

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.1.6

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF completes the book *Overcoming Addiction by the Spirit of Christ*.

This book has been an exploration of the nuts and buts of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is my hope that after finishing this book you will be able to better define what salvation in Christ is all about.

I have often found that if I can explain a matter to another person, then I am forced to understand the subject better myself. It would be a good exercise for you to share with another the things you have learned in this first book.

Why don't you consider

sharing with another person what man's condition is when he is born. Can you explain to them why man is born in bondage to sin? Can you explain to them the "seed principle" where they can understand that all men were "in Adam" when he sinned in the Garden of Eden?

Why don't you explain to another person why sin must be paid for with blood? Remember that sin's penalty is death, always, and to be redeemed from death another life must be offered in our place. This is what is meant when we say that Christ's death was "a substitutionary sacrifice."

Can you explain to another person the various elements of salvation? Remember, salvation involves both forgiveness of sins, and freedom from sin. We need to receive both the forgiveness of God through Christ's shed blood, and we need to receive the life of God by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

I challenge you to share these things with others. You will never grasp these truths better than after having explained them to another person. And you never know, the grace of God may work a mighty deliverance in the life of the person you are speaking to.

Food for Thought

"Wishing will never be a substitute for prayer."

Ed Cole

"Be assured, if you walk with Him and look to Him, and expect help from Him, He will never fail you."

George Mueller

Scripture Memory

I Corinthians 3:16-17

Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

Parables Newsletter

- Series 1.1.6
- *Overcoming Addiction by the Spirit of Christ*
- Chapters 15-16

Overcoming Addiction by the Spirit of Christ

Chapter 15 - The Weapons of Our Warfare

We have learned much about God's provision for men and women to overcome addiction as we have observed the history of Israel. The Israelites were enslaved to the most powerful kingdom on earth. In the same way, we have seen that all mankind are born as slaves to sin, and are under the power of Satan.

John 8:34

Yahshua answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."

As Israel dwelt in Egypt for 430 years they were totally dominated by the power of Pharaoh and his armies. We read of no revolts, and no open warfare against Israel's captors. There were no weapons and no armor to be found among those who were enslaved. Neither were there any among them who were skilled in the ways of battle.

'Do the next thing the Spirit tells you to do.'

While we are slaves to sin, and prior to our release from captivity, we also lack spiritual armor and weapons, and we have no knowledge of their usage. We must be instructed in the ways of spiritual warfare, and we must exercise ourselves in battle in order to become skillful and victorious. If you would go forth to slay giants, to attack fortified cities, and to demolish strongholds, you must know something of the weapons of your warfare.

We have seen that our battle is not against

flesh and blood, that is to say, it is not against a physical foe after the manner that Israel fought in the Old Testament. Our enemies are thoughts, passions, desires, and spiritual forces of wickedness that assert themselves in defiance of the will of God. In order to face such foes we must have armor and weapons appropriate for our warfare.

II Corinthians 10:4

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful...

You will not overcome addiction through any carnal instrument, or human method. You need that which is divinely powerful. The world thinks it can cure addiction through pills. A sister in Christ recently sent me an article from Newsweek on the topic of alcohol and drug addiction which included the following statements.

If you weigh advances in neuroscience over the last few decades against social and spiritual progress, it's clear which field is more likely to produce the next breakthrough in treatments...

To the extent that "willpower" is a meaningful concept at all, the era of willpower-in-a-pill may be just over the horizon...

"The idea that we can restore 'self-control' or 'free will' with medication is a very, very exciting one," says Vocci of NIDA. "It could be paradigm shifting. But we need more studies to see how consistently that impacts recovery."

[Source: Newsweek, article 'What Addicts Need']

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To declare that there is more hope in mind altering drugs (neuroscience) than there is in Christ, is symptomatic of the pride and spiritual blindness that has descended upon the world in this late hour. Isaiah prophesied of these days:

Isaiah 60:2

For behold, darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples...

To suggest that addiction can be overcome by “willpower in a pill” is to not understand mankind’s slavery to sin. We must have armor and weapons that are divinely powerful, and this is precisely what Christ has given to His disciples. The most detailed and descriptive teaching we find in the Bible concerning the Christian’s armor and weapons is found in the book of Ephesians. As we look at this passage again, let us identify each item and then go on to describe it clearly, its function and value in overcoming addiction.

Ephesians 6:13-18

Therefore, take up the full armor of God... Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit...

We can identify the following from this passage:

- The belt of truth
- The breastplate of righteousness
- The shoes of peace
- The shield of faith
- The helmet of salvation
- The sword of the Spirit
- Prayer

Each item here is an essential element in the outfitting of those who would enter into spiritual battle.

The Belt of Truth

The apostle Paul speaks of “having girded your loins with truth.” It is not a mere loin cloth that Paul has in mind here, but the leather belt of a soldier that hung from his waste and covered his loins. David knew much about warfare, and he also makes reference to the role of truth.

Psalms 51:6

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts...

When the apostle Paul spoke of girding our waist with *truth*, he used the Greek word *aletheia*. This Greek word literally means “not concealed.” The message given is that Yahweh desires that there be nothing hidden, or concealed in the inward parts of a man. We can only begin to do warfare as we cast aside all deception and come into agreement with God.

If you are a Christian, you have received the Spirit of Christ to instruct you and lead you in all things.

If God says there is pride in us that must be

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driven out of the land, we must not call it something else. If He says there is fear, we must not say it is simply caution. If He says there is stubbornness, we must not be like King Saul and declare that we do not see it. In order for the Lord to lead us into victory over all enemies in the land, we must agree with Him about the character of all of the inhabitants within us. If He says that something is sin, we must agree.

We must remember that our enemies are not other men, nor is the Kingdom of God that we seek to establish some outward earthly kingdom. The Kingdom of God is within us. We must therefore allow the light of God to shine upon our inner parts and disclose every enemy that dwells in the land. Our inward parts must be covered in truth. We must have the heart of David who prayed:

The tendency to judge things by appearances is deeply ingrained in our flesh.

Psalms 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart (inner man); try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me...

This is the beginning of our warfare. We must come to the light of truth and allow the Spirit to identify all things within that must be brought under subjection to the rule of God.

Some years back I attended a series of meetings that featured a man named Milton Green as the speaker. He was the former owner of a carpet cleaning business, but had left that occupation to become a teacher to the church. He shared an event that reveals the need for the saints to have their loins girt with the belt of

truth.

Mr. Green shared that he had hired a man that had worked in carpet cleaning before, and who had much experience. On his first day working with this man, Milton dropped him off at an office building to clean the carpets, telling him he would pick him up later. When he arrived to pick up the man, he immediately noticed areas on the carpet that were soiled. The man approached him and told him he was through and ready to go. Milton asked the man, "You are done cleaning the offices?" The man assured him he was. Milton then walked over to a dirty area of the carpet and asked the man "What is this?" The man replied, "I don't see anything." Milton then asked him to come closer, and he bent down and pointed to the dirty carpet. He asked again, "What is this?" The man made some excuse, so Milton asked him a third time, "What is this?" Finally the man admitted, "It is dirt."

Milton shared from this experience that if the man could not agree with him that dirt was dirt, then he would be unable to work with him. In the same way, God cannot work with us if we do not agree with Him concerning the sin in our lives. If we try to conceal our sin, or we make an excuse for it, or we call it something other than the sin which it is, then God cannot work with us. We will not be able to perform all Yahweh's desire apart from agreement with Him.

This is why the first item of the Christian soldier's outfit to be named is the belt of truth. This is our starting point in our warfare. We must agree with God concerning those things to which we are enslaved.

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The Breastplate of Righteousness

The Greek word that the apostle uses here, which has been rendered as righteousness, is *dikaioisune* (dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay). Strong's Concordance defines this word as "equity (of character or act); specially (Christian) justification."

According to the 1933 edition of Webster's Dictionary that I have on my desk, the word equity is defined as: "the administration of law according to its spirit, and not according to the letter."

This symbol of a breastplate of righteousness that covers the heart of a man is filled with insight. Where did God say that He would write His law in the days when He established a new covenant with mankind?

Jeremiah 31:33

"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares Yahweh, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it..."

This same concept is expressed by the apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Corinth.

Romans 7:22

For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man...

Another way to phrase this is, "I joyfully concur with the *rule* of God in the inner man." Indeed, this is the definition of the Kingdom of God being established within our being. When

God is ruling over all of our parts, then the Kingdom of God will be established in us. The breastplate of righteousness signifies this rule of God over the heart of man.

The administration, or the carrying out of the law of God within us, must be according to the spirit of God's law, and not the letter. This is the definition of righteousness, it is equity of act and character. It is important that we understand the breastplate of righteousness in this manner. The Pharisees claimed to be keeping the law of God, but they were deceived. They focused on the letter of the law, and by their deceptive interpretations they ended up nullifying the intentions of God. The spirit of the Law was violated.

Deception regarding what it means to have fulfilled the righteousness of God is a great danger for the saint in this hour as well. Many hold to the letter of the Law, but they have fallen far short of the spirit of it. They have not arrived at Yahweh's desire for them. The sermon on the mount provides numerous illustrations of such shortfalls. Yahshua said:

How do we make decisions if we are not judging by appearances?

Matthew 5:21-22

"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 'But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' (empty head) shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell."

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Matthew 5:27-28

“You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

As God leads us forth to battle against the enemies in the land, we must desire to fulfill the spirit of the command of Christ, not merely to fulfill the letter of the command. Only as we

We should not assume that Christ will lead us to victory over the sin in our flesh by the same method He used on another.

fulfill the spirit of the command will we be considered righteous in the eyes of God. All of the laws of God are summed up in the words “You shall love

Yahweh your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does not seek its own interests, but the interests of others. Love will not commit adultery because to do so is a purely selfish act as well as a serious trespass against our neighbor.

In the same way, righteous men and women will choose not to take illegal drugs, or to get drunk, because to do so is a violation of love. It is a purely selfish act. Love is the true spirit behind the Law of God. If we are to go forth and conquer we must have our heart covered with the breastplate of righteousness, which is the perfect law of love.

We see then that these first two parts of the Christian’s armor are closely related to one another. The belt of truth speaks of honesty and agreement with God about those things that dwell within us. The breastplate of righteousness speaks of embracing the spirit of God’s commands as they relate to the enemies in our

flesh. We must set our minds on what is pleasing to God, rather than seeking to hold onto those things in which we find pleasure.

Ephesians 5:8-10

You were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

As overcomers in Christ, our attitude cannot simply be to know what we can and cannot do. Our attitude cannot be focused upon a desire to please ourselves, or a pursuit of knowing which of our selfish desires God will allow us to keep. Our heart’s focus must be to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Truth and righteousness are those things that must adorn us, bringing all our inward parts into a willing subjection to the rule of God over us.

It is sometimes difficult to grasp the proper application of the parables of the Bible. It may seem somewhat elusive to you to understand how these first two symbols of spiritual warfare apply to your own life. An illustration from the Old Testament will help us in this matter. In the life of King Saul we observe numerous examples of one who failed to rule over the Kingdom of God properly. As a result the Kingdom was taken from him and given to another. If we will view his life serves as a type, or a shadow, of spiritual truth that Christians can learn from today, we can gain valuable insight.

At Yahweh’s command, the prophet Samuel anointed Saul to be king over Israel. After Saul had been king for some time, God instructed him to go to war against Amalek. In the same way God will instruct the Christian to wage war against some sin in his/her flesh. God’s in-

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structions were very precise. Saul was to destroy all the people of the land, and he was to destroy all the animals. Nothing was to be left alive. Saul was not to pity or spare anything. Saul went forth into battle as the leader of Israel, and God was with them to give them the victory. Yet Saul did not carry out Yahweh's desire. We read:

I Samuel 15:7-9

So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

Although Saul did not carry out the command of God, when Samuel came out to meet him after the battle Saul declared that he had done so. When Samuel pressed him on the matter Saul made excuses.

I Samuel 15:13-21

Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of Yahweh! I have carried out the command of Yahweh." But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed..." Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Yahweh anointed you king over Israel, and Yahweh sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and ut-

terly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.' Why then did you not obey the voice of Yahweh, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh?" Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of Yahweh, and went on the mission on which Yahweh sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God at Gilgal."

How stubborn Saul was in this matter. He kept insisting he had carried out God's will when it was very plain that he had not. This account was not recorded simply for the sake of historical record. It has been written for our instruction. Many Christians today do precisely as King Saul did. God sends them forth to battle an enemy and they only do the job part way and then say they are finished and they expect God to be pleased. The Christian often will get rid of that in their life which appears worthless to them, but those things that are attractive they will spare, even when God says to destroy them.

When Yahweh wants some work done, He anoints people.

Working and living at a rescue mission, I have found this to be the pattern of most men. Many come in who want to be delivered of that which is destroying their life, but they do not want to go as far as God would have them to go. When God would begin to convict them regarding those substances they are putting in their body, they immediately begin to divide them up into those things they are willing to get rid of, and those which they are not. Many missions have rules that prohibit smoking ciga-

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rettes. At those that do not prohibit smoking, it is not unusual to find that nearly all of the men in a recovery program smoke. Whereas they are willing to forego illegal drugs to be at a mission, for they are not tolerated, they are unwilling to do anything about their equally destructive addiction to cigarettes.

Some men who have been convicted by God to lay aside cigarette smoking, switch to smokeless tobacco instead. They dip snuff, or chew tobacco and they go on as if they have done all

Yahweh would have us to be a Spirit directed people.

that God desires them to do. I have found the same pattern being followed in alcohol consumption. Some who were greatly convicted of their drunkenness

would give up hard liquor, but they would continue to drink beer. There are some who even feel they have done the will of God when they have ceased to use cocaine or methamphetamines, but they convince themselves it is okay to continue to smoke marijuana.

All of these things are examples of the type of failure manifested in the life of King Saul. They are also examples of not putting on the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness. We must agree with God concerning those things which are sin. If we do not, we will sit back and glory in our victory when we have not done the will of God. King Saul even erected a monument to himself after his defeat of Amalek, and so too do men and women celebrate their victories when they have fallen short of God's command.

The Shoes of Peace

“and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace...”

This may seem like a strange description of a warrior's apparel. What does the gospel of peace have to do with spiritual warfare? The word 'gospel' literally means 'good news.' What good news is being referred to here? Evidently it is good news concerning peace. The angels announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds in the following way:

Luke 2:14

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

What peace is it to which the angels are referring? It is peace between God and man. Because of sin mankind had been at enmity with God. Sin had caused a breach in man's fellowship with God. In the book of Romans the apostle Paul declares, “while we were enemies Christ died for us.” Christ came to bring peace between God and man. He came to cancel out the bill of decrees against us as He bore our sins on His body at the cross.

John the Baptist came as a forerunner of Christ. His father prophesied the following words concerning him.

Luke 1:76-79

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; to give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our

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God, with which the Sunrise from on high shall visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Our peace is accomplished through the forgiveness of sins. Even as shoes are that which man stands upon, so the forgiveness of sin is the foundation for our victory in Christ. Our victory begins with our reconciliation to the Father. Apart from being united with the Father we can have no victory. It was the atoning death of Christ that made peace between God and man, and now that peace has been made man can walk with God as He leads mankind to victory over every enemy.

The Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16

Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Mankind has an external enemy in this battle to establish the kingdom of God within his being. This enemy is Satan, and those forces in league with him. Faith is a key element in the armor of the saint.

Many Christians think only of belief in the atoning death of Christ when they hear the word faith. They only understand faith as it relates to forgiveness of sin. Yet faith is also a critical part of our victory over sin. We saw this in the earlier chapter that looked at the failure of the Israelites to believe that God would give them victory over all their enemies. Because they preferred to believe the report of their eyes, they were not able to enter the land.

When we come to Christ we begin to take an accounting of those things that dwell in the land of our flesh. There are strongholds and walled cities and giants that live in the land. Some of these bear names such as ADDICTION, FEAR, LUST, PRIDE, and ANGER. A man may have been ruled by a violent temper all of his life before coming to Christ. Another man may have been addicted to drugs or alcohol. One man may have been enslaved to sexual lust, while another man has been covetous of worldly possessions. As these men look upon the enemies dwelling within them, and understand the strength of the enemy, they may be tempted to respond as did the unbelieving Israelites.

If we do not love God it will be revealed in our lack of vigor in seeking to rule over the flesh.

Yet God has given us many precious promises of victory over sin. We must stand upon these promises in faith, and we must hold up these promises when the enemy seeks to attack us with fear, doubt and unbelief.

I John 5:4-5

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Yahshua is the Son of God?

Your response to God's promises is critical. If you do not take up the shield of faith, you will not be able to walk as an overcomer after the pattern of Joshua and Caleb. You will simply die in the wilderness. You will be like those who saw the produce of the magnificent land flowing with milk and honey, but who never were able to enter in. When you stand upon the promises of God then you are able to with-

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stand all the lies that your adversary Satan shoots at you. You are able to withstand the assault of the flaming arrows of fear and unbelief. As you continue to stand your ground the enemy must flee before you.

The Helmet of Salvation

The apostle Paul in writing to the church in Thessalonica provides a little more insight into the nature of this part of the soldier's outfit.

I Thessalonians 5:8

But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

The helmet is not just salvation, but "the hope of salvation." We have mentioned before that the word *deliverance* is a synonym for the word *salvation*. We could therefore state that this helmet stands as a symbol of our hope of deliverance. It is symbolic that this helmet fits over the head of man, for this hope of deliverance stands as our defense against thoughts of defeat, frustration and weariness that attack our mind.

I believe the hope in view here is two-fold. There is a hope that we will overcome every besetting sin in this present life. There is also a hope that we will enter into a fulness of salvation in the age to come. There will be a time when we will lay aside these mortal bodies and put on that which is immortal. We will put off these bodies of corruption in which sin dwells, and we will put on glorified bodies without corruption or any knowledge of sin. The Scrip-

tures speak of the hope of a present deliverance from sin, as well as the hope of a future deliverance from the battle that rages between the flesh and spirit of man.

As we enter into the battles set before us we will find that all is not won in an instant. There is a long warfare to take complete control of these bodies in which sin dwells. At times we will find that the enemies are not driven out apart from a prolonged engagement. The tendency to become weary in the battle will be known to all saints at some time. Even David, the man after God's heart, became weary.

II Samuel 21:15-17

Now when the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David went down and his servants with him; and as they fought against the Philistines, David became weary. Then Ishbi-benob, who was among the descendants of the giant, the weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of bronze in weight, was girded with a new sword, and he intended to kill David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah helped him, and struck the Philistine and killed him.

It is to be noted that after this occurrence, David's men urged him to not go out to war with them anymore, lest he be killed and Israel suffer. David, being weary of war, listened to their words and stayed home when they went to battle thereafter. It was while he was at home idle, when he should have been with his men leading the battle, that he fell into temptation and committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of one of David's most valiant and victorious soldiers.

We must not give into the weariness that plagues us at times, even when we are looking for the fulfillment of some long awaited prom-

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ise, or the complete victory over some sin that we have wrestled with for a long season. As the Scriptures state, patience is as necessary in our warfare as is faith.

Hebrews 6:11-12

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

It is our hope of deliverance that gives us renewed strength to stand in the battle. It is hope that every promise of God will be realized that allows us to withstand every assault of the enemy upon our mind.

The Sword of the Spirit

The last two items in the list of our spiritual equipment serve as both defensive and offensive weapons. These are the word of God, and prayer.

And take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

In all of the pieces of the soldier's outfit looked at thus far, it is necessary to become familiar with them, and comfortable with their usage. It is especially needful with the sword of the Spirit. We must study its usage diligently and become skillful with it. The apostle Paul instructed the young minister Timothy in the need to apply himself diligently to mastering the word of God.

II Timothy 2:15

Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.

[Amplified Bible]

Your effectiveness in spiritual battle will depend much upon your skillful handling of the word of God. It is essential that all who seek to overcome addiction and progress in a life of holiness should spend much time in the study of the word. Even as a man does not become skillful with a sword without much usage, we will not become skillful in the word apart from a devotion to learning is correct application.

It is never wise to neglect any aspect of truth...

It is symbolic that the sword is gripped in the hand. The word of God must also be near at hand at all times. We must be able to swiftly draw it forth out of its scabbard in time of need. In order to do this, memorization of Scripture is important.

Psalms 119:11

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

When I was a youth I began memorizing Scripture in church. Later I was encouraged by a number of older Christians to apply myself to Scripture memory as a spiritual discipline. It became my practice to write key verses down on index cards and to carry them in my pocket

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during the day. I would take them to work, and everywhere I went, and I would meditate upon them to gain understanding. I would practice reciting them until I could say them perfectly.

I have found the Scriptures committed to memory to have been a great aid throughout my entire life. Many

Whenever we read the words "Do not be deceived," we can be assured that many saints are walking in deception.

Scriptures now come to mind as easily as a well used sword is drawn forth by the hand of a seasoned warrior. There is tremendous value in the study of the word of God. It renews the mind even as we dwell upon it. The soul is refreshed and the thoughts purified as we immerse ourselves in the cleansing power of the holy word of God.

When Christ was tested by Satan in the wilderness, the word of God flowed forth from His mouth as a two-edged sword. At every parry of the enemy, Christ had the appropriate response.

The danger of neglecting the word of God is that Satan also is familiar with it. Satan quoted Scriptures to Christ when he tempted Him. If a believer is not well grounded in the Scriptures he will be easily misled when Satan seeks to deceive him through a misapplication of the word of God.

Those who love life, and who want to walk in victory, will give themselves to a study of the word. Like David they will seek to implant the word in their heart. Scripture memory is a valuable means of fitting oneself for battle.

The sword of the Spirit is not only the written

word. It is also the spoken word of God.

Romans 10:17

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Romans 8:14

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

The Spirit will teach us truth as we are attentive to His voice. He will lead us in the path of righteousness. We must train our senses to listen to the voice of the Spirit. It is very easy to allow the temples of our bodies to become so filled with the thoughts of worldly pursuits that the still, small voice of the Spirit is drowned out.

When Christ drove out the merchants and money changers from the temple, He was demonstrating a powerful lesson for us. He said, "My Father's house is to be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves." Our bodies are the temple of God. We have been created to be houses of prayer where God's Spirit communes with our spirit. We too can fill these temples with all the noise of the world as we set our sights on buying and selling, pleasures and various entertainments.

The pursuit of the world will keep us from hearing the voice of God. When this occurs we are putting ourselves at risk from an attack of the enemy. It is as if a soldier on the battlefield had turned off his combat radio and had tuned in a station playing the music and news of the world. Becoming so fixated on this noise the soldier is unable to receive warnings from his commander. We must be attentive to the writ-

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ten and spoken word of God.

This leads us to the final part of our spiritual weaponry.

Prayer

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit...

Many people do not include this verse along with the section that describes the spiritual armor of the saint. Yet I see it as being part of the same thought. Who ever heard of engaging in battle without making some provision for communication between the battle commander and those under his leadership? In today's arena of modern warfare, communication has become one of the most important parts of the military's focus. It should also be a priority with the child of God.

Throughout Scripture, and throughout the recorded history of military warfare, we see numerous examples of battles gone awry due to the absence of good communication. Many times the tide of an entire war has turned on this one issue. Armies have turned back when they feared an approaching foe that was nowhere around. Others have been destroyed through poor battle execution when communication was disrupted.

We have seen already in this book that God wants us to look to Him at all times to discern His will for us. We are to move when He moves, and remain still when He does not move. Failing to do so, we will make a shipwreck of our lives.

The only example mankind has been given of a

man who walked victoriously over all sin and temptation is found in the life of Christ. It is no coincidence that we observe in His life a devotion to prayer.

Luke 5:16

Yahshua would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

Whether in the morning, or the evening, we find Christ seeking a place apart to pray.

Mark 1:35

In the early morning, while it was still dark, Yahshua got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

Matthew 14:23

After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.

Apart from a devotion to prayer, there is no power over sin and temptation in the life of the saint. We must remain abiding in Christ in order to receive the divine life necessary to live a transformed life as a spiritual creature. If we neglect prayer, we begin to wither away and we become easy prey for the enemy.

God's word testifies over and over that He will judge us according to our actions, not our confession.

All of these various parts of our spiritual armor and weaponry are needed in order to defeat the enemies that we face.

Overcoming Addiction by the Spirit of Christ

Chapter 16 - Free in Christ

Perhaps you picked up this book out of a desire to obtain victory over a specific addiction or besetting sin. If so, it seems fitting to end this book by seeking to widen your hope of the victory and freedom that you can experience in Christ. Perhaps it has seemed almost too good

When we have no fear that continuing in disobedience will bring severe consequences, we are much more apt to be careless ...

to be true, as you have considered the promise that Christ can deliver you from any sin or addiction. There is no giant, no walled city, no stronghold, that cannot

be overcome in Christ. These statements are true, but I would urge you to consider something even greater than this precious truth. Not only can Christ deliver you from ANY sin, He can deliver you from ALL sin.

The level of Christian experience has sunk very low in these days due to the wayward heart of mankind. Many who confess Christ love pleasure more than they love God. There has been little pressing in to know how mankind might satisfy Yahweh's desire, as men and women have been more focused on satisfying their own desires.

Few Christians in this hour are able to receive the report that there is a place in Christ where we can rise above all the bonds of this sinful world. We can be filled with the fulness of Christ. His life can be our life. His thoughts can be our thoughts. We can become fully motivated, and completely animated, by the divine life within our members. Our daily walk can be one of unbroken fellowship, and our experience can be one of endless righteousness through the power and presence of the One who dwells in us.

This testimony is hidden from the majority of men and women today, yet the Spirit bears witness of its truth. So too do the many parables of Scripture, as well as the plain speech of the apostles. Yet that which is declared in many ways and in many places has been obscured by the veil that lies over the eyes of men and women who are divided in their affections. Consider once more the parable of Israel's release from captivity in Egypt and her entry into the land of promise.

How much authority did Egypt and Pharaoh retain over Israel after they crossed the Red Sea? Crossing through a body of water is symbolic of passing through death into a new life. What is symbolized in crossing the Red Sea is the complete death to all that had formerly kept Israel enslaved. We find this truth in the following words:

Exodus 14:13

Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of Yahweh which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever."

"See the salvation of Yahweh!" It is a complete salvation. Egypt maintained no hold over Israel. The power of Pharaoh was completely broken as the great army of Egypt perished in the sea.

Exodus 14:28

The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained.

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The testimony of Scripture is that the substance of our salvation in Christ is just as complete as the shadow seen in the Israelites' salvation from Egypt. There was no reason for any who came out of Egypt to ever return to bondage there. The Israelites' freedom was complete. Their freedom was as certain as if they had passed from one life, through death, and into another existence. This too is the experience of all those who have been united with Christ through baptism. We have been buried with Him, and we have been resurrected to a new life of freedom.

Colossians 3:3

For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Crossing the Red Sea symbolizes how completely the Christian has been severed from the old slavery to sin that formerly held them bound. Crossing the Jordan River under the leadership of Joshua signifies the power we have to conquer all enemies in our flesh.

Deuteronomy 11:24-25

“Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours... No man will be able to stand before you...”

Notice the scope of the words in these verses, and consider what they portend for the Christian today. “**EVERY**” place the Christian sets his foot will be theirs to possess. “**NO**” enemy will be able to stand before the one who has faith. Even as our deliverance from bondage is a full deliverance, so too our victory over every sin and enemy of God is boundless.

Christ has not merely given you and I victory

over addiction, He has given us an entirely new life. We are new creatures with new appetites, and new minds. The extent to which you and I walk as these new creatures is limited only by our own desire and belief. As the apostle Paul declared to the church in Corinth:

II Corinthians 6:12

You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.

Christ has set the captives free, but the degree to which you or I live in freedom is determined by us. You can choose to live the rest of your life for the pleasure of God. You can give yourself fully over to Christ that He might manifest Himself in you, bringing all your thoughts, words, and actions under His control.

I know from experience the great value of coming to understand the fear of God.

II Corinthians 5:14-15

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

All has been provided for the child of God to enable them to live a life immersed in the life of Christ. We need not sin. We can always choose to live for the pleasure of God. His Spirit in us will fill us with His desires, and empower us to carry them out. We must cast off the low thinking that grips the church today, for many Christians believe themselves still to be slaves to sin. The church believes it is more natural for them to sin than to practice righteousness. Consequently, they live out what

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they believe. Yet the testimony of Scripture is that Christians have died to sin and are alive to God.

Romans 6:11

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Yahshua.

“Consider yourselves to be dead to sin.” How easy it is to pass over these words without comprehension. As a Christian I am dead to sin. It has no

*Even the greatest among
Yahweh's servants can
benefit from the fear of God
in their life.*

hold over me. I am completely free of its authority. The dominion of sin has been shattered. I am now alive to God in Christ. I am a partaker of the divine life. The same Spirit that is in

Christ is also in me. It is God's pleasure that I am alive to. It is His desires that I seek. I am no longer bound to low, fleshly living. I am no longer obligated to fulfill the desires and passions of the flesh. I am free! I am the Lord's!

Romans 14:8

If we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

It is with some difficulty that we lay aside our slave mentality, for we come from a long line of slaves. Our ancestors have been enslaved to sin for the past 6,000 years, all the way back to Adam. The mind staggers to realize the freedom that has been given to us in Christ. Can it really be true? Is it really no longer inevitable that I will commit sin? Can I truly walk in righteousness?

Perhaps the most profound expression of the Christian's new life is found in the words of Paul.

Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...”

What a depth of transformation is revealed here! “It is no longer I who live.” The old sinful creature I once was is no longer alive. When Christ died on the cross, I died with Him. When He arose from the grave I was resurrected to new life in Him. Now “Christ lives in me.”

How do we enter into such a life? How can this confession become our own? We enter in as we believe the testimony of Christ.

John 8:31-32

Yahshua was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free... So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

To continue in Christ's word is to rest upon it as truth. The second part of Galatians 2:20 reveals Paul's confession of this.

Galatians 2:20

The life which I now live in the flesh I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

What Paul is testifying is that his life is *completely* different now that he has been born of the Spirit of Christ. He lives his life through a daily reckoning upon the presence of Christ in Him. He surrenders to the life of Christ in his being, and as he does so the life of Christ is manifested. The divine life of God is revealed in, and through, Paul. This can also be your experience, and mine.

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Such an understanding goes far beyond hoping that we might be able to overcome a specific, troubling addiction. It is to embrace the knowledge that God's Spirit is present in us to enable us to walk as a mature reflection of Himself through the course of this world. God has testified that He is at work in us to conform us to the image of Christ, and Christ said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." It is not heresy then to believe that God desires this same confession to be the normal result of His powerful working in our lives.

From the beginning God said, "Let us create man in our image, and after our likeness." Christ was the first man to attain to this end that God had in mind. He is not the last, however.

Romans 8:29

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren...

Satan would tell the Christian that it is not possible to walk as Christ did in this world. He would declare to us that we cannot walk in victory over all sin, that such a state is only possible when we leave this world and ascend to heaven. The Scriptures reveal that Satan is a liar, and the father of lies. He has lost his authority over our lives, but he knows he can still keep many from walking in the power of the Spirit by deceiving them. If you do not believe you are free from your chains, you will live as if you are still bound, though the chains lie broken beside you.

You will never rise higher than your faith to believe. Feed your spirit. Abide in Christ. Live in His word, and be transformed as you renew your mind. Your victory is assured if only you will believe.

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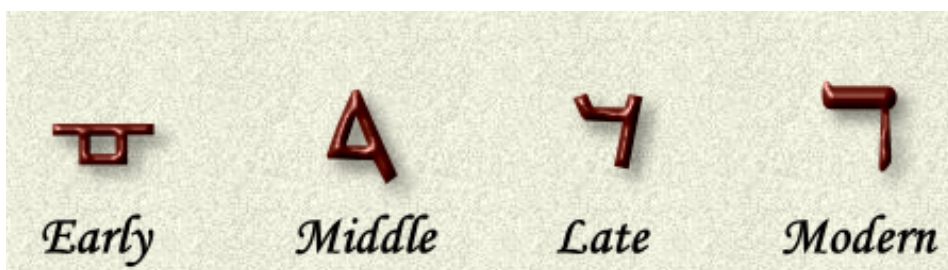
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PARABLES PRECEPT—The Hebrew Alphabet



(Image source: Ancient Hebrew Resource Center's Website)

The Hebrew letter featured above is Dalet. This was an image of a tent door. Look at the Dalet above the word "Early." Picture the line at the top as a rod from which a piece of fabric is hanging. The hanging fabric would serve as a door. The word *dalet* in Hebrew means "door."

Researching the meaning of ancient Semitic words written in Paleo-Hebrew is a fascinating study. You learn things about the culture of the

people whose lives are recorded in Scripture, and about the way they viewed the world.

One word I find interesting is the Hebrew word for rest. This is spelled as follows:

דגל

This is the letters Dalet and Gimel. Dalet is the tent door, and Gimel is the tent. Putting them together we get an image of the door of a tent. One might wonder what this has to do with rest.

The Patriarchs, such as Abraham dwelt in tents. They would sit in the doorway of the tent, much like someone today would sit on the porch of their house. This would be a position of rest.

Genesis 18:1

Now Yahweh appeared to [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day.

Before people had television, sitting in front of their house watching the world go by was both a form of entertainment and relaxation. Times have changed, and not necessarily for the better.

Abraham, and men of his generation, must have spent much more time reflecting on the important things of life in the hours spent resting in the doorway of the tent.