in the kingdom of Christ. You should hear them pray. They speak in very weird tongues, and they praise their god, whom they say they love with a passion.

“They don’t dress any differently than anyone else. They are very united. They walk humbly, therefore there is no strife. They don’t envy each other’s possessions and they aren’t proud!

--And even when you try to provoke them, they smile, as if they love and care for you. They may look meek, but they are like warriors; very focused and very disciplined.

‘They don’t go to the doctor because most of them are healers through the authority that was given to them by Christ, their Messiah. They've healed many of our soldiers' families, even some of our slaves.

“You can also meet them in prisons... not as prisoners, but they go encourage and pray for them to be delivered and freed, not from prison as you might think, but from evil spirits...

“You meet them talking to the beggars...and even to the lepers. I have even seen one of them helping one of those dirty Samaritans, who had been wounded and was about to die, had he not been cared for, and that Christian even paid for his hospital bill.

“They are different, alright, because they don’t desire any of the world that we Romans bring through the great teachings of the Emperor, the great Cesar. But on the other hand, they respect our authority. They are weird to say the least. But they are peaceful. They don’t lie, they don’t steal, they don’t vain babble. They speak evil of no one. They are kind towards everyone and they forgive whoever might hurt them.

“Of all citizens, they are the ones that walk in love the most. They don’t live in debauchery. I would call them brainwashed by this Jesus doctrine. And people don’t like the fact that they are so close to each other, almost fitly joined to one another. They depend on each other. But on the other hand they are very outgoing and the most generous in our community. –Not only to the poor. This woman I had dinner with, paid for my dinner and gave the slave a handsome tip and talked to him as a dignified member of society and told him how God so loved him. -- a slave...

“They have beautiful families and their children are well behaved. You will never see them drunk, but sometimes you think they are! They sing and sing so loud!

“Of course we obey the orders of our Cesar who has commanded us to kill as many of them in the arenas, but there are so many of them. We soak them in oil and tar, and hang them on a street pole and light them up.

“Lately we have used them as lanterns of fire to light up our streets at night. But I want you to be prepared, they sing hymns of praise to their God while they burn. And people are starting to get fed up hearing their loud happy songs while they are trying to sleep.

“There is one thing I don’t understand. They get the most persecution from the religious leaders, the ones who ordered their Messiah to be killed. It is as though those old fogies are envious of the freedom of those Christians. They call them a ‘sect’ of little Christs. Yet they are the least trouble-makers.

The end