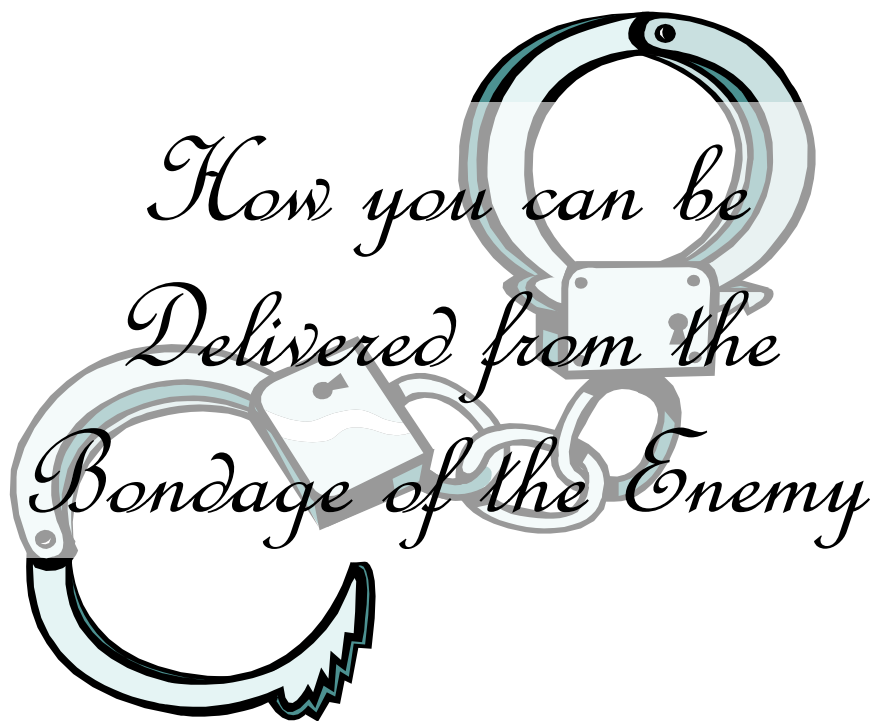


# Free at Last



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# LeadersServe

*Serving Leaders who Shape the World*

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## Introduction

The Bible says, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.” (I John 3:8). The work of Jesus Christ was sufficient to set us free from every bondage of the enemy.

Yet, many believers are still suffering unnecessarily and in many cases unaware of the bondage in which they live. The truths set forth in this booklet are designed to set you free. The power is not in my words or in the format, but in the Word of God.

These teachings were developed to be taught in deliverance seminars and I pray that you may also benefit from them. You will benefit more if you look up the scripture passages and study them for yourself. Feel free to read, study and take notes. However, please do not photocopy these notes.

I acknowledge the blessing that many people have been to my life through books and through their teaching. I wish to give credit to the following people particularly for their blessing to my life in the area of deliverance and as sources for many of the ideas presented here:

Derek Prince: *Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose.*

Neil Anderson: *The Bondage Breaker*

Thomas B White: *The Believer’s Guide to Spiritual Warfare*

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Pastor John Otaala *Polygamy and it’s Curses*

Material shared by Dr. Stephen Mathai of Nairobi

May God bless you and set you free!

Jon Byler

## Session One: The Battle for Deliverance

### INTRODUCTION

“Lord, I thank You for Your presence in this place and that You have made me a child of God. I come to You now in the name of Jesus and take authority over all of the schemes of the enemy for every person listening to or reading this teaching. I rebuke the spirits of doubt, unbelief, fear, pride, rebellion/witchcraft, sexual immorality and religion in the mighty name of Jesus. Holy Spirit, I ask You to take complete control and teach truth to the hearts of your people. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

We are in a battle. A fierce battle is raging all over the world for the souls of men and women. Our enemy, the Devil is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He is not happy when someone enters the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father and he will continue to try his wicked tactics against a believer. We need to know about this battle, the enemy and how we can fight if we are going to have the victory that God provides.

In our introductory session we will look at the nature of our battle.

Before we go to our text it is helpful to understand some things about the composition of man and what happened to man at the fall.

Man was created in the image of God as a three-part being; body, soul and spirit.

The **body** is the physical part that includes the five senses. It has appetites and desires and provides **world consciousness**.

The **soul** is the place where our will, emotions and mind reside. It provides **self-consciousness**.

The **spirit** is the place of worship and includes our conscience and intuition. It provides **God-consciousness**.

At creation the three were in perfect harmony. God’s presence resided in the spirit of man controlled his body through the soul.

But when sin entered the world the picture changed radically. The spirit died, God’s presence was gone; the soul rebelled and the body was corrupted. Man became self-centered. If you are still unsaved you are still in the kingdom of the Devil and need to experience being made alive with Christ.

At Salvation God’s Spirit comes to live in our spirit and makes it alive again. God’s plan is to reconcile the soul to God and heal the body. But often there is a struggle in our soul and body to follow the way of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is there and we are saved, but without deliverance in the body and soul we will live a defeated Christian life. The devil can still have a place in our souls and be there tormenting us; not possessing our spirit but controlling our mind, will and emotions and even our physical body. This is the area of our battle.

God expects us to grow in our Christian walk and experience deliverance from all that would keep Him from controlling our souls and to free physical healing in our bodies. In theological terms this is what we call deliverance and sanctification. And this is why we are looking at this subject!

### **Ephesians 6:10-18**

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your*

*waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

There are four important principles that we will see from this passage about the battle we are facing that will also lay a foundation for the things we will share in the next sessions.

## **I. THE BATTLE IS SPIRITUAL**

Scripture clearly says, **“Our struggle is not against flesh and blood.”** The war we are engaged in is not a battle fought with sticks and clubs, swords and spears, or AK47s. It is fought in the spiritual realm. The things we will see in scripture as we continue show that we are fighting in the spiritual realm. What happens in the spiritual can certainly affect our bodies, but the battle is not physical.

The body can sense what is happening in the physical world. We can look at houses and smell flowers. There is another world that is just as real – a world that we cannot see but which is just as active and influences our lives in the same measure. Some cultures are much more aware of this than other cultures.

When you find yourself annoyed with someone, or you explode with anger, or you carry bitterness remember that you are not fighting against that person; there is a spiritual battle going on.

### **A. The battle is in the mind**

Often times this battle takes place in our **mind**. Our mind controls us and affects all that we do. Scripture teaches much about our minds and the importance of controlling it. If we are going to change our actions; our minds must also be changed.

The Bible has a lot to say about our minds. Let’s look at several passages:

**Romans 12:2**, *“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*

**Colossians 3:2** *“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”*

**Philippians 4:8** *“Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”*

**1 Peter 1:13** *“Prepare your minds for action...”*

**Philippians 2:5** *“Let this mind be in you...”*

**1 Corinthians 2:16** *“We have the mind of Christ.” Yet many believers are defeated because they don’t have the mind of Christ.*

Our minds are powerful parts of our body. In fact our mind controls us; it tells us what to do; it controls what we think about; it directs our lives. Most of the battles that you will face this week will be won or lost in your mind, not in the body. We often focus on the external, the body. We have a problem with lust, so we try closing our eyes. We have a problem with anger so we just try to shut our mouth. Many believers are discouraged or defeated and losing the battle. The reason they are losing is that they are fighting the battle at the wrong place; the battle is in the mind. This is why it is so crucial and we learn to control our thoughts. If the devil can control our mind he has us under his power. In the next session we will come to understand some of the ways he has gained control over our minds.

True change doesn't occur just when we stop doing what is wrong. Many people get saved and they stop sinning, i.e. they stop doing wrong habits, but in their mind they are still not transformed. They still think the same way.

If you wash a pig so that it looks very clean and beautiful you can show all your friends what a clean pig it is. But when you release him he will again go back to the mud. Why? Because in his mind he is still a pig. He still loves mud. He has not really been changed. For true change to occur our mind needs to be transformed. Our minds must be changed. This is the battleground for the Christian life and if a Christian is victorious it will be because his mind has been controlled. A defeated Christian is one who has not learned to control his mind.

## **2 Corinthians 10:4, 5**

*The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

These are powerful verses about spiritual warfare and we will look at them more closely in the next session. For now notice a key thought in the last part of verse 5, **“We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”** (In the King James version it says *captivity* which literally means to bring under control.) We talk about getting a “hold of” ourselves which means getting ourselves under control. This is the idea talked about here, getting control of our thoughts. This is the area of the spiritual battle on which we will focus now.

### **B. Our minds contain strongholds**

Our verse talks about “strongholds.” In our minds there are very strong places that are difficult to change. There are many strongholds in our minds; patterns of thinking that have become a part of us. A stronghold is defined in the All Nations Dictionary is, “a strongly fortified place.” Specifically in scripture it is referring to a place where Satan has established a presence. Realize that our mind is powerful and it is a tough place to do battle.

Maybe you got saved when you were a young person and now you are middle aged. For 20 years you have been thinking that your nose is too big. That is a hard thought to change!

Maybe you have allowed your mind to think that you can never succeed in life. That is a stronghold. It is a pattern of thinking.

Maybe you have allowed lustful thoughts to control your mind. That is a stronghold.

Maybe you have allowed hatred and bitterness to form in your mind and now whenever you think of someone you think bad things about them. That is a stronghold.

Maybe you have been rebellious. You just don't like to be told what to do. That is a stronghold in your mind.

Perhaps you have just decided that you will make your own decisions in a certain area of your life. That is another stronghold.

### **C. Wrong thoughts must be demolished**

Our verse says, **we demolish arguments and every pretension...** We need to tear down wrong thoughts and wrong patterns of thinking. We must demolish them!

Demolish is a strong word meaning *to tear down, to break to pieces, smash* (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary).

What is it that we are to tear down? Arguments, pretensions (a pretense is giving a false impression) and any ungodly thoughts. We must remove them completely.

Many of the thought patterns of our minds have a pretension of being right or spiritual. Perhaps you think about yourself as not worth anything to God and your mind convinces you that you are being humble to have such a thought. Perhaps you think you will keep quiet in the church and by doing so you will not make any mistakes. These are wrong ways of thinking and need to be demolished.

#### **D. We must take thoughts captive**

We must learn how to control our thoughts. Many people believe that they have no control over what they think. They believe that their mind is like a car without a driver, it goes wherever it pleases. The Bible says, NO! You control your mind. You can take every thought captive. Your mind should not control you; you should control your mind.

This language is actually slightly deceptive since it is really not me that should control my thoughts, it is God. But it is by an act of my will that I allow him to take control.

To take our thoughts captive means that we bring them into a new stronghold, God's! To try to demolish the old and do it on our own is not enough, our thoughts which used to be under the control of Satan must now come under the control of God. This is so important in our understanding of how we can control our mind. Essentially our mind must come under the control of God. Our thoughts should come from His fortress in our minds instead of Satan's.

Let me illustrate these concepts which are rather abstract. Suppose we are thinking about our nose again. Satan has been telling us for years that our nose is ugly and because of it we will never succeed in life. That is his stronghold. Now we can recognize that those thoughts are from Satan and so we tear them down. I refuse to think those thoughts any longer. Now we try to take control, I will just stop thinking about my nose. That probably won't work. Our own thoughts are no match for the Devil's. What can we do? We must redirect those thoughts, take them captive for Jesus! How do we know God's thoughts about us?

#### **E. We must know God to know His thoughts**

If we are going to change the way that we think so that it becomes like God we are going to have to know God, right?

And how do we know God? Through His **Word!** We can't know the thoughts of God if we don't know the Word of God. We can't know the will of God if we don't know the Word of God. Many times our minds are not changed because we are not feeding on the Word of God.

Back to our nose. What does the Word of God say?

*Psalm 139:14, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

#### **F. We must be willing to do battle in our minds**

How do we control our minds?

Let me first surprise you with a statement. We don't control our minds through prayer! Prayer is good but it normally won't change the way you think.

There might be several things we can do to control our minds but I think the most important one is by **feeding our minds with the Word of God.** It is the Word of God that will take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.



The Word of God is the only thing that has power to control our minds. I am convinced that many Christians are defeated because they aren't using the Word of God. You can't know the will of God if you don't know the Word of God. On this issue it doesn't help to pray. You can pray all day but God says, "I have given you instructions in My Word, why don't you use it?"

Many believers struggle with habits for which they have prayed for victory for a long time. They are praying that God will help them to change the way they think about themselves, to get rid of a bad habit, or a pattern of behavior. You won't get the victory in prayer as important as that is. You will find victory as your mind is transformed by the Word of God. God has a part to play and prayer is important but the Bible says in **Romans 12:1, "be transformed by the renewing of your mind!"**

That is not a prayer request; it is a command! We are commanded to put off the old and be changed in our minds and to put on the new (**Ephesians 4:22-24**). We are commanded to set our minds on things above. We are commanded to think on these things. The rate of your Christian growth depends on your willingness to follow with obedience!

**"Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32)** When we begin to get the TRUTH into our lives we will begin to see change in our thinking patterns. We will be able to resist those temptations which have plagued us.

When you are tempted to think that you have not been delivered from a curse, confess the Word of God in **Galatians 3:13, "He redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."**

When you are tempted to think that you cannot do something, confess the scripture, **"I can do all things through Him who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13)**

When you are tempted to think that you are a weak and defeated believer remind yourself that you are **seated with Christ Jesus in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 2:6)**

When you are faced with financial struggles, confess **"My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)**

When faced with sickness, confess that **"By His wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)**

If you don't know the Word of God you can't confess it. If you don't read it you can't know it.

You may need deliverance in a certain area before these principles can be put into practice in your life but you must know them and be ready to practice them.

Now back to our text in Ephesians 6.

## **II. THE BATTLE IS AGAINST AN ORGANIZED ENEMY**

Notice what Paul says we wrestle against.

*"Against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

What do we know about our enemy and his kingdom?

### **A. The leader of his kingdom, the Devil**

We know that he goes by many names, Lucifer, the deceiver, the devil, the tempter, the accuser of the brethren, the evil one, and Satan which means "adversary." None of them are very flattering. He uses multiple ID cards to avoid detection.

Satan is a spirit being. He and his demons have a will and emotions. They possess knowledge. But there are several things that are very important that we know about him.

**He is not omnipresent.** The devil is not everywhere at once. Yes, he has demons sent all over but the devil himself is not everywhere present as God is.

**He is not omniscient.** He does not know everything. He depends on his demons to gather information as an underground informant but he doesn't know everything. The Bible tells us two things that he knows:

That there is one God (**James 2:19**) and that  
His time is short! (**Revelations 12:12**)

The devil is a fallen angel who used to be an arch angel before pride led to his expulsion from heaven. Beware of pride, it turned heaven's best angel into a demon!

#### **B. The agents of his kingdom, demons**

The devil doesn't work alone, he has a whole kingdom of demons working with him and serving him. The Bible tells us that when Satan fell from heaven he took 1/3 of the heavenly host with him.

Demons are like persons but without bodies. They have a will and knowledge and are always looking for a body to occupy and carry out their evil desires. Their purpose is to serve and worship Satan and to promote the plans of his kingdom.

#### **C. The hierarchy of his kingdom**

The devil's kingdom is very organized. The list that Paul gives is likely a list of the hierarchy of the enemy's kingdom. There are rulers, then authorities, powers and spiritual forces. This is a descending list of power and authority. There is a strict chain of command in the kingdom of darkness.

There are territorial leaders. Daniel speaks of the battle with the "prince of Persia." There are demons assigned to control certain areas, cities, towns, etc. Just as the government has leaders assigned to certain areas, the devil has his own organization.

There are also likely special agents to promote certain activities of the kingdom. There may be a minister of sorcery, a minister of homosexuality, a minister of false religions. The Bible doesn't tell us all these things and we won't spend much time on what the Bible doesn't tell us. But it is clear that his kingdom operates with organization.

#### **D. The tactics of his kingdom**

More importantly for us to know is the way he operates. How does the kingdom of darkness operate?

Demons are good historians. They like to remind us of our past. (We should be prepared to remind them of their future!)

They try to compel people to do bad things; drugs, sexual sins, stealing, killing, etc. They delight in causing someone to sin and then make the person feel guilty about what they have done and then lie to cover up!

His tactics are to make you feel dirty, unclean, tired, weak, defeated, discouraged, etc. Often when you want to read the Bible you get sleepy!

His demons produce restlessness, inner turmoil and a loss of peace. Ultimately, they try to bring death.

Demons like to operate in areas of sexual sin. They promote lust, pornography, unnatural sexual acts, etc.

They attack in areas of emotions and produce hatred, resentment, bitterness, and depression which is a spirit of heaviness.

They promote sicknesses, many of which are unable to be diagnosed or treated. Demons are behind false religions, cults and secret societies.

They are the masterminds behind fortune telling, palm-reading, horoscopes, Chinese medications (tea) and acupuncture. In the subsequent sessions we will talk about how to be delivered.

But above all the major weapon that the enemy uses against believers and unbelievers is LIES. The devil is a master liar. He has perfected the language of lying. In fact, the Bible tells us in **John 8:44**, “**When he lies he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**” This is his only real power, when he can get someone to believe his lies. He has thousands of them and if you need a special one he will make one up just for you. But most of them are so old that we should recognize them by now. “How can you be a child of God after...?” “You’ll never succeed.” “See I told you that you would fail...” “No one is watching, just do it.” “You can never be set free from that...” “You’ll never be healed.” “Don’t go to church today, after all you can worship God anywhere.” LIES, LIES, and MORE LIES. We must learn the truth that will set us free and stop listening to the lies of the devil.

### **III. THE BATTLE REQUIRES SPIRITUAL WEAPONS**

Let’s stop looking at the devil. We need to know some things about him but I don’t like to waste any more time on him than necessary. We will get a lot further looking towards Jesus!

We have seen that we have an enemy that has power and is organized. Left alone we would be defeated. But praise God we are not left alone! God has given us some powerful weapons.

#### **A. The weapons are God’s**

It tells us in verse 13 to put on the full armor of God. Paul goes on to list the weapons; they are spiritual weapons, not physical weapons. The fight is against a spiritual enemy and the weapons need to be spiritual weapons. Since the armor is from God I think it is sufficient, don’t you? He doesn’t get his weapons on the used black market; they are state-of-the-art. Don’t imagine that you can win with your own intellect or your own strength.

In **2 Corinthians 10:4** we are told that these weapons have divine power.

Let’s look at several weapons that are particularly relevant to our deliverance theme.

##### **1. The belt of truth**

After what we said about the major weapon that the enemy uses being lies, you can understand that this is one of our major weapons against him. **WE MUST LEARN TO STAND ON THE TRUTH. John 8:32** is so important, “**You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.**” When Satan comes with his lies, strike back with the truth!

##### **2. The breastplate of righteousness**

If we are going to defeat the devil we must be serious about righteousness. Sin in the life of a believer leaves us open to all sorts of attacks of the enemy. We will see later how particular sins allow the devil to gain an entrance in our lives. We must clothe ourselves with righteousness. If you’re not willing to live a righteous life, don’t come for deliverance prayers!

##### **3. The shield of faith**

We must fight the battle by faith. Faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Faith in the defeat of Satan on the cross of Calvary. Faith in the power of His Word. Faith in the blood of Christ. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God.” (**Romans 10:17**)

#### **4. The helmet of salvation**

We must be saved to experience deliverance. Deliverance is a covenant right of every child of God; without salvation you are waiting for your head to be chopped off!

#### **5. The sword of the Spirit**

The Bible says that this is the Word of God. We need the Word of God to fight against the lies of the devil! We must know it, read it, study it, memorize it and apply it to our lives. Again, if you're not willing to get into the Word of God, forget about deliverance.

#### **6. Spirit-empowered prayer**

We are commanded to pray always. One thing demons hate is praying Christians. Prayer confuses and destroys the plans of the enemy. He doesn't know what to do. When we pray we experience the protection of God.

#### **B. We are to use it fully**

We are to put it on fully! (verse 11, 13) We will never have victory in all areas of our lives if we fail to put on the armor fully. There are a lot of half-naked Christians running around, telling the world to look at their helmet of salvation and not noticing that the belt of truth has gone off with their trousers!

Believe and know with all your heart that no matter how the devil has defeated you, how he has cursed you, how he has captured you, God has given you a weapon and he wants you to use it fully.

### **IV. THE BATTLE IS ALREADY WON!**

The final principle is clearly implied in this passage and stated clearly in other scripture passages. JESUS HAS WON THE BATTLE! THE ENEMY IS A DEFEATED FOE. Our work is just to stand and keep the ground that he has already won!

Four times in this passage we are told to stand. This is not a battle for people sitting on a sofa! It is a battle for those who are awake. But just as important, this is a battle fought from the position of victory. We don't have to try to take new territory for God; we just have to stand on what He has done for us already! (Read more in Watchman Nee's book *Sit, Walk, Stand*)

Are you ready for the battle? Are you ready for victory? Are you ready to be a good soldier and fight for every inch that Christ has gained?! You can be set free in Christ!

## Session Two: The Actions of Deliverance

### INTRODUCTION

We have been talking about the spiritual battle in which we are all involved. We have looked at the arena of the battle, our minds and how to apply biblical principles to control our thoughts. We introduced the topic of strongholds in that session from 2 Corinthians 10. Now we want to explore that topic a little more and discover areas of our lives in which we need to tear down more strongholds, the action of the battle.

#### **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

### **I. STRONGHOLDS DESCRIBED**

#### **A. Our lives contain strongholds**

The key word in the Corinthians passage is *stronghold*. What is a stronghold?

In the first session we looked at strongholds as patterns of thinking in our minds; now we will broaden that scope somewhat and look at strongholds in general.

“Strongholds” are “a strongly fortified place.” In the natural world we might say it is simply that, a strong location that is fortified. We might think of a castle on a hill with high walls, or a bunker dug into the ground secure against the attacks of the enemy, or a big house surrounded by walls and guarded by security guards.

“Strongholds,” used only here in the New Testament, comes from the Greek word *to hold*, and has military connotations.

Specifically in scripture it is referring to a place where Satan has established a presence and built strong thoughts and ideas, wrong ways of perceiving reality, etc. We saw in the last session that we are commanded to tear down these strongholds and take our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ Jesus. We recognized that this is a difficult battle and requires spiritual weapons which have divine power to demolish strongholds. We are to replace the thoughts that are from the Devil with the truth that is found in the Word of God.

Now we want to go a bit deeper into this concept. We want to take another step back in what happens in our lives with strongholds and how they get there in the first place. The key idea that we want to see is found in Ephesians 4.

#### **Ephesians 4:26, 27**

*"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.*

#### **B. Strongholds come from footholds**

Notice very carefully what it tells us to do. We are commanded not to give the devil a *foothold*.

What is a foothold? Think of mountain climbing. The climber is scaling the rock looking for a small crack just big enough to insert his fingers so that he can move into that area. Or think of a knock at the door and you open just a crack but in comes a foot! You will have a difficult time to close the door again.

The word used in this verse is a legal term used to show jurisdiction over an area. KJV says not to give him a “place.” Place defines a space or territory. It gives Satan the right to be in that area. The Greek is *topos* which means metaphorically an occasion or opportunity.

So this foothold in our lives is a place where we have allowed Satan to come and establish a presence in our souls. This passage uses a very common foothold of the devil, anger. I believe that there are also many others which we examine later.

### **C. Strongholds produce bondage**

Follow carefully as I try to describe what happens with footholds and strongholds because it is very important for us to understand.

When we allow unconfessed sin in our lives such as anger, we give the devil a foothold, we give him a legal right to establish a presence in our lives or we give him a ground from which to work. Satan can't enter our souls unless we give him a place. He is a defeated foe.

And what does he do? He sets up camp. He builds a base of operations to do his dirty work in our lives.

**He builds strongholds on the ground that we have surrendered to him.** He begins to tell us things that are not true. He begins to influence our will, decisions and emotions in ways that are contrary to God's Word.

Furthermore, he uses this base to afflict our lives in many other ways such as: sickness, fear, depression, guilt, financial problems, marriage problems, evil habits and many others. We can call these things tormentors, things that afflict our lives and make us miserable people.

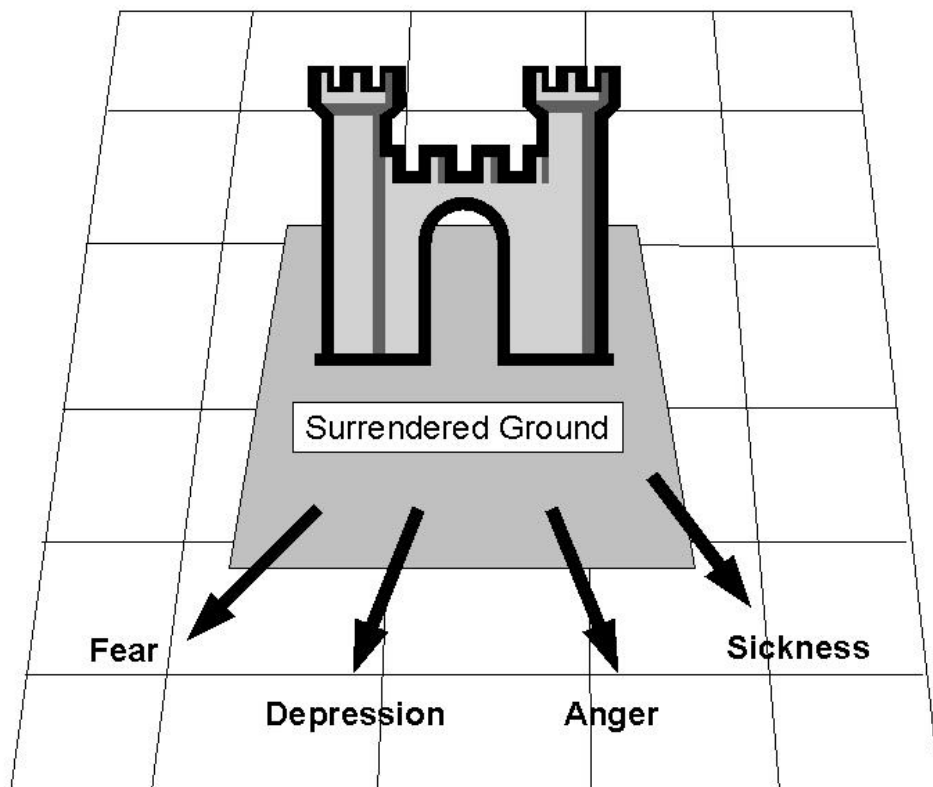
The scriptural basis for this is found in **Matthew 18:34** in a teaching about unforgiveness. Remember the story Jesus told of the man who had been forgiven of much by the master. Then he went out and refused to forgive his brother of just a small debt. The master became angry with him and turned him over to the jailers to be *tortured and tormented*. And then it says that this is how God treats us when we refuse to forgive!

So when we have given Satan a place and he has established a stronghold there he has the legal power over our lives to torment us. We have, in essence, handed ourselves over to the tormentors.

And oh, what devastation this brings to our lives. What pain, what struggle! And the mistake we often make in our lives is that we go after the tormentors rather than the foothold or ground we have given to the devil. We want to get rid of the surface problem rather than the root cause. We want to be freed from sickness or depression, we want an end to our financial or marital problems. We pray and pray and Satan just laughs at us since he had the legal right to be there.

We need deliverance to remove the place that we have given to the devil.

Before we talk about specific things that allow the Devil to build strongholds and how to regain the ground we have lost to Satan let me illustrate what I have been saying with a diagram.



This diagram represents our soul, divided into different areas for the purpose of illustration. In the shaded area we have surrendered ground to the enemy and there he has built his stronghold. From this position he sends out tormentors of fear, anger, depression, sickness, poverty, etc. It is useless to pray against the sickness because the devil has a place in our souls; we must remove the stronghold and then the tormentors will leave.

## **II. STRONGHOLDS DETECTED**

Now that we have understood the principle of how Satan can gain a stronghold in our lives through surrendered ground, we will now spend a great deal of time looking at specific areas in which we may have surrendered ground to the devil either knowingly or unknowingly. Let the Lord speak to you concerning any area that has affected your own life.

### **A. Anger**

The most immediate context of our text in Ephesians 4:25, 27 is dealing with anger. When we allow unresolved anger to be in our lives even overnight, it gives the devil ground. It gives him a place on which he sets up strongholds.

We need to recognize that unresolved anger is sin and will produce disastrous results in our lives. We cannot excuse it with a comment, "That's just the way I am" or "My father was like that." (A sure sign of an inherited sin!) We need to confess our anger and receive deliverance.

## **B. Bitterness**

Closely related to the sin of anger is the sin of bitterness. Perhaps bitterness is anger gone to seed. It is anger that continues to burn in us and eats away at our souls. This sin is devastating in our physical and spiritual lives. **Hebrews 12:15** says, “*See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*” Bitterness is something that starts as a root, but grows up to cause defilement. It will never remain stagnant; it will always continue growing and producing its deadly poison in our bodies.

**Ephesians 4:31**, “*Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger.*”

**2 Corinthians 2:10, 11** speaks of the direct relationship that unforgiveness has to giving the devil a place in our lives. “*...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.” Bitterness is one of the “schemes” of the devil that has affected many believers.

I have seen many, many Christians who were bitter people and they suffered for it. One sister who received salvation in our church had been very bitter towards her husband who had hurt her a lot emotionally. As a result she struggled with severe depression and spend a lot of money on drugs. She used drugs to sleep and drugs to wake up. When she received the Lord, she forgave her husband, the bitterness was gone and the depression was cured instantly! She had taken back the surrendered ground caused by bitterness.

The solution to bitterness is forgiveness.

Forgiveness is one of the most important steps to be set free from the control of the enemy of our souls. Yet, so many believers refuse to forgive those who have wronged them. This brings the curse of God in the sense of the “tormentors.”

Forgiveness is a *choice* that we make; it is an act of our will; not our feelings. If you wait until you feel like forgiving you will never forgive. It is a choice that we choose to make on the basis of what God has done in forgiving us. It does not mean that we forget what has been done to us, but it means that we set the other person free. They can no longer control us and bring confusion and pain to our lives.

Many people need to forgive themselves. Others need to forgive parents, spouses, those who have sexually abused them, etc. Some even are bitter at God and need to forgive Him!

Think about your own life today, is there someone who wronged you from your family, your boyfriend, your wife, etc? If you have not forgiven them completely you have allowed the devil a foothold in your life.

## **C. Rebellion**

Another area in which we can give ground to Satan is rebellion. This is the root problem of many other sins; deciding to live life my own way apart from God, rebelling against his authority. We may also rebel against human authority which God has established for our good, our parents, government, church leaders, husbands or employers.

Authority has been established by God and is for our good (**Romans 13:1-7**). It provides an “umbrella” of protection over our lives and God expects us to submit to all authority over us.

**1 Samuel 12:23** says, “*Rebellion is like the sin of divination (witchcraft, KJV).*”

Why is rebellion like witchcraft? Because both of them open us up to the direct influence of the devil in our lives. Rebellion takes us out from under the protection of God’s appointed authority in our lives and exposes us to the attacks of the devil. We



surrender ground to the devil when we rebel and from that foothold he will send tormentors.

Many believers view rebellion as a small issue that is joked about. They think that it doesn't hurt to talk evil about the government leaders, the boss, their husband, their parents or even the pastor. They might even boast, "No one can tell me what to do!" But God's Word makes rebellion a serious sin. **Numbers 16** gives the account of the rebellion of Korah in which he and another 250 men challenged the authority of Moses. The result? The death of more than 14,000!

In **Deuteronomy 21:18-21** God gives the death penalty to a son who is rebellious and will not obey his father and mother. **Disrespect for parents** is just as serious and is a violation of the **fifth commandment**. (See Deuteronomy 5:16 and Ephesians 6:1-3) This is a commandment with a promise, "**so that you may live long and it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you,**" and an implied curse for disobedience.

Have you examined your life for the sin of rebellion and confessed all known sin?

#### **D. Sexual sins**

Sexual sins are another area in which many of us have given room for Satan to work in our lives. It may be through immorality or through events even from our childhood, but if allowed to remain it will give Satan a foothold.

**1 Corinthians 6:18** says, "*Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.*"

Demons are able to enter our lives through sexual sins. Even cases of incest and rape can provide entrances for demons and need to be cleansed. If you have been involved in fornication, adultery, homosexuality or any other sexual perversion you have given ground to the devil in your life. Specific and thorough repentance is needed for each case of sexual sin.

#### **E. Involvement in the occult**

Often times our lives are oppressed because of some involvement in the occult world. In some cases it may be direct involvement in playing occultic games, using an Ouija board, etc. In other cases it may be less direct or by being in close contact with those who are involved in Satanism. Involvement in the occult world is a direct doorway for the devil to take control of our lives.

The word *occult* actually means, "hidden" or "covered over."

There are three branches in the occult:

##### **1. Witchcraft**

Witchcraft deals with power, desire to control people and circumstances, to intimidate, manipulate and dominate. Martial arts, acupuncture, etc. fall under this category. They have a power but it is not of God.

##### **2. Divination**

Divination deals with knowledge and a desire to know the future. Fortune-telling is one example of this; palm reading, ESP, horoscopes, also false religions or cults that claim special revelation that doesn't come from the Bible. Any involvement with Jehovah's witnesses, Mormons, Moonies (Unification church) or the New Age Movement opens one to the influence of the devil. Also the Eastern religions like TM, Yoga, Buddhism, etc. fall under this category.

##### **3. Sorcery**

This branch deals with physical objects: charms, beads Ouija boards, books. It impacts the senses with things such as rock music and drugs. Things which are

the expression of superstition like figures of saints or lucky coins are included here. Many people have objects in their homes that are connected to the occult world and have power to influence even the atmosphere in your home. They need to be destroyed.

Any occultic involvement is actually idolatry, a violation of the first commandment. Idolatry is acknowledging any other God; seeking any other source of revelation than from the Almighty God. *Leviticus 19:26, "Do not practice divination or sorcery."*

There was a time that my wife was tormented by various problems, one of which was serious reactions when in the presence of people worshipping the Lord. As she prayed about this one day, she asked the Holy Spirit to reveal to her any such involvement in the occult. Right away she remembered a time when she was a young person and had a Hindu friend. This friend invited her to wedding festivities at the local temple. They quite innocently took their shoes off (an act of worship in eastern religions), rang bells, bowed in front of the idol and then ate. For years she had forgotten it but God revealed to her as she asked him to bring any such thing to her remembrance. She repented of that involvement and was instantly released from that bondage.

Confess and repent of any involvement in the occult world and ask God to reveal anything unknown to you.

#### **F. Ancestral sins, sins of our forefathers Deuteronomy 5:9 (also Exodus 20:5; 34:6, 7; Numbers 14:18)**

There is a direct connection between many of the sins we struggle with and the sins of our forefathers. We receive or inherit from our parents both good and bad things, blessings and curses. The sin of your parents can provide a place in your own life for the devil to afflict you.

**Exodus 20:5**, *"for I, the Lord, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."*

Does this mean that we are *guilty* for what our parents did? No, God holds them responsible for their own sins, but we are *affected* by them. If I beat my child in anger and use filthy language to him I can expect that in some way my sin will affect his life. The same is true if we look back at our parents. If they were involved in sexual immorality it can affect our lives. If they violated God's plan for marriage by having more than one wife or participating in divorce, it can affect us. If they sinned by having a low self-esteem they likely passed it on to us. If there was child abuse, alcohol abuse, anger, immorality, depression, lack of self-control, rebellion, etc. it is very likely to be passed on to the children.

The Bible has many examples of this principle. Abraham's half-truths led to outright lies in his children. (**Genesis 20:2; 26:7; 27:32; 37:32**) Jacob was favored by his mother and when he had children he favored Joseph. Jacob was a schemer and deceiver; his sons did likewise and even deceived him about Joseph's death. The different tribes took on the characteristics of their originators and were either blessed or cursed because of their forefathers (see **Genesis 49**).

We can each probably think of examples in our own life. I was blessed with Godly parents and for the most part have received only blessings from them. But I have also inherited their sins and weaknesses. For many years I struggled with procrastination and could not seem to change that sin in my life. One day the Lord revealed to me that it was the sin of my father. He was a "great" procrastinator and we often joked about it

in our family. When I repented of that, the power of the sin was broken in my life and I had the power to change.

In such cases we need to confess our sin (for we have allowed the devil to continue working in our lives) and also to confess that our parents were involved in the sin. We should ask God to break the connection between our family sins and the sins of our own lives.

The Old Testament also has numerous illustrations of people who confessed their sin and also the sins of their forefathers. **Nehemiah 1:6**, “*I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my fathers house, have committed against you.*”

Scripture teaches that we are affected by the sins of our parents to the third and fourth generation. Each of us has two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents and 16 great-great-grandparents. That’s thirty people in total. There is the possibility for inheriting a lot of sin from those thirty people!

Think seriously about the sins you struggle with and ask God to show you if there is any relationship with the sins of your parents.

### **G. National sins**

Just as a family can have particular sins that follow the members of the family, so also a nation can have sins that are particular areas of strongholds for the members of that nation. They are sins that seem to be in the air we breath and often are very difficult for us to observe. But they affect us and in many cases may result in God’s curse against us. We are told in scripture that different nations have different “princes” over them in the spiritual world (**Daniel 10:20**). This is why we can see a particular nation that is characterized by bloodshed; others by sexual promiscuity, greed, anger, etc. What are specific sins that have been prevalent in your nation?

### **H. Curses**

A major area in which the devil is able to come into our lives is the area of curses. Many people are living under curses and are not even aware of what is happening. Blessings are powerful and curses are likewise powerful.

#### **1. Signs of a curse**

I will only list these 7 indications of a curse. This does not mean that in every case presented here a curse is involved. But it should serve as a warning sign to us when we see these things. (Read Derek Prince’s excellent book, *Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose*, for more information.)

- a. Mental/emotional breakdowns**
- b. Repeated/chronic sickness**
- c. Barrenness/miscarriages/related female problems**
- d. Marriage breakdown/family alienation**
- e. Continual financial problems**
- f. Being “accident prone”**
- g. History of suicides/unnatural or untimely deaths**

#### **2. Causes of curses**

Every curse must have a cause. (**Proverbs 26:2**) If we are to be released from the curse we should identify the cause and repent of it. **Deuteronomy 27:15-26** gives a list of many curses that could come on God’s people if they didn’t follow him carefully. For our study we will look at 13 sources of curses.

### **a. Involvement in idolatry**

We have previously looked at this subject. I will only add that any involvement in the occult is breaking the first commandment and opening oneself to a serious curse.

### **b. Disrespect for parents (Ephesians 6:1-3)**

The fifth commandment clearly states that we are to honor our father and mother so that it may go well with us. Implied in that is the fact that when we do not honor our parents, we will receive a curse instead of a blessing from God.

To honor our parents doesn't mean that we always agree with them but we must show love, respect and honor. Many people don't honor their parents and can't understand why they are not experiencing blessings in their lives.

### **c. Oppression and injustice against the poor and the weak**

This can take many forms in discrimination, showing favoritism to the rich, tribal favoritism, etc. But one of the big areas in which people receive God's curse is in the area of *abortion*.

Abortion is murder against the life of a helpless child who cannot protect itself; an act which grieves the heart of God and places us under a curse.

### **d. Abuse or perversion of the sexual relationship**

This covers not only adultery and fornication but homosexuality, lesbianism and other unnatural acts. **Leviticus 18:22** condemns homosexuality. We have already looked at this subject briefly. Here we will touch on one major perversion of the sexual relationship, *polygamy*.

Polygamy also is a violation of God's principles of one man and one wife that is prevalent in Africa. Nearly all Africans have at least a polygamous relationship in their ancestors. This sin violates the most holy of all human relationships, the marriage relationship and brings disastrous results. Polygamy brings many curses upon ones life and many sins that are related to this sin.

The sin of polygamy brings a spirit of lust that often destroys and destabilizes the home. It also brings a spirit of rejection and suicide. Many children feel rejected in a polygamous home and many people struggle to love and be loved as a result.

Polygamy and witchcraft often dwell together in the same home. This involvement in witchcraft often leads to curses of poverty to the children.

Incest (sexual relationships between close relatives) and rape is common in polygamous homes. This can lead to abortions or children born out of wedlock.

Lying is common in polygamous homes. The children learn to lie from the mothers. Jealousy and envy are also common along with unforgiveness.

If either partner in a marriage has been involved in polygamy their marriage can be affected. There may be a continual habit of the husband sleeping with other women or marrying them. This is a strong curse which affects many people and deliverance is needed. For many it is a sin that is inherited from our fathers or grandfathers.

In other cultures divorce or other sexual sins are prevalent. Divorce is likewise a tragic breaking of God's design for the relationship between a man and his wife. Malachi speaks about God's intense hatred of this sin.

*"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. Malachi 2:16*

#### **e. Anti-Semitism**

In **Genesis 12:3** God tells Abraham that those who curse you I will curse. There are still people and nations that are under the curse of God for their attitude towards the Jewish people.

#### **f. Trusting in self, man, and departing from the Lord**

**Jeremiah 17:5**, *"Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength whose heart departs from the LORD."*

We can quickly stop walking by the Spirit of God and start trusting in our own flesh, our own mind, our own reasoning, our own ability. This is carnality and brings with it a curse. Paul warns,

*All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Galatians 3:10*

#### **g. Robbing God**

Malachi says that we are under a curse because we have robbed God with tithes and offerings.

*"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse-- the whole nation of you-- because you are robbing me. Malachi 3:8, 9*

Many believers take tithing and offerings to be a joke but to God it is a serious business.

#### **h. Rebellion against authority**

God has established authority and **Romans 13** makes it clear that rebellion against the authority God has established is rebellion against him. As we have already seen, rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft.

#### **i. Self-imposed curses**

These are curses spoken upon ourselves with our own lips. Our words have such great power that even idle words can affect us.

I used to say, "Every time I go to the city I get a headache." And it would happen. Then I realize that I was making myself experience pain with my own lips.

Other statements that can be self-imposed curses: "It's driving me crazy." "I don't think I'll ever get pregnant." "I'm just a clumsy person." "I can't sing." "I can't afford to tithe." These are things that you may say lightly but they become curses that will actually happen.

Often when people join secret societies such as the freemasons they take oaths and impose upon themselves curses that can even be passed to family members and descendants.

## **j. Curses from servants of Satan**

This includes all forms of witch doctors, medicine men, witches, etc. who put curses on people. They can carry out curses on people and even kill people with curses. A believer walking in obedience to God is protected from this kind of curse. But if you are walking in disobedience or if it happened before you were saved you need deliverance. Your family may have received a curse that is still devastating the family in finances or even in life itself. I have shared with a sister who has lost nearly every member of her family to strange and untimely deaths.

## **k. Soulsh (fleshly) talk**

We don't fully realize the power of our tongue and it is therefore one of the ways that the devil gains a foothold in the lives of many believers.

**James 3:10** says that out of the same mouth comes both blessing and cursing. **Proverbs 18:21** says that our tongues have the “**power of life and death.**” Many believers use their tongues to bring death to others and to themselves. **Titus 3:2**, “**Speak evil of no one.**” How many of us are guilty of that one?

**James 4:11, 12**, “*Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it...But you - who are you to judge your neighbor?*” In this verse James makes it clear that we are not to speak against our brethren in Christ.

In **Matthew 12:36** Jesus says that on the day of judgment men will have to “*give account...for every careless word they have spoken.*”

Wrong speech is direct disobedience to God and releases the Devil's power. When we speak evil of someone it is like cursing them. Evil speech corrupts you as a person and also unleashes the enemy's power to work in the body to which you belong.

**Proverbs 13:3**, “*He who speaks rashly comes to ruin.*”

Often times we can also receive a curse from those in authority over us through their words. Many times an authority figure says, “You will never succeed.” That is a curse and will follow you. We should be careful if we are in positions of authority not to use such words.

## **l. Soulsh (fleshly) prayers**

Soulsh talk deals with the things we say to one another; soulsh prayers deal with the things we say to God.

**Proverbs 28:9**, “*If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable.*”

Our prayers are powerful; they will have an effect, either negative or positive. We should guard against accusing people in prayer or seeking to control them. Manipulation is soulsh, not godly.

Begin your prayers by giving thanks for the person about whom you are praying.

## **m. Unfruitfulness in our Christian life**

**Hebrews 6:8** speaks of a believer that continually receives good rain but doesn't produce a crop when it says “*Land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.*”

Spiritual barrenness brings a curse. You may think it is a small thing just to come Sunday after Sunday drinking in a good sermon, but if your life is not being transformed and producing good fruit you are under a curse of God.

These are many of the areas in which Satan can gain an entrance in our lives, establish his stronghold and begin to torment us through many afflictions. There are so many that it can almost be overwhelming. But the good news is coming...our God has come to set us free!

### **III. STRONGHOLDS DESTROYED**

Strongholds can be destroyed. Hallelujah! Our text in 2 Corinthians says that we have weapons that are able to *demolish strongholds*. No matter in what areas you have given the devil a foothold, you can be delivered! You can be set free in Jesus Christ!

Steps to overcome strongholds and regain the ground you have given to the devil.

#### **A. Confession**

**1 John 1:9**, *“If we confess our sins He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

Confession is simply to agree with. It is to acknowledge that what God says about us is wrong. That His Word is true. That rebellion is as witchcraft, that sexual immorality is a sin against our body which is a temple of the Holy Spirit, etc...

There is power in our words as we confess our sin. It is the beginning of victory.

**Revelation 12:11** says, *“They overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony.”*

In the next part you will have an opportunity to say prayers of repentance to God in many different areas. Be as specific as possible, name the sins in which you have been involved.

#### **B. Ask God to take back the ground**

When we have allowed the devil to gain ground in our lives we need to ask God to restore or take back that ground. We are told to tear down the strongholds but God is the One that sends Satan fleeing.

**Psalm 23:3**, *“He restores (literally returns to the starting point) my soul.”*

**Joel 2: 25**, *“I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten.”*

Recognize that Jesus has provided for our victory. No place that the devil has taken in your life is rightfully his. Satan has been there in your life as an unlawful resident, claiming his place only because of some sin which allowed him in. Now he must go in Jesus' name and God himself will take his rightful place in your soul.

Jesus has broken the power of sin and every curse upon our lives. **Galatians 3:13, 14** says, *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse of the law by becoming a curse for us...He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit.”*

#### **C. Destroy strongholds with truth**

When God had taken back the ground that we have given to the devil it is our role to destroy the stronghold which he has established there. We talked in more detail about this in session one. In **John 8:32** the Bible says, *“You will know the truth and the truth will make you free.”*

**John 17:17**, *“Your word is truth.”*

The most powerful weapon which we have against all the wicked lies of Satan is the *truth*. We need to learn how to fight lies with truth. In the first session we used the illustration of how we think about ourselves and beginning to speak the truth of God that we are wonderful creations of God instead of allowing Satan to tell us otherwise. By reading, memorizing, meditating on and confessing the Word of God we begin to build strongholds of truth in our lives. This is the part of taking thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. We build a new stronghold, a stronghold of truth in which every thought is in conformity to the Word of God. This is when we begin to really have victory over many areas of our lives.

The principles of this session can instantaneously set you free from many problems with which you have been struggling. On the other hand it can be a long process as we ask God to search our lives and begin to seriously deal with the long held ground that Satan has occupied in our lives. But it is exciting to me because I know that it can set us free.

In what areas of your life have you allowed Satan to have a foothold? What are the strongholds that need to be torn down? Allow God to change you.



## Session Three: Practicals in Deliverance

(Prayers taken from *The Bondage Breaker*, by Neil Anderson pages 187-203.)

We will now go through prayers of deliverance, asking you to repeat everything that we are saying. Remember that confession with our mouths is very important. Be as specific as you can when you are given opportunity to insert your own words. At the end of each prayer we will take a moment to allow God to minister to us concerning that specific area. After we have finished all the prayers we will pray for release from the powers of darkness.

### Step One: Counterfeit versus Real

“Dear Heavenly Father, I ask You to reveal to me all the occultic practices, false religions and false teachers with which I have knowingly or unknowingly been involved.

“Lord, I confess that I have participated in \_\_\_\_\_. I ask Your forgiveness, and I renounce \_\_\_\_\_ as counterfeit to true Christianity.”

### Step Two: Deception versus Truth

“Dear Heavenly Father, I know that You desire truth in the inner self and that facing this truth is the way of liberation (**John 8:32**). I acknowledge that I have been deceived by the father of lies (**John 8:44**) and that I have deceived myself (**1 John 1:8**). I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that You, heavenly Father, will rebuke all deceiving spirits by virtue of the shed blood and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And since by faith I have received you into my life and am now seated with Christ in the heavenlies (**Ephesians 2:6**), I command all deceiving spirits to depart from me. I now ask the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth (**John 16:13**). I ask you to “**search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts, and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way**” (**Psalms 139:23, 24**). In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

### Doctrinal Affirmation

“I recognize that there is only one true and living God (**Exodus 20:2, 3**), who exists as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that He is worthy of all honor, praise and worship as the Creator, Sustainer and Beginning and End of all things (**Revelation 4:11; 5:9; Isaiah 43:1, 7, 21**).

“I recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us (**John 1:1, 41**). I believe that He came to destroy the work of Satan (**1 John 3:8**), that He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public display of them, having triumphed over them on the cross (**Colossians 2:15**).

“I believe that God has proven His love for me, because when I was still a sinner Christ died for me (**Romans 5:8**). I believe that He delivered me from the domain of darkness and transferred me to His kingdom, and in Him I have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (**Colossians 1:13, 14**).

“I believe that I am now a child of God (**1 John 3:1-3**), and that I am seated with Christ in the heavenlies (**Ephesians 2:6**). I believe that I was saved by the grace of God through faith, that it was a gift and not the result of any works on my part (**Ephesians 2:8**).

“I choose to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (**Ephesians 6:10**). I put no confidence in the flesh (**Philippians 3:3**), for the weapons of my warfare are not of the flesh (**2 Corinthians 10:4**). I put on the whole armor of God (**Ephesians 6:10-17**), and I resolve to stand firm in my faith and resist the evil one.

“I believe that Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (**Matthew 28:18**), and that He is the head over all rule and authority (**Colossians 2:10**). I believe that Satan and his demons are subject to me in Christ because I am a member of Christ’s body (**Ephesians 1:19-23**). I therefore obey the command to resist the devil (**James 4:7**), and I command him in the name of Christ to leave my presence.

“I believe that apart from Christ I can do nothing (**John 15:5**), so I declare my dependence on Him. I choose to abide in Christ in order to bear much fruit and glorify the Lord (**John 15:8**). I announce to Satan that Jesus is my Lord (**1 Corinthians 12:3**), and I reject any counterfeit gifts or works of Satan in my life.

“I believe that the truth will set me free (**John 8:32**), and that walking in the light is the only path of fellowship (**1 John 1:7**). Therefore, I stand against Satan’s deception by taking every thought captive in obedience to Christ (**2 Corinthians 10:5**). I declare that the Bible is the only authoritative standard (**2 Timothy 3:15-17**). I choose to speak the truth in love (**Ephesians 4:15**).

“I choose to present my body as an instrument of righteousness, a living and holy sacrifice, and I renew my mind by the Living Word of God in order that I may prove that the will of God is good, acceptable and perfect (**Romans 6:13; 12:1,2**).

“I ask my heavenly Father to fill me with His Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 5:18**), to lead me into all truth (**John 16:13**) and to empower my life so that I may live above sin and not carry out the desires of the flesh (**Galatians 5:16**). I crucify the flesh (**Galatians 5:24**) and choose to obey the greatest commandment to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul and mind, and to love my neighbor as myself (**Matthew 22:37-39**).”

### **Step Three: Bitterness versus Forgiveness**

“Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You for the riches of Your kindness, forbearance and patience, knowing that Your kindness has led me to repentance (**Romans 2:4**). I confess that I have not extended that same patience and kindness toward others who have offended me, but instead I have harbored bitterness and resentment. I pray that during this time of self-examination You would bring to mind only those people that I have not forgiven in order that I may do so (**Matthew 18:35**). I also pray that if I have offended others You would bring to mind only those people from whom I need to seek forgiveness and the extent to which I need to seek it (**Matthew 5:23, 24**). I ask this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.”

(Allow the Lord to remind you of those you need to forgive.)

“Lord, I forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for (offenses – be specific).

“Lord, I release all these people to You and my right to seek revenge. I choose not to hold on to my bitterness and anger, and I ask You to heal my damaged emotions. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

### **Step Four: Rebellion versus Submission**

“Dear Heavenly Father, You have said that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry (**2 Samuel 15:23**). I know that in action and attitude I have sinned against You with a rebellious heart. I ask Your forgiveness for my rebellion and pray that by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ all ground gained by evil spirits because of rebelliousness would be canceled. I pray that You will shed light on all my ways that I may know the full extent of my rebelliousness and choose to adopt a submissive spirit and a servant’s heart. In the name of Christ Jesus my Lord. Amen”

(Allow the Lord a moment to reveal any area in which you have not been submissive.)

“Lord, I agree I have been rebellious toward \_\_\_\_\_. I choose to be submissive and obedient to Your Word. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

#### **Step Five: Pride versus Humility**

“Dear Heavenly Father, You have said that pride goes before destruction and an arrogant spirit before stumbling (**Proverb 16:18**). I confess that I have not denied myself, picked up my cross daily and followed You (**Mathew 16:24**). In so doing I have given ground to the enemy in my life. I have believed that I could be successful and live victoriously by my own strength and resources. I now confess that I have sinned against You by placing my will before Yours and by centering my life around self instead of You. I now renounce the self life and by so doing cancel all the ground that has been gained in my members by the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that You will guide me so that I will do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but that with humility of mind I will regard others as more important than myself (**Philippians 2:3**). Enable me through love to serve others and in honor prefer others (**Romans 12:10**). I ask this in the name of Christ Jesus my Lord. Amen.”

(Allow the Lord a moment to reveal any area in which you have been proud.)

“Lord, I agree I have been prideful by \_\_\_\_\_. I choose to humble myself and place all my confidence in You. Amen.”

#### **Step Six: Bondage versus Freedom (Habitual sin)**

“Dear Heavenly Father, You have told us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts (**Romans 13:14**). I acknowledge that I have given in to fleshly lusts which wage war against my soul (**1 Peter 2:11**). I thank You that in Christ my sins are forgiven, but I have transgressed Your holy law and given Satan an opportunity to wage war in my members (**Ephesians 4:27; James 4:1; 1 Peter 5:8**).

“I come before Your presence to acknowledge these sins and to seek Your cleansing (**1 John 1:9**) that I may be freed from the bondage of sin (**Galatians 5:1**). I now ask You to reveal to my mind the ways that I have transgressed Your moral law and grieved the Holy Spirit. I ask You to reveal to my mind every sexual use of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness. In Jesus’ precious name I pray, Amen.”

“I now confess these sins to You and claim through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ my forgiveness and cleansing. I cancel all ground that evil spirits have gained through my willful involvement in sin. I ask this in the wonderful name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.”

#### **Step Seven: Acquiescence versus Renunciation (Sins of ancestors/curses)**

“Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You that I am a new creation in Christ. I desire to obey Your command to honor my mother and my father, but I also acknowledge that my heritage has not been perfect. I ask you to reveal to my mind the sins and iniquities of my ancestors in order to confess, renounce and forsake them. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”

“Dear Heavenly Father, I come to You as Your child, purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. I here and now reject and disown all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified and raised with Christ and who sits with Him in heavenly places, I reject any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and

committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. I now command every familiar spirit and every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ that is in or around me to flee my presence and never to return. I now ask You, heavenly Father, to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I submit my body as an instrument of righteousness, a living sacrifice, that I may glorify You in my body. All this I do in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”

### **End of Prayers**

Now that we have prayed, we will ask the Holy Spirit to take control and to expel from this place any and every evil spirit that has kept us in bondage. Take time to worship the Lord and allow His cleansing in your life. You may experience different sensations in your body as you are cleansed. You should release any demons inside of you by opening your mouth and breathing out. We will be moving around to lay hands on you and pray during this time.

“Holy Spirit, we invite you to come and take complete control. We have confessed our sins before Your holy presence and now invited Your cleansing to come. Remove any unclean spirit from our bodies. Heal any sicknesses caused by sin and fill us anew at this moment completely and totally with Your spirit. Amen.”

## Session Four: Walking in Deliverance

### INTRODUCTION

We preached the Gospel in a town and a drunkard got saved. He was delivered from the bondage of alcohol and his life changed. He started to look like a decent man and we were all amazed at the transformation in his life. But later he went back to his drinking and now he looks worse than ever before.

God did a work among us through the previous prayers that He wants to continue. It is a tremendous thing to be delivered from the bondage of the past, to be free at last, to be the person that God has called us to be. But now we are to walk in deliverance. We are to take the steps required to continue to experience all that God wants for us. We must be careful to maintain the deliverance that He has provided for us. No one admires a backslider. We should never desire to go back to where we were.

### Hebrews 5:11-6:12

*We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

*Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.*

*Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned. Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case-- things that accompany salvation. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. (Hebrews 5:11-6:12)*

### I. RECOGNIZE DELIVERANCE AS BASIC (5:11-6:3)

When we have experienced deliverance in our lives we feel good. It seems like we have reached a high level of maturity. But scripture teaches otherwise.

#### A. Deliverance is a foundational doctrine (6:1, 2)

Before we look at some of the teaching of this passage notice that Paul is challenging the listeners to move on to maturity in Christ. He says that they should leave the teachings of “milk” and the “*elementary teachings*.” Then he lists some of the foundational truths of God’s Word.

“**Repentance from acts that lead to death**” is one of them. And this is the essence of deliverance, recognizing and repenting of acts that lead to death and bondage. We

received deliverance because we repented of areas in our lives, mostly from the past, that were not right.

It is great to be delivered, but recognize that these are not “advanced” teachings; they are for infants in Christ! Deliverance should be taught to new believers so that they can finish with the past and move on to great things in Jesus!

## **B. Deliverance must be maintained**

If you have been delivered from any bondage in your life let me tell you that the devil is not happy. He will be back! He will try to come again in that area of your life. You are responsible to keep him out! You need to stand and maintain the deliverance that Christ has provided for you. We will look at several things that you can do from this passage. I also would encourage you to do several things:

### **1. Continue asking God to search your life**

There may be areas about which He has not yet spoken to you. Allow Him to continue delivering you. You have learned the basic principles but may need to review what we have been learning.

### **2. You may need to share with your pastor or a spiritual leader to gain victory in certain areas**

You may have prayed the prayers but feel that you want to share more about your life with someone and pray together again... do so!

### **3. Work actively at building God’s strongholds in your life**

Search the scriptures about the problem that held you in bondage. Get to know the spiritual principles behind it and what God’s plan is for you in that area.

You must work to continue in deliverance. Don’t think that a seminar alone will set you free for the rest of your life. I have found that many people want to be prayed for, but don’t want to work to maintain their deliverance. You must do your part.

## **II. RECOGNIZE GOD’S PLAN FOR GROWTH**

The theme of this whole passage is that God desires growth in His people.

### **A. We need to grow to be teachers**

In verse 12 the writer makes it clear that he expected that at this point in their spiritual lives they should be able to teach others. Instead they still needed to be taught elementary things. They were still taking milk.

There is nothing wrong with milk at the proper time. Mothers delight in feeding milk to an infant. But if the child is two years old and still taking only milk it represents a serious problem!

Needing to be taught is a sign of infancy. This does not mean that we ever reach a level of not needing teaching, but we should learn what we are taught and then be able to teach it to others. If you are really going to grasp the things of God it will happen when you begin to nurture another believer. When you start to share what you have learned you learn it even better.

It takes time to become a teacher but the church is in desperate need of them today. You have been delivered so that you can grow up and teach others.

## **B. Continual feeding on milk produces infants (verse 13)**

Many believers live on milk. Every week they are living at the same level as before. They hear messages again and again about salvation but they don't go deeper in the Word of God. They become spiritual infants. Year after year they need to be reminded to be faithful in prayer. They need to be reminded every six months to continue tithing. And pastors spend much of their time changing their diapers! We need to move on.

## **C. The goal of growth is maturity (verse 14)**

We do not want to remain infants in the Christian life. We want to grow on to maturity. The scripture says that "*solid food is for the mature.*" The word *mature* implies growth, stability and wisdom. It is also translated "*perfect*" in some versions. This is not sinless perfection but it means that the person has grown up. He is an adult spiritually. This is someone who can be trusted; someone who will not drift from day to day, someone who has learned to control his thoughts and his speech, who is consistent in his study of the Word and is passing on his wisdom to others.

## **D. Three signs of maturity (verse 14)**

### **1. Constant use of the Word**

The spiritually mature person is a person of the Word. A person who uses the Word "**constantly.**" They don't wait to be fed; they learn to feed themselves. It is not just listening to the Word on Sunday morning; the mature person uses the Word constantly.

Constant use of the Word of God is required if you are going to grow strong spiritually. What do you need to do with the Word of God?

#### **a. Read it**

You need to be reading the Word of God to know the mind of God. It is foolish to pray about God's will if you are not reading His Word. Read much of it. Find a way of reading the Bible that speaks to you on a regular basis and do it constantly. Read it carefully. Read it consistently. Have a plan to read all of it. Read it!

This will help you to know the thoughts of God. You will learn who He is, how He acts, what He thinks. You will learn to know God.

#### **b. Memorize it**

Put the scripture in your mind. Some who have been saved for several years yet can't quote more than 5 verses of scripture! They don't even have a chance when Satan comes with all of his power. Memory work is not just for children. Get God's Word into your mind.

Then when Satan tries to get an ungodly thought in your mind, RESIST IT, REFUSE IT! TAKE IT CAPTIVE!

#### **c. Meditate on it**

This is where God's Word begins to really act with power in your life. By carefully considering what it is saying, by personalizing it and by internalizing it into your life.

#### **d. Confess it**

Speak the Word of God. When those thoughts come and you have learned the mind of God through the Word of God, speak the Word of God. The Bible says in **Revelation 12:11**, *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony.”*

Verbal confession will help you to stand on the truth of God’s Word. We must replace the garbage of Satan with truth. The Bible says, *“Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”* (**John 8: 32**) When we begin to get the truth into our lives we will begin to see change in our thinking patterns. We will be able to resist those temptations which have plagued us.

When you are tempted to think that you have not been delivered from a curse, confess the Word of God in **Galatians 3:13**, *“He redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.”*

When you are tempted to think that you cannot do something, confess the scripture, *“I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”* (**Philippians 4:13**)

When you are tempted to think that you are a weak and defeated believer remind yourself that you are *“Seated with Christ Jesus in the heavenly realms.”* (**Ephesians 2:6**)

When you are faced with financial struggles, confess *“My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”* (**Philippians 4:19**)

When faced with illness, confess that *“By His wounds we are healed.”* (**Isaiah 53:5**)

When tempted to think lowly of yourself, confess that *“I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”* (**Psalms 139:14**)

When tempted to think that you don’t have a noteworthy gift, confess *“those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.”* (**1 Corinthians 12:22**)

If you don’t know the Word of God you can’t confess it. If you don’t read it you can’t know it.

Maturity requires constant use of the Word. It is not easy; it will take discipline and commitment. Many believers remain spiritual infants because they don’t get into the Word.

## **2. Self Training**

The second mark of a mature person is that they **“have trained themselves.”** They have learned the discipline of growing in Christ and are doing it themselves.

Many people are looking for an anointed person to lay hands on them and they will receive blessings, but few are willing to work at maintaining them. Many want to receive a spiritual blessing easily but don’t want to discipline themselves to continue in it.

If you are going to grow and become mature you need to train yourself to be godly. Your pastor cannot do this for you; no one else can do it for you; you must do it yourself. The rate of your Christian growth depends on your willingness to follow hard after God!



### **3. Discernment**

Discernment is to show insight and understanding. It is to be able to know right from wrong in a given situation. Many of the issues that we face in life are not clearly written in the scripture. An infant in Christ doesn't know what to do, but a mature person has trained themselves to **“distinguish good from evil.”**

Many believers find themselves in difficult situations and they come running to a leader for advice. Should I listen to that music? Is it right to wear jewelry? How should I live with my unsaved husband? These questions are good for infants. But as you grow up in the Lord you should develop discernment. You have come to know the Word of God and the principles contained in the Word. With constant use of the Word, we can learn to know right from wrong.

## **III. RECOGNIZE THE DANGER OF GOING BACK (6:4-12)**

### **A. Danger of no more repentance (verse 6)**

There are many dangers of not maintaining our deliverance. One is that there can come a time that there is no repentance available for you. It says in our text that it is impossible for a person who has fully tasted of God and who falls away to be brought back to repentance.

Any time that we joke with God we are playing a dangerous game. We don't know how far His grace and mercy will reach. When we walk in disobedience we risk losing everything.

### **B. Danger of a curse (verse 7, 8)**

There is a curse mentioned here and it is for those who continually drink in without producing any fruit! It is not a small issue to be a Christian who takes in without producing fruit, it results in the curse of God. We want to be set free from curses! Don't just be a drinking Christian, produce fruit in your life. Be productive for Jesus. Use the gift that He has given you in the church. Become involved. Start discipling a new believer.

### **C. Danger of losing inheritance (verse 9-12)**

Verse 11 makes it clear that we must be diligent to the end. We cannot rest in our Christian lives. We are either growing or regressing. The only way that our hope can be “sure” is to continue showing diligence in our walk with God. Then we will receive our inheritance, the crown of life.

These dangers should make us serious in our walk with Christ. You have learned much and you are now responsible for much.

## **Conclusion**

Will you walk in deliverance, or slide back into the old way of life? The choice is yours. God will help you grow to maturity but you will have to make the effort required. You will have to take the steps required for growth. This is a somber message, more of a warning to you. But it is a challenge given because of love. I believe that God will do good things in your life and that you will follow hard after him. I leave you with the words from our text, *Hebrews 6:9*, “*Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case – things that accompany salvation.*”

May God bless you as you keep growing in Him.

## Further Steps

If you are reading this material and want to make it more effective in your life here are some suggestions:

1. Read carefully through the material asking God to reveal to you any area of bondage.
2. Look up the scriptures mentioned in the notes.
3. After each area is discussed, take time to think and pray about that particular area. In some areas God may need to deal with you more than others. Be as specific and thorough as possible with your life. The more time you spend with each area the more God can give you insight into your own life.
4. You may want to take a day of fasting and prayer for each area covered, asking God to deal thoroughly with that area.
5. If you feel you need more counsel in an area, go to your pastor for advice and prayer.
6. Take seriously the steps for Christian growth outlined in the final section. God wants you to grow.
7. Share what God has done in your life with others. Ask your pastor for a time that you can share how God has set you free. He will be encouraged by your testimony and can also give you more advice.
8. Learn to resist the devil. He will try to come back but you have the victory and authority over him. Command him to keep out in Jesus' name.

## About the Author

Jon Byler has a passion to serve the body of Christ by using his gifts of teaching, writing and encouragement. He especially enjoys serving the leaders who build the church. He lives with his wife, Loice and their three children in East Petersburg, PA.

Jon served in Kenya for 13 years and in different capacities in the church including pastoral ministry and leadership development. He has authored several books including *7 Keys to Financial Freedom*, *The Heart of Christian Leadership* and *The Art of Christian Leadership, Signposts for the Journey, Vol. One and Two*, and several booklets on other topics. He currently serves as the VP for LEAD, a training phase of Global Disciples. Global Disciples is a ministry committed to assisting churches around the world train their own leaders. ([www.GlobalDisciples.org](http://www.GlobalDisciples.org)) He writes a bi-weekly e-zine *Reflections for Servant Leaders*.

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