

SPIRITUAL WARFARE MANUAL

RECLAIMING SURRENDERED GROUND





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Reclaiming Surrendered Ground

by Dr. Peter Hammond



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Frontline Fellowship

P.O. Box 74 Newlands 7725 Cape Town South Africa

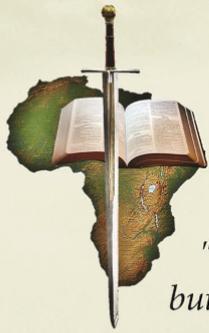
Tel: +27 (21) 689 4480

info@williamcareybi.com

www.FrontlineMissionSA.org

www.WilliamCareyBI.com





*"All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth.
Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations
teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded ..."*

Matthew 28:18-20

*"...The harvest truly is plentiful,
but the labourers are few. Therefore,
pray the Lord of the harvest to send out
labourers into His harvest." Matthew 9:37-38*

PRAY FOR AFRICA

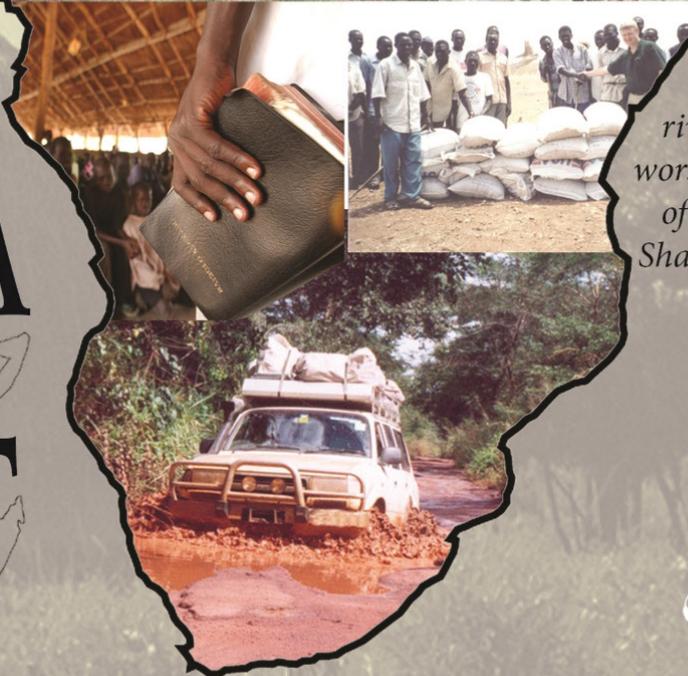
*"He shall have dominion also
from sea to sea and from
the River to the ends
of the earth. Those who
dwell in the wilderness
will bow before Him,
And His enemies will
lick the dust."
Psalm 72:8-9*



*"Cush will submit to God."
Psalm 68:31*

AFRICA FOR CHRIST

*"From beyond the
rivers of Ethiopia, My
worshippers, The daughter
of My dispersed ones,
Shall bring My offering."
Zephaniah 3:10*



*"That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those
in Heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth and that every
tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
Philippians 2:10-11*

Chapter 1

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Freedom in Christ

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Is it possible for a Christian to be under spiritual bondage?

Can a Christian Sin?

Many Christians say that they do not think that it is possible for one in whom the Holy Spirit lives to be bound by an evil spirit. Yet, if we were to ask: Is it possible for a true Christian to sin? The answer would unfortunately have to be: Yes. Christians do sin. Of course, this grieves the Holy Spirit, it quenches the Holy Spirit, it resists the Holy Spirit, but the fact is that sin can be present in Holy Spirit indwelt Christians. Sin is worse than satan. It was sin that turned Lucifer, the archangel, into satan – the fallen angel, the enemy of God and all His people.

Some of the well-known Christian leaders who have taught that Christians may suffer from demonic bondage include: Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones, Dr. Kurt Koch, Watchman Nee and A.W. Tozer.

The Forces of Darkness

The book of Ephesians is addressed to *“The Saints... Faithful in Christ Jesus...”* Ephesians 1:1. And these Christians are taught not to *“give place to the devil.”* Ephesians 4:27. In fact the believers are commanded to ***“Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*** Ephesians 6:11-12

Be Vigilant

Plainly the ‘we’ spoken of here, are the Believers in Christ. Every Christian should be involved in a personal wrestle against evil forces. Christians are also warned: ***“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the Faith ...”*** 1 Peter 5:8-9

Setting the Captives Free

In the Gospel of Luke we read of a woman who had “a spirit of infirmity eighteen years ...” and Jesus called her to Him and said: *“Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.”* He laid His hands on her and immediately she was made straight and glorified God.” Luke 13:12-13

Because the Lord healed this woman on the Sabbath, He came under severe criticism. In response the Lord declared: *“...Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it away to water? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom satan has bound – think of it – for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?”* Luke 13:15-16

By describing her as a daughter of Abraham, whom satan had bound, our Lord reveals to us that a Believer can be bound by an evil spirit, even while continuing to attend worship services.

Be Not Deceived

The Bible is full of warnings against being deceived. *“...feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside...”* Isaiah 44:20; *“...he deceives himself.”* Galatians 6:3; ***“But be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*** James 1:22; ***“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”*** 1 John 1:8; ***“The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?”*** Jeremiah 17:9

As our Lord warned His own disciples to take heed that they be not deceived; this means that it is possible for Christians to be deceived. Deception brings bondage. Since it is possible for a Christian to be deceived, it implies that it is possible for a Christian to be in bondage.

A World at War

In *“The Christian in Complete Armour”* the Puritan William Gurnall (1616-1679) writes that we are all involved in a war between the Saint and satan. “And it is such a bloody one that the cruellest war ever fought by man will be seen as but sport and child’s play, compared to this. Alas, what is the killing of bodies to the destroying of souls? It is a spiritual war that you shall read of; not a history of what was fought in many ages past and is now

over, but of a war now going on – the tragedy is present with us. ...the stage on which this war is fought is every man's own soul. There are no neutrals in this war. The whole world is engaged in the quarrel, either for God against satan, or for satan against God."

A Life and Death Struggle

The author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan, wrote that this is why "The most delicate Christian must become a stern warrior." Whether we believe it or not and whether we like it or not, this war is raging in our souls and in the heavenlies every moment of every day and night. It is a life and death struggle to the finish - against the devil and all his demons. Satan and his cohorts come '*...to steal and to kill and to destroy...*' John 10:10"

Two Extremes

C.S. Lewis wrote: "*There are two equal and opposite errors into which we can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.*"

Know your Enemy

In any war a soldier needs to know his enemy, their weapons and tactics and the terrain in which he fights.

The nature and activities of satan are revealed through his different names. In the Scriptures he is called satan (the adversary or enemy), the devil (slanderer or accuser), Beelzebub (lord of the flies), the serpent, Lucifer (the light bearer), a murderer from the beginning, like a roaring lion, a liar, the tempter, the dragon, the accuser of the brethren, the prince of the power of the air, the evil one, the deceiver of the world, Abaddon (or Apollyon – the destroyer), the god of this world, the beast, belial (the worthless one) and an angel of light.

Demons are created spirit beings. They are fallen angels who have rebelled against Almighty God. Demons are evil spirits - they can think and act without a body; they have a character, a mind of their own and a will. They are not human spirits, nor impersonal forces, but actual spiritual persons. The demons are crooked, cruel, contaminating, clever, cunning, cowardly, craving, ceaseless, crouching, crippling, counterfeiting, clandestine, continuous criminals, but at the same time created beings confined in time and space, curtailed in their activities and power, conquered by Christ on the Cross, cursed and condemned.

Like scavengers they attack the tired, the weak, the wounded and the sick. They track down, attack and mutilate their prey. Like flies they gather around any form of filth. Like serpents they can hide and slide secretly, striking suddenly and injecting their venom.

As Ephesians 6 reveals there are principalities, powers, rulers, hosts – an entire hierarchy of darkness and deception. The Scripture speaks of lying and seducing spirits (1 Timothy 4:1); idolatrous spirits (1 Corinthians 10:20, Psalm 106:36-38 and Deuteronomy 32:16-17); unclean spirits (Mark 7:25 and Zechariah 13:2); seducing spirits, such as the spirit of Jezebel, spirits of infirmity (Luke 5:15, 8:2, 13:11); and spirits of divination (Acts 16:16).

Demonic Possession

Possession is a legal term that does not necessarily mean the person has an evil spirit within them, but that rather the evil spirit possesses something in, or of, that person. E.g. I may possess a car, but not be in it. I may even point out and say that that is my car while someone else is in it and driving it. Demonic possession can be when an evil spirit has a hold over something in the life of a person.

Do Not Give the Devil Any Ground

The Scripture urges us to not give the devil a foothold (Ephesians 4:27). Whether it is a toehold, a foothold, a stronghold, or a stranglehold, we must personally and practically proclaim the Gospel of Christ's glorious victory on the Cross, not only over sin and self, but also over satan and all his hosts of evil spirits. Our eyes need to be opened and our hearts cleansed. We need to be set free.

"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8

Immunity

God has given each person a natural physical immunity, a natural mental immunity and a spiritual immunity. Bacteria cannot enter our bodies unchallenged. In the same way we can take control over the thoughts that enter our mind. Similarly, God has placed a hedge of protection around His children. Physically our skin is part of our body's immune system. When a wound breaks the integrity of the skin, bacteria can enter and cause infection, disease and in the case of tetanus, even death.

In the same way demons will try to cause a break in our mental and spiritual wall of immunity against them. Once they succeed in making a gap, an opening or a wound, they will enter in and establish a foothold and attempt to gain ground, to establish a stronghold and ultimately a stranglehold. If a **wound** is not swiftly and effectively treated, it can become a **way** for evil spirits to enter and bring bondage in a persons' life.

By Storm or By Stealth

What the demons cannot obtain by force, they attempt to gain by fraud. These are the two ways the enemy seeks entrance: by storm or by stealth.

It is the same with our physical bodies. While some bacteria enter through the trauma of a vehicle accident or an assault with a knife, others can enter by stealth, such as when we unknowingly drink contaminated water.

Principles

Watchman Nee taught: For each and everything God has created, there is a law. All actions are governed by laws. Hence evil spirits also operate according to definite laws. Certain causes produce certain effects. Violating the law of gravity will cause one to fall. Putting one's hand into a fire will result in one being burnt. The principles by which demons can successfully break through the hedge of protection God has placed around us and weaken our spiritual immunity, gaining ground for the devil and bringing us into bondage include: **permission** by the victim; **passivity**; **parental bondage** and **para-normal** spiritual activity (such as witchcraft).

"Nobody can make me do something that I don't want to do. If something is not in my heart, the devil will not be able to make me do it!" Rev. Greg Denysschen

Permission

By involvement in occultism, idolatry, stubbornness, rebellion and pride, we can give permission to demonic forces to gain a foothold in our life. We can also give permission unconsciously, through deception. By accepting emotions or deception suggested by evil spirits, we can come under spiritual bondage. That is why the Scriptures commanded us to "*capture every thought and make it obedient to Christ.*" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Passivity

Passivity also gives permission for evil spirits to work in our lives. The chief condition for the working of evil spirits in a human being, apart from sin, is passivity. "Passivity is the law: suggestion is the tool the devil uses!" Rev. Greg Denysschen

We are commanded to watch, resist, fight, obey, work, trust, test. The Scriptures teach us that a person is cursed when he is slack, lazy, or passive in doing the Lord's work (Jeremiah 48:10). Passivity gives place to the devil. Passivity is sin. Passivity is the sin of omission. Passivity is the chief basis of possession.

Parental Bondage

In The Ten Commandments God declares: "*I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol...*" The Lord reveals that He is a jealous God, who will punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him (Exodus 20: 2-6). Children are not held responsible, or reckoned guilty, for those sins (Ezekiel 18:20), but they do suffer the consequences of parental sin. This principle is seen in the physical realm. E.g. through children being born with diseases transmitted from the parents. It is also seen in the psychological realm and in the spiritual realm. Darkness and deception in the ancestral line has the potential for bringing about a familial bondage.

George McDonald wrote: "I will assert that it is an honour to us to have the sins of our fathers laid upon us. For thus it is given into our power to put a stop to them, so that they shall descend no further."

Occultism

The fourth principle by which evil spirits work is through witchcraft or occultism. God's Law forbids us to give attention to: "*mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God.*" Leviticus 19:31

"When you come into the land which the Lord your God has giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are abominations to the Lord and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out before you. You

shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you.” Deuteronomy 18:9-14

Demonic Devices

The main methods which demons use to bring people into bondage are **darkness** (sin) and **deception** (lies). They also use doubt, discouragement, difficulty, desire, disobedience, disunity, disease and death. These demonic d's can be easily identified in the downfall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3, satan came with doubt to Eve's mind (3:1), then desire in her heart (3:6), deception (3:4&13), disobedience (3:6), darkness (3:8), followed by difficulty (3:17), disease (3:16), depression (4:6), discouragement (4:6), disunity (4:6), departure from God and man (3:24; 4:12) and death (4:8) – both spiritually and physically. Adam and Eve were **deceived** into darkness by **doubting** in the mind, **desiring** with the heart and **disobeying** with the will.

All sin is darkness. Persistent sin gives ground to demons and brings bondage (Proverbs 5:22-23). Sin is the greatest enemy which we have in the world and does us more harm than the devil himself. For it betrays us to the devil and, under the pretence of favouring and pleasing our nature, betrays us.

Sin's Kisses Kill

Sin lusts (Galatians 5:17), fights, wars (Romans 7:23; James 4:1; 1 Peter 2:11) and captivates the soul (Romans 7:23; Proverbs 5:22-23). Sin is madness (Ecclesiastes 9:3). Sin is selfishness, lawlessness, missing God's mark and self-centeredness. In Galatians 5:19 – 21 the works of the flesh are listed: *“Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries and the like; of which I told you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.**”*

Idolatry Enslaves

Doubt is darkness (Romans 14:23), disobedience is darkness (1 Samuel 22:23), demon worship (Idolatry), is darkness (1 Corinthians 10:20). Any form of idolatry is darkness. Divination is darkness (Deuteronomy 18:10-13) and discouragement is darkness (Ezekiel 13:22).

Lies Bind

Self-centeredness is idolatry, which is an abomination to God and gives a foothold to demons. Deception (lies) is darkness and deception leads to darkness. Nothing is more infectious than a cleverly cloaked lie. Lies bind. It is not harmless to believe a lie. It is not innocent to believe a lie. Believing a lie can have painfully devastating consequences. Ignorance, pride and deception lead to bondage. Lies bind, but the truth sets us free.

Types of Bondage

One can distinguish between two basic types of bondage: **voluntary bondage**, which involves the permission of the person (consciously or unconsciously, actively or passively) and **involuntary bondage**, which would include familial bondage. (The degree of bondage and affliction suffered would be determined by the degree of involvement by the person concerned, the kind and number of evil spirits involved, the ground given, the amount and frequency of exposure to the demonic influence and the nature and immunity of the person.)

Wounds

Demonic spirits may seek to cause a wound in a person's life, either through that person's own darkness or through another's darkness/sin towards them. Even if no ground was given, sometimes serious trauma can cause such a terrible wound in a person's soul and spirit that they seek to heal the wound through sinful **pleasure**, or **performing**, or **pleasing** people, or inflicting **pain** on others, or **pretending**, or exerting **power** over others, or **pitying** themselves, or through **paralysis (passivity)**. These make matters worse and give ground to satan. **A wound not taken to Christ becomes a way for evil spirits to bring bondage.**

The process of deliverance includes us **recognising, repenting, refusing** and being **ready to resist**.

Signs and Symptoms

Christian missionaries involved in deliverance ministries have identified the following as possible signs and symptoms of demonic bondage:

Physical symptoms: severe headaches and migraines, muscle spasms, nausea, infertility, mouth ulcers, darkened skin, muscle twitching, obesity and anorexia.

Psychological symptoms: antagonism to truth, an inability to reason or listen to others; a suspicious spirit, fear, panic attacks, sudden unexplainable awakenings at night with a sense of oppression and dread; blasphemous

thoughts; abnormal depression; temper tantrums; uncontrollable episodes of anger; homosexuality; vacillation; obstinacy; suicidal tendencies; death wishes; multiple personality disorders; schizophrenia, psychotic disorders, drug dependency and alcoholism.

Spiritual symptoms: hostility to the truth; falling asleep while reading the Bible or praying or during church services; difficulty reading the Word of God; aversion to the Gospel of the Cross of Christ; deadness and hardness of heart towards God; no spiritual growth; mediumistic tendencies; an obsession with esoteric, mystical and occultic experiences, such as 'being slain in the spirit' and 'holy laughter'.

Social symptoms: asocial and antisocial behaviour; socializing with people involved in the occult; following the fashions of this world and the spirit of this age; interest and involvement in false religions; and criminal activities.

Symptoms and signs observed **before prayer for deliverance** have included:

Physical swelling of the veins in the temple areas and on the sides of the head, profuse sweating and reddening of the face, wandering and flitting eyes, a seductive look in the eyes, rebelliousness and angry expression of face, glazed-over look in the eyes, dizziness and visual problems with spasms, pain and pins-and-needles movement in parts of the body.

Emotionally: fear, anxiety, anger, suspicion, negativity, etc.

During prayer the person may go into a complete trance where the eyes go blank as if not seeing anything, not even blinking when a hand is moved in front of their eyes. The body may tense up or tremor or sway. They sometimes start speaking in another language or voice (not their own). They may take on the posture characteristic of the particular evil spirit that is troubling them, such as dancing like the monkey god, Hanuman, hissing and writhing like a snake, they may become very aggressive or destructive towards themselves, or those present. They may also vomit or sweat out needles or metal objects from their skin.

Freedom in Christ

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18-19

The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast (Proverbs 5:22).

Jesus taught that those who sin are slaves to sin (John 8:34). *"Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."* Romans 6:16-18

The Apostle Peter writes of people being *"slaves of corruption"* 2 Peter 2:19

The Apostle Paul writes *"that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."* 2 Timothy 2:26

The Apostle Peter rebuked Simon the sorcerer: *"For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."* Acts 8:23

"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8

On the Cross our Lord Jesus Christ dealt with our sins (1 Peter 2:24; Colossians 2:14), crucified our self (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; 6:14), defeated the world (Galatians 6:14) and triumphed over satan and all his evil spirits and hosts of hell (Colossians 2:15; 1 John 3:8).

"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the Cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them, in it." Colossians 2:13-15

God Alone

Deliverance is a dynamic work of Almighty God, working on the basis of Christ's victory on the Cross, applied by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Deliverance is God's work. Our prayers cannot deliver any person, nor can any method, technique or ritual. God alone delivers by the power of His Holy Spirit. It is not magic or mediums which we need, but Almighty God Himself.

God Resists the Proud

The person needing deliverance must recognise his need and willingly seek help. You cannot help a person who is not really willing to be helped. A person who is bound needs to want to be free. They need to be desperate to be set free by the Lord. The one seeking deliverance should humble himself completely. God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Where there is pride in the heart the person cannot truly be delivered.

Foundations for Freedom

Foundations need to be carefully laid. It is important that the person understands how evil spirits work, by what laws they operate and what ground for bondage is. Otherwise it will be easy for them to be re-deceived by evil spirits, to again give ground to the enemy. It is the truth that sets us free and unless the person is filled with the Holy Spirit, he will be open for further bondage by evil spirits.

Reclaiming Surrendered Ground

It is only Christ's victory on the Cross that makes deliverance possible. The ground that was given to evil spirits must be reclaimed before true deliverance can take place. The process of bondage needs to be reversed. Step by step the ground given to the enemy needs to be reclaimed.

The Counsellor

The counsellor needs to be **called, cleansed, consecrated and committed**.

Spiritual Warfare

The battle lines have been drawn. This is a battle between light and darkness, holiness and sin, the real vs. the counterfeit, truth vs. deception, forgiveness vs. bitterness, submission vs. rebellion, humility vs. pride, freedom vs. bondage, truth vs. lies, activity vs. passivity and God vs. satan.

The Phases of Deliverance

Like a surgical operation there is the pre-operative phase, the actual operation and the post-operative phase. In the same way the three phases of deliverance are: **Preparation** for the deliverance; **Process of prayer** for deliverance and **Post deliverance** (how to stay free).

Phase 1: Preparation for deliverance requires removing all ground for bondage and preparing ground for deliverance. All darkness must be dealt with ruthlessly. All deception must be discovered and destroyed. All doors that were opened for the demons must be closed, one by one. All ground given to the enemy must be removed, one by one. This requires separating from sin, self-centeredness and satanic activities and influences and uniting with God, His holiness, light, truth and integrity.

Leaving Egypt and Entering the Promised Land

Negatively the person needs to be dead to sin, self, society and the evil spirits. Positively the person needs to be alive to Christ, holiness and the Spirit of God. As with the people of Israel in the book of Exodus, he needs to get out of Egypt and cross the river to the Promised Land to conquer the enemy. He needs to die to self and come alive in Christ. This involves a **realisation** of where he has given ground to evil spirits, to where he may be in demonic bondage; recognition as to the truth of his condition. This involves **recognising** all ground given to the evil spirits, **relying** on God, **remembering**, **re-searching** into family background and life and **revelation** from God.

He needs to remember, recall back to memory, those steps, stumbling's and sins that led to his state. ***"Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent..."*** Revelation 2:5

The best way is to write down these sins, one by one and repent of them, one by one. This list should include all sins of commission and omission.

Repentance

One needs to repent radically and completely. True repentance involves a complete change of mind and heart and life and a radical change in attitude, affections and acts. Without repentance there is no salvation. Without

repentance there is no deliverance. Without repentance there is no relationship with God. Repentance is the lifeblood of the Christian's walk with God. It is at the heart of true Godliness. The crisis and continued life of repentance includes: **conviction** of sins (John 16:8), **contrition** (Psalm 32), **confession** (James 5:16), **cleansing** (1 John 1:7-9), **conversion** (John 3), **consecration** (2 Corinthians 5:15) and **commitment** to Christ (Acts 2:38).

Confession

If we confess our sins He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other that you may be healed (James 5:16). God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible (Ephesians 5:13-14). But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:7). Confession of sin should be **free, full, frank, factual**, from the heart, in **front** of another Christian and include **forsaking** sin, **Faith** in Christ's Sacrifice on the cross and it must be **frequent**.

Divorce from Sin

Joseph Alleinen in *An Alarm to the Unconverted* writes: "You cannot be married to Christ unless you are divorced from sin. Give up the traitor, or you can have no peace with Heaven. Keep not Delilah in your lap. You must part with your sins or your soul: spare but one sin and God will not spare you. Your sins must die or you must die for them."

A Broken and Contrite Heart

Openness without brokenness is not acceptable to God. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart God will not despise (Psalm 51:17). There is not true confession without conviction of sin and contrition for sin. **The root of all sin is pride**. Confession breaks arrogance as nothing else can.

We need to renounce and refuse all ground given to demons - specifically, steadily and deliberately, one by one. God commands: "**Repent! And renounce all your detestable practices.**" Ezekiel 14:6

I must renounce my sins, reject them and refuse to have anything to do with them anymore, to resist any temptation towards them or from them - once and for always.

Restitution

There is no forgiveness without restitution. "*He must make restitution in full...*" Leviticus 6:5

Return what you have borrowed, **restore** what you have stolen, **repair** what you have damaged and **reconcile** with those that you are not right with. Do everything you can to **resolve** conflict and repair your relationships.

Idols for Destruction

Remove and destroy all objects related to demonic activity and sin. Read of the believers in Ephesus who had practiced sorcery how they brought their scrolls together and burned them publically. In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power (Acts 19:20).

Full Freedom in Christ

In the war to claim the land of freedom, Joshua left no survivors. In the same way the person in need of deliverance should not rest until every bondage is broken and he is set free from every evil spirit in his life. As William Booth wrote: "For strength to ever do the right, for grace to conquer in the fight, for power to walk the world in white - send the fire!"

"Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Corinthians 3:17

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:2

"And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." John 8:36

"For you brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Galatians 5:13

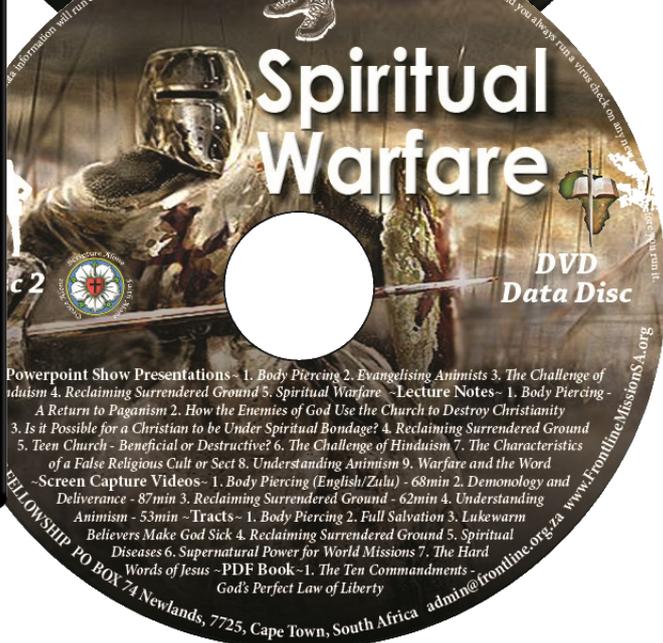
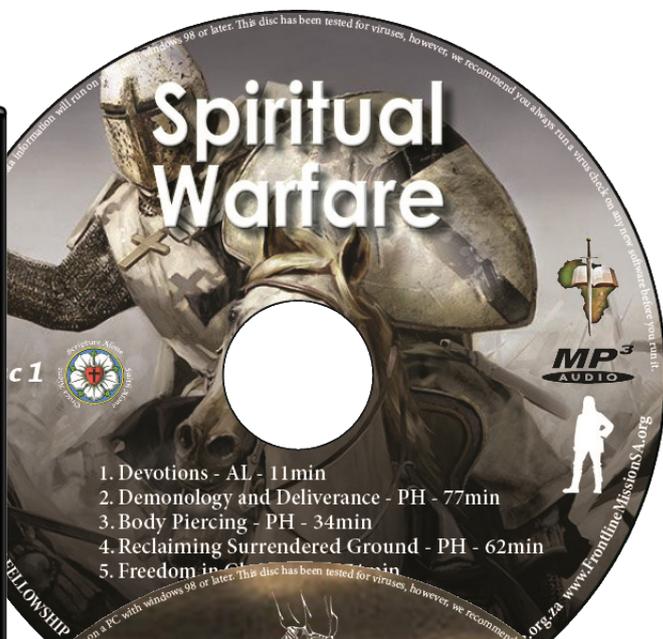
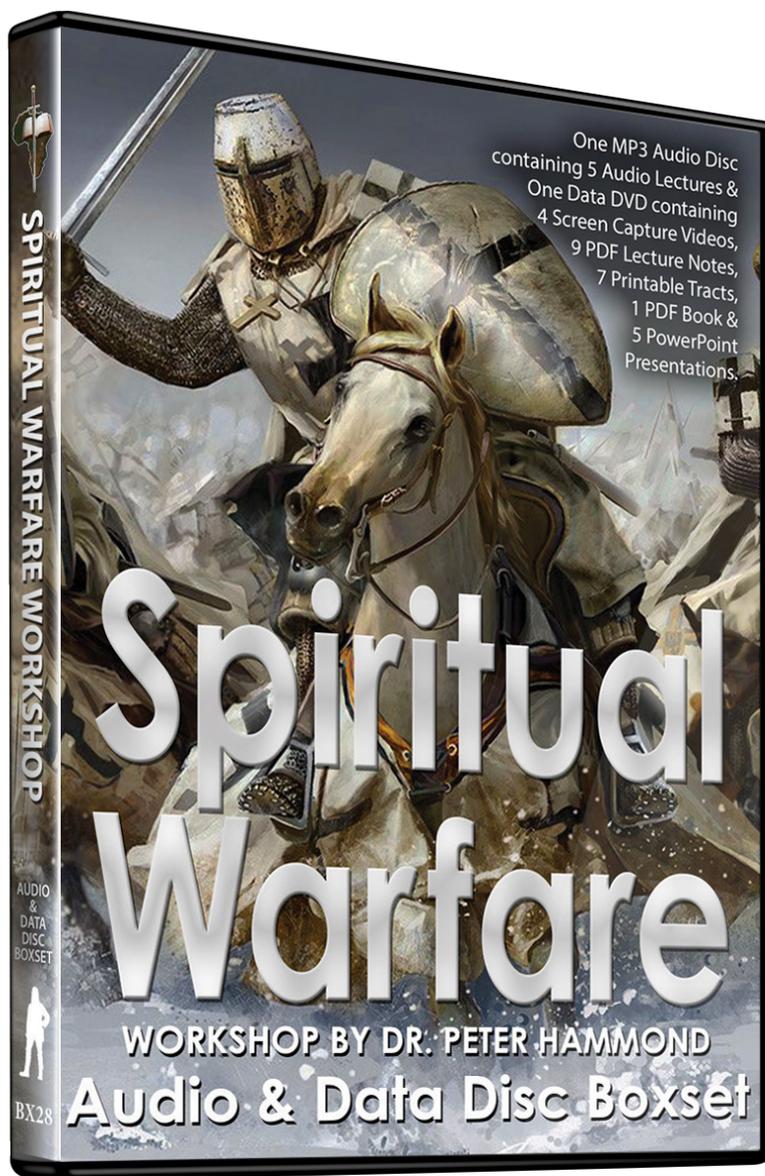
"For this is the Will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men - as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God." 1 Peter 2:15-16

"Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1:12-14

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 15:57-58

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Chapter 2

RECLAIMING SURRENDERED GROUND**Freedom in Christ**

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-4

As Christians we are engaged in an intense spiritual warfare. ***“Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*** 1 Peter 5:8

The devil is a shrewd enemy who has been tempting God’s people for centuries, placing snares and traps in our path to distract, deviate, discourage and defeat us. The devil knows our weaknesses, whether pride, greed or lust, dishonesty, immorality or bitterness. If we do not deal with sin and fortify our areas of weakness, we will continue to experience spiritual defeat.

If we harbour and nurture our sin, we will give the devil a foothold in our lives. Once we have surrendered ground to satan, it is vitally important that we learn how to reclaim it, how to put on the whole spiritual Armour of God and successfully resist the tempter. The weapons that God gives us are able to tear down satan’s strongholds and replace them with fortresses of faith.

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.”

Ephesians 4:26-27

If we cultivate any known sin, we are giving satan an opportunity to gain a foothold, a beachhead in our life. Satan will then use this opportunity to invade and take over other areas. It is crucial that we, in the power of God’s Holy Spirit, reclaim and retake the ground that we have yielded to the enemy.

The Apostle Paul said that he didn’t want us to be ignorant of satan’s devices (2 Corinthians 2:11). But most Christians today are wilfully ignorant of the tactics and strategies of the enemy.

As John Bunyan’s *Pilgrims Progress* so eloquently portrays, Christians are involved in a daily battle against *“all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.”* 1 John 2:16

Satan’s plan is to steal, to kill and to destroy (John 10:10) ***“The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”*** 1 John 5:19

Total War

Not only has the enemy enslaved many to false religions, sinful habits and addictions, but he is also waging an all-out war against the forces of Jesus Christ. Satan aims to undermine the Church and frustrate the Divinely appointed rescue mission entrusted to it.

Just as our Lord Jesus Christ is dedicated to the saving of lost men and women (Luke 19:10), so too satan is dedicated to damning and destroying everyone in this strife torn world.

Just as it is God’s plan for the Church to take the precious life giving Bible, the Word of God, to all peoples everywhere, so too satan seeks to prevent this.

Just as Jesus has commanded Christians to be a light to this world, radiating God’s love to those trapped in the darkness of sin, so also the enemy continually seeks to dim, divert or destroy that influence.

The only hope for this lost world is the Good News of Jesus Christ and God has entrusted this message to the Church. God’s plan is for Christians to be His freedom fighters in this sin-enslaved world. As God’s guerrillas, Christians need to be undermining satan’s forces, the false religious cults and sects, Communism and the occult. The whole Church needs to be involved in this war of liberation to free the whole world from the devil’s deceptions and the snares of satan.

The only reason why the devil is so often winning, is that the church is so seldom fighting!

“Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” James 4:7. If the devil is not fleeing from us, then either we are not submitting to God, or we are not resisting the devil, or both.

“He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4

“We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” Romans 8:37

Yet, most in the church prefer to retreat into our barracks to sing battle songs, rather than follow our Commanding Officer into the fields of battle. We teach about our wonderful weapons, but they are seldom used. We praise our Commanding Officer, but we don't obey Him. We know He commands us to attack, but we choose to consolidate. He says move forward, but we decide to dig in. He leads us into battle, but we stay at home and watch T.V., read romance novels, mix it or play video games.

The enemy has tricked many into the ambush of pride and thousands have triggered the landmines of lust. Others have been discouraged by the bombardment of criticism and many have retreated before the poison gas of gossip. The booby traps of bitterness have crippled the critical and those who have straggled behind their units have found themselves captured by the diversions of the world. Propaganda has led some to surrender to the army of unbelief.

We are in a spiritual world war and the fight is to preach the Gospel to the millions living under communist oppression, to smuggle Bibles to those living under severe persecution, to save the lives of the millions trapped in satanic deceptions and false religious cults and sects, to free the drug addicts and liberate the alcoholics. The church must reach everyone in this needy world with the powerful love and liberty of Jesus Christ. Our primary targets must include the seemingly impenetrable Communist and Muslim areas. These strongholds must be reached for Christ – no matter what the cost.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

To do so, we need to be free. Ephesians 4:27 warns us: *“never give place to the devil.”* The NIV calls this a *“foothold”*, the NASB an *“opportunity”* and the TEV: a *“chance”* to the devil.

The Downward Spiral of Sin

If satan gains a firm enough foothold in a person's life, he can turn an act of sin into a regular practice of sin and from there it can degenerate into a habit, which leads the person downward into bondage. ***“His own iniquities entrap the wicked man and he is caught in the cords of his sin.”*** Proverbs 5:22

No alcoholic starts by announcing: *“I plan to ruin my life and my family by drinking as much alcohol as I can every day from this day forward!”* No, it begins with a single drink, then a second, then a third...the downward slide can be traced from the initial act, to a regular practice, to a habit and to bondage.

The counselling psychologists tend to use the word *“addiction.”* This suggests that we are powerless victims of our problem. God calls it sin. ***“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free...most assuredly I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin...therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”*** John 8:32-36

Steps to Freedom

1. The first step towards genuine freedom in Christ must be wholehearted repentance from sin.

“For Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation...” 2 Corinthians 7:10

“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:5-9

The truth is that we are not just victims of satan needing deliverance, we are guilty sinners needing forgiveness.

2. The next step to freedom in Christ is taking back the ground that we have yielded to the enemy. If we have given satan a key, or a foothold, in our lives through bitterness, unforgiveness, pride, immorality, idolatry or rebelliousness, we need to command the enemy in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ to leave.

Satan is a liar and a deceiver (John 8:44), he is the *“accuser of the brethren.”* Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). It is the truth that sets us free. We need to renew our minds (Romans 12:2) meditating on *“whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy.”* Philippians 4:8

We need to tear down the strongholds of satan in our life (2 Corinthians 10:4). In its place, we need to build towers of truth, reprogramming our mind with the life giving and liberating Word of God. We need to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, bringing our thoughts and lives in line with God's Word and God's Will.

The Occult

God's Law forbids us to give attention to ***“mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.”*** Leviticus 19:31 ***“When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. These shall not be found among you: anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practises witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are abominations to the Lord and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you.”*** Deuteronomy 18:9–14

1. Ask God to reveal any and all occultic activity that has taken place in your life.
2. Renounce the seeking of power as sin and commit yourself to the empowering of God's Holy Spirit.
3. Renounce the seeking of guidance from evil spirits and commit yourself to the guidance of the Scriptures.
4. Renounce all occult healing involvement and commit yourself to the God who heals.
5. Renounce the use of all mantras, charms, fetishes or any object that you may have trusted in for protection and commit yourself to God's protection.
6. Remove all occult material from your home. Burn what can be burned and break and bury what cannot be burned (Act 19:19).
7. Ask God to take back all ground given to satan through your involvement in darkness and worldly or occultic music.
8. Determine to only listen to music which is thoroughly Christian, God honouring and edifying. Remove and destroy all music that does not glorify God. Music is one of the tools that the enemy uses to entice people into occult and the effects often stay with these people long after their conversion to Christ.

God instructed Israel: ***“You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covert the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.”*** Deuteronomy 7:25-26

David said that he would even take the names of false gods upon his lips (Psalm 16:4).

Getting in to the occult is relatively easy. Getting out is very traumatic, but it is absolutely essential for spiritual health. We need to destroy all occult materials. ***“If you bought it, you burn it.”*** (See Acts 19:19-20)

“And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony and they did not love their lives to the death.” Revelation 12:11

Bitterness

Bitterness can be another stronghold of satan. If you have not forgiven someone, then it is likely that you harbour an unforgiving spirit and a resentment that will deepen into bitterness. Ask God to reveal to you the people against whom you are holding feelings of bitterness and resentment. Be aware that you could also be harbouring feelings of bitterness against God. Make a list of the names that God reveals to you. Start at the bottom of the list, with those people who are easier to forgive and work your way up to the more difficult cases. Repent of the sin of unforgiveness. Forgive each person from the heart. Ask God to take back the ground that you have given satan through unforgiveness. We are to forgive wholeheartedly ***“lest satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”*** 2 Corinthians 2:11

The Apostle Paul said that: ***“I myself always strive to have a clear conscience without offence toward God and men.”*** Acts 24:16

If someone you knew was making a list of people who had hurt them and had never asked for their forgiveness, would you be on that list?

Make a list of all the people who God brings to your mind whom you have offended and whom you have not sought forgiveness from. Contact those individuals by letter or telephone if possible and be brief. Tell that particular person that you have been looking back over your life and you realised that you had failed him/her in the specific way that God revealed to you, then ask for his/her forgiveness. Make restitution where needed.

If certain people have benefitted you, but you have never shown appreciation, express gratitude to them for what you have gained. Send thank you notes, or cards, to people who have blessed you, showing how God used them to build up, strengthen or challenge you.

Ask God to guide you as to everything that you can do to make things right, do restitution, apologise and restore relationships.

Rebellion

Another key area where satan gains a foothold and strongholds, in the lives of Christians is in the area of rebelliousness. ***“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”*** 1 Samuel 15:23

Ask God to forgive you for not respecting and submitting to the authorities He has placed in your life. Determine before God to be in submission to the authorities that God has placed over you, whether your parents, your husband, your educational institution, your mission, your church, or your employer. Ask forgiveness from those authorities that you have rebelled against and tell them of your renewed commitment to be in submission under the Lord.

Pride

Pride is repugnant to God. In some ways pride is one of the worst sins anyone could commit. Pride is a fist of rebellion in the face of the Creator and Ruler of the universe. In Proverbs 6:16–17, pride is at the top of the list of the seven sin that God hates most. Pride was satan’s original sin that caused him to be cast down from Heaven as Lucifer. ***“Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.”*** Proverbs 16:5 ***“Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*** Proverbs 16:18

Every day make a conscious decision to die to self and to be committed to God’s Will and His purpose for your life. Ask God’ forgiveness for areas of your life that you have built around self and surrender them to God. Ask Him to take back any ground that you have surrendered to satan.

Immorality

Sexual bondage is one of satan’s chief ploys in undermining Christians. Ask God to reveal to you the first time you violated His moral Law and began to give satan ground in your life. Confess every sin that the Lord brings to your memory and ask God to restore your fellowship with Him in that area. Ask God to take back all ground given to the enemy through moral failure. Dedicate your body to the purpose of glorifying God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Be on your guard for the traps and temptations of satan and be prepared to resist him.

The Armour of God

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the Heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Stand them, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace; above all, taking the Shield of Faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this and with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:10-18

Set Free to Serve Christ

Humble yourself before God (James 4:6). Acknowledge your need of God’s grace, His Divine power and guidance.

Submit yourself to God (James 4:7). Dedicate your body to glorifying God (1 Cor. 6:19-20), your mind to thinking His thoughts (Phil 4:8), your emotions to loving Him (Matthew 22:37) and your energy to serving as unto God and not unto men (Ephesians 6:6-7).

Actively resist the devil (James 4:7), in the Name of Jesus (Phil 2:9-11). Overcome satan by the Blood of the Lamb and by the Word of your testimony (Rev. 12:11). Counterattack with the Word of God and prayer (Ephesians 6:18-20). Draw near to God (James 4:8). **“Cleanse your hands,”** asking forgiveness for every violation of God’s standards. **“Purify your hearts,”** get back in the race and keep your eyes fixed on Jesus on whom your faith depends from beginning to end (Hebrews 12:1-2). Reclaim all surrendered ground and enjoy full freedom in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Here is a **suggested prayer** that you may find helpful as you wholeheartedly turn from sin and place all your trust in Christ alone:

Heavenly Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I come before You desiring to be free from all bondage and sin. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sin, for Your mercy and grace and for cleansing me from my sin. I am sorry for my sin and I pray Lord God that You would wash me and cleanse me and free me from all consequences of my iniquities and rebellion.

I now confess and repent of all my sins, both known and unknown. I confess and renounce the sins of my forefathers. In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the power of His Blood shed upon the cross of Calvary I break and renounce the power of every demonic curse that has been passed down upon me by the sins and actions of others, or by myself.

In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ I renounce, break and loose myself and my family from all demonic subjection and bondage. I claim release through the Blood of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. By Your Grace may You bless me and use me and enable me to serve You faithfully, to Your honour and glory and for the extension of Your Kingdom.

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Chapter 3

WAR PSALMS of The PRINCE of PEACE

Those of us involved in ministering to Christians suffering persecution recognise that the Imprecatory Psalms are a tremendous source of comfort. Those of us who are fighting for the right to life of the preborn, or battling social evils such as pornography or crime, appreciate what an important weapon God has entrusted to us in the Imprecatory Psalms.

The Imprecatory Psalms

When I first encountered the prayers for judgement in the Psalms I was quite at a loss to know how to respond to them. Prayers such as: ***“Break the arm of the wicked and evil man; call him to account for his wickedness...”*** Psalm 10:15 did not seem consistent with the gospel of love which I had accepted. Yet Psalm 10:15 was clearly motivated by love for God (***“The Lord is King forever and ever; the nations will perish from His land”*** 10:16 and ***“Why does the wicked man revile God?”*** 10:13) and by love for the innocent who suffer (***“You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; You encourage them and You listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.”*** 10:17-18.)

The Wrath of God

Nevertheless, I grew increasingly uncomfortable reading such graphic prayers for God to judge the wicked as: ***“Pour out your wrath on them; let Your fierce anger overtake them”*** 69:24; ***“O Lord, the God who avenges, O God who avenges, shine forth. Rise up, O Judge of the earth, pay back to the proud what they deserve.”*** 95:1-2; ***“Break the teeth in their mouths, O God... let them vanish like water... let their arrows be blunted... The righteous will be glad when they are avenged, when they bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked. Then men will say, ‘Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth.’”*** 58:6-11

Certainly I wanted God to be honoured and yes I was deeply distressed by the prevalence of evil - but could I actually pray for God to *“pour out His wrath”* on the wicked?

How are these Prayers to be Prayed?

The Scriptures make it clear that these prayers are not to be prayed for our own selfish motives, nor against our personal enemies. Rather they are to be prayed in Christ, for His glory and against His enemies. The psalmist describes the targets of these imprecations as: those who devise injustice in their heart and whose hands mete out violence (58:2); those who ***“boast of evil”*** and ***“are a disgrace in the eyes of God. Your tongue plots destruction, it is like a sharpened razor, you who practice deceit. You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth.”*** 52:1-3; ***“They crush your people... They slay the widow and the alien; they murder the fatherless.”*** 94:5-6; ***“With cunning they conspire against Your people; they plot against those You cherish.”*** 83:3; ***“You hate all who do wrong. You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors.”*** 5:5-6.

To those unrepentant enemies of God, the psalmist declares: ***“Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin”*** 52:5; ***“Surely God will crush the heads of His enemies... of those who go on in their sins”*** 68:21.

The Purpose of these Prayers

And the purpose of these prayers for justice is declared: ***“Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules...”*** 59:13; ***“to proclaim the power of God”*** 68:34; ***“All kings will bow down to Him and all nations will serve Him”*** 72:11; ***“Who knows the power of Your anger? For Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due You.”*** 90:11

Yet despite the fact that 90 of the 150 Psalms include imprecations (prayers invoking God’s righteous judgement upon the wicked) such prayers are rare in the average Western church. However, amongst the persecuted churches these prayers are much more common.

Praying Against the Persecutors

Amidst the burned out churches and devastation of Marxist Angola I found the survivors of communist persecution - including the crippled and maimed and widows and orphans praying for God to strike down the wicked and remove the persecutors of the Church. I was shocked - yet it was Biblical (Even the martyrs in Heaven pray ***“How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until You judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?”*** Revelation 6:10).

The initiator of the communist persecution in Angola was Agestino Neto. Described as a “*drunken, psychotic, Marxist poet*”, Neto had been installed by Cuban troops as the first dictator of Angola. He boasted that: “*Within 20 years there won't be a Bible or a church left in Angola. I will have eradicated Christianity.*” Yet despite the vicious wave of church burning and massacres it is not Christianity that was eradicated in Angola but Agestino Neto. Neto died in mysterious circumstances on an operating table in Moscow.

Persecutors Judged

In **Romania** I learnt of a series of remarkable incidents recorded of God judging the persecutors of the Church in answer to prayer:

- A communist official ordered a certain pastor to be arrested. The next day the official died of a heart attack.
- Another communist party official ordered that all the Bibles in his district were to be collected and pulped, to be turned into toilet paper. This blasphemous project was in fact carried out. But the next day when the official was medically examined, he was informed that he had terminal cancer. He died shortly afterwards.
- On another occasion, a communist official who had ordered a Baptist church to be demolished by bulldozers died in a car crash the very next day.
- When an order was given to dismantle a place of worship on the mountainside in a forest, the workmen flatly refused to carry out the order. At gunpoint a group of conscripted gypsies also refused to touch the church. In desperation, the communist police forced prisoners at bayonet-point to dismantle the structure. Yet the officer in charge pleaded with the local Christians to pray for him, that God would not judge him. He emphasised that he had nothing against Christians and was only obeying strict orders. The building was in fact reconstructed later and again used for worship.

“They were all seized with fear and the Name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour... in this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.” Acts 19:17,20

Nicolae Ceaucescu the dictator who ordered much of the persecution in Romania was overthrown by his own army and executed on Christmas day, 1989, to joyous shouts of “the anti-Christ is dead” in the streets. Many testified that this was in answer to the fervent prayers on the long suffering people of Romania.

Challenging God

Another persecutor of the Church who challenged God was Samora Machel, the first dictator of Marxist Mozambique. Samora Machel was a cannibal who ate human flesh in witchcraft ceremonies in the 1960's. He pledged his soul to Satan and vowed that he would destroy the Church and turn Mozambique into the first truly Marxist-Leninist state in Africa. Thousands of churches in Mozambique were closed, confiscated, “*nationalised*”, claimed and padlocked, burnt down or boarded up. Missionaries were expelled, some being imprisoned first. Evangelism was forbidden. Bibles were ceremonially burnt and tens of thousands of Christians, including many pastors and elders, were shipped off to concentration camps - most were never seen again.

A month before his sudden death Samora Machel cursed God publicly and challenged Him to prove His existence by striking him (Machel) dead. On 19 October 1986, while several churches were specifically praying for God to stop persecution in Mozambique, Machel's Soviet Tupelov aircraft crashed in a violent thunderstorm. The plane crashed 200 metres within South Africa's boundary with Mozambique. Amidst the wreckage the Marxist plans for overthrowing the government of Malawi were discovered and published. Not only had God judged a blasphemer and a persecutor, but He had also saved a country from persecution.

The Power of Prayer

In the months leading up to the first multi-party elections in Zambia many churches fasted and prayed for God to remove the 27 year socialist dictatorship of Kenneth Kaunda. This was done on 31st October 1991 when Fredrick Chiluba (a man converted to Christ whilst imprisoned for opposing Kaunda) was elected president of Zambia and covenanted to make Zambia a Christian country.

It is recorded in history that the wicked Mary, Queen of Scots, declared trembling and in tears: “*I am more afraid of John Knox's prayers than of an army of ten thousand.*”

The Psalms are the Oracles of God

Our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles used the Psalms constantly in teaching men to know God. The New Testament (NT) quotes the Old Testament (OT) over 283 times 41% of all OT quotes in the NT are from the Psalms. Christ Himself alluded to the Psalms over 50 times. The Psalms are the Prayer Book of the Bible.

2 Tim 3:16-17 declares:

“All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (see also 2 Peter 3:15-16).

The Psalms are part of God’s revelation of Himself and His attributes and they are reaffirmed by the NT as the authoritative Word of God. Those imprecatory Psalms which evangelical plastic surgeons reject as “*unsuited*” and “*unworthy*” for the Church are the very Psalms Christ used to testify about Himself (e.g. Mark 12:36; Matt 22:43-44) and which the apostles used as authoritative Scripture (e.g. Acts 1:16-20; Acts 4:25; Hebrew 4:7). See also 2 Samuel 23:1-2.

CH Spurgeon said concerning the imprecatory Psalms, (especially Psalm 109):

“Truly this is one of the hard places of Scripture, a passage which the soul trembles to read, yet it is not ours to sit in Judgement upon it, but to bow our ear to what the Lord would speak to us therein.”

The rejection of any part of God’s Word is a rejection of the giver of that Word, God Himself.

The Messianic Psalms are the Words of Christ

Christ quoted the Psalms not merely as prophecy; He actually spoke the Psalms as His own words. The Psalms occupied an enormous place in the life of our Lord. He used it as His prayer book and songbook - from the Synagogue to the festivals and at the Last Supper.

On the cross Christ quoted from the Psalms - not as some ancient authority that He adapted for His own use, but as His very own words - the words of the Lord’s Anointed which as David’s Son He truly was.

“Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit” Psalm 31:5

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Psalm 22:1

In His ministry Christ foretells what He will say as the Judge on the Day of Judgement and He quotes the Psalms in doing so!

Matthew 7:23 ***“Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers!’”*** Psalm 6:8

In Hebrews 10:5 the apostle attributes Psalm 40:6-8 directly to Christ although nowhere in the Gospels is Christ recorded as having said these words. Similarly Hebrews 2:11-12 attributes Psalm 22:22 directly to Christ despite there being no record of His having spoken these words while on earth. Clearly the apostles believed Christ is speaking in the Psalms.

Christ came to establish His Kingdom and to extend His mercy in all the earth. But let us never forget that Jesus will come again to execute Judgement on the wicked.

David as the anointed king of the chosen people of God was a prototype of Jesus Christ. Acts 2:30: ***“being therefore a prophet... he foresaw and spoke of the Resurrection of Christ.”***

David was a witness to Christ in his office, in his life and in his words. The same words which David spoke, the future Messiah spoke through him. The prayers of David were prayed also by Christ. Or better Christ Himself prayed these Psalms through His forerunner David.

The imprecatory Psalms are expressions of the infinite justice of God, of His indignation against wrong doing and His compassion for the wronged.

What about the Psalms of Repentance?

Christ is also the Lamb of God, the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. Christ in the day of His crucifixion was charged with the sin of His people. He appropriated to Himself those debts for which He had made Himself responsible. Our Lord was the substitution for the sinner. He took the sinners place (Isaiah 53).

“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”
2 Corinthians 5:21

In history the Psalms, especially the imprecatory Psalms, have been understood to have been the prayers of Christ by: St Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, Tertullian, Luther and many others. All the Psalms are the voice of Christ. Christ is praying these prayers of vengeance. It is only right for the righteous King of Peace to ask God to destroy His enemies.

These prayers signal an alarm to all who are still enemies of King Jesus. His prayers will be answered! God's Word is revealed upon all who oppose Christ. Anyone who rejects God's way of forgiveness in the cross of Christ will bear the dreadful curses of God.

He who prays Psalm 69:23-28 will one day make this prayer a reality when He declares to those on His left: ***"Depart from Me you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."*** Matthew 25:41

All the enemies of the Lord need to hear these Psalms. God's Kingdom is at War. The powers of evil will fall and God alone will reign forever!

"With justice He judges and makes war... out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron sceptre; He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty... King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Revelation 19:11-15

What About Loving our Enemies?

What about Jesus' command to love our enemies and to bless those who curse us (Matthew 5:44)?

Christ is of course the loving and merciful Saviour who forgives sin; but He is also the awesome Judge who is coming in Judgement on those who disobey His Gospel.

"God is just. He will pay back trouble to those who troubles' you and give relief to you who are troubled... This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels. He will punish those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power on the day He comes to be glorified in His holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed." 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

Jesus has power on earth to forgive sins and He has power on earth to execute judgement upon His enemies. In the Psalms we see both the vengeance and the love of God.

Even in the N.T. & in the Gospels we see imprecations.

"Woe to you... hypocrites... blind guides... blind fools... full of greed and self indulgence... whitewashed tombs... you snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to Hell?" Matthew 23

In Matthew 26:23-24 Christ quotes from Psalm 69 and 109 to refer to His betrayal by Judas.

We also need to acknowledge that Christ's prayers of blessing are not for all. In John 17:6-9 it is clear that Christ is only praying for the elect of God - those who have: *"obeyed your Word"...* *"accepted" God's Word...* and have *"believed"*. (see Luke 10:8-16 - Those who reject the message of God's kingdom will be judged.)

May we Pray the Imprecatory Psalms?

Martin Luther pointed out that when one prays: ***"Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done"*** then ***"he must put all the opposition to this in one pile and say: Curses, maledictions and disgrace upon every other name and every other kingdom. May they be ruined and torn apart and may all their schemes and wisdom and plans run aground"***.

To pray for the extension of God's kingdom is to seek the destruction of all other kingdoms, e.g. Daniel 2:44: ***"The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed.. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."***

Advance and victory for the Church means defeat and retreat for the kingdom of darkness.

There is a life & death struggle between two kingdoms. The Church cannot exclude hatred for Satan's kingdom from its love for God's Kingdom. God's Kingdom cannot come without Satan's kingdom being destroyed. God's will cannot be done on earth without the destruction of evil. The glory of God demands the destruction of evil. Instead of being influenced by a sickly sentimentalism which insists upon the assumed, but really non-existent, rights of man - we should focus instead upon the rights of God.

"Do To Them As You Did to Sisera"

Note Psalm 83 where the Psalmist prays against those who "plot together" against God and His people: ***"Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your Name O Lord... Do to them as You did to Median, as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, who perished at Endor and became like refuse on the ground."***

The story of Sisera in the book of Judges (Chapter 4 and 5) provides a vivid example of God's judgement on the wicked. Sisera *"cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years"* and they *"cried to the Lord for help"* Judges 4:3. In response

to those prayers: ***“The Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword and Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot... All the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man was left.”*** Judges 4:15-16

The account then goes on to describe how Sisera escaped to the tent of Jael she lulled him into a false sense of safety and then drove a tent peg through his temple with a hammer. The song of victory by Deborah and Barak celebrated the crushing of the head of Sisera in graphic detail (Judges 5:25-27). And it is this that Psalm 83 implores God to again do to His enemies...***“As you did to Sisera...”***

The Blessings of Obedience and the Curses of Disobedience

The imprecatory Psalms are fully consistent with the law of God: ***“If you do not carefully follow all the words of this Law, which are written in this book and do not revere this glorious and awesome Name - the Lord your God - the Lord will send fearful plagues on you and your decedents. He will bring upon you all the deceases of Egypt that you dreaded and they will cling to you. The Lord will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law until you are destroyed... because you did not obey the Lord your God... so it will please Him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess.”*** Deuteronomy 28:58-63

The Covenant God made with His people included curses for disobedience as well as blessings for obedience. Deuteronomy 27 records the formal giving and receiving of the covenant terms in an awesome account: ***“The Levites shall recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice:***

“Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol - a thing detestable to the Lord, the work of the craftsman’s hands - and sets it up in secret. Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

“Cursed is the man who dishonours his father or his mother...”

“Cursed is the man who moves his neighbour’s boundary stone...”

“Cursed is the man who leads the blind astray on the roads...”

“Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow...”

“Cursed is the man who kills his neighbour secretly...”

“Cursed is the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person.

“Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this Law by carrying them out.

Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’” Deuteronomy 27:14-26

The New Testament confirms that the inevitable consequences of rejecting Christ, is the curse. ***“If anyone does not love the Lord - a curse be on him.”*** 1 Corinthians 16:22 (See also: Romans 12:19-21; Hebrews 1:1-3; 3:7-12; 3:15-19; 10:26-31; 12:14-29.)

How Can We Preach these Prayers?

The Church of Jesus Christ is an army under orders.

Scripture constitutes the official dispatches from the Commander-in-Chief. But we have a problem: those who are called to pass on those orders are refusing to do so. How then can we expect to be a united, effective army? Is it any wonder that the troops have lost sight of their commission to demolish the strongholds of the kingdom of darkness? If the Church does not hear the battle cries of her Captain, how will she follow Him onto the battlefield?

Pastors are commissioned to pass on the orders of the Church’s Commander, never withholding or changing His words. One whose job is to carry dispatches to troops in wartime would face certain and severe punishment if he dared to amend the general’s orders. The pastor’s charge is of greater importance than that of a courier in any earthly army. There’s no place for the dispatcher to decide he doesn’t agree with his Commander’s strategy.

When Jesus Christ sent seventy-two disciples on a preaching mission, He told them to proclaim the coming of God’s Kingdom (Luke 10:9) - that is, to announce that people must submit to God’s rule in their lives. Jesus instructed them to pray for peace on any house they approach, assuring them that if anyone rejected it, the peace would return on the disciples (verse 5). But we must consider what He said they should do if their message were rejected - that is, if the hearers persisted in rebellion against God’s rule - ***“But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The Kingdom of God is near’”*** Luke 10:11.

What would be the result of that denunciation? I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom [on which God sent fire from heaven in judgement for its wickedness] than for that town (verse 12). Immediately Jesus added curses on Korazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum for their rejection of His message (verse 13:15).

He then explained to the disciples the great authority He had given them: ***“He who listens to you listens to Me; he who rejects you rejects Me; but he who rejects Me rejects him who sent Me”*** (verse 16). This is the fundamental basis for calling down God’s curses on anyone: his persistent rebellion against God’s authority expressed in His Law and the ministry of His servants.

We need to clearly and forcefully proclaim the war cries of the Prince of Peace. Only then will the Church awake from its lethargy and once again enter the battle. If we fail to pass on the battle cry then a lack of urgency and confusion in the ranks will be inevitable.

God Cannot Be Mocked

Like Psalm 1 our preaching needs to clearly show the blessings of obedience and the curse of disobedience. The eternal truth is that **God cannot be mocked**. Whatever a man sows - that shall he reap (Galatians 6:7). The curses pronounced on disobedience in Deuteronomy 28:47-53 were fulfilled in detail in Samaria (2 Kings 6:28-29) and in Judea (AD 70). The wrath of God upon covenant breakers is real.

The “I” of the Psalms is Jesus Christ. The “we” of the Psalms includes those of us in the Lord Jesus. The enemies are not our own, individually, but those of the Lord and of His Church. The Psalms are of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. They record Christ’s march in victory against the kingdom of darkness. As Christ is the author of the Psalms, so, too, is He the final fulfilment of the Covenant on which they are based. God will answer the psalmist’s prayers completely in Jesus Christ on the final Day of Judgement. While on earth Jesus foretold the day when He will say: ***“But those enemies of Mine who did not want Me to be King over them - bring them here and kill them in front of Me”*** Luke 19:27.

God’s Kingdom is at War

A fatal end awaits everyone who refuses to acknowledge and to obey Jesus as King and Lord. Hearing expositions of these war psalms of the Prince of Peace will remind His people that God’s Kingdom is at war! The Kingdom of darkness is being overcome by the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, a war in which each local congregation of believers plays a vital part. You must rally your battalion to put on the whole armour of God, including ***“the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God”*** Ephesians 6:17. That battle-readiness also involves ***“pray(ing) in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests”*** Ephesians 6:18.

Christ teaches His army to pray for the utter destruction of the enemies of God as the psalmist did: ***“Pour our Your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge You, on the kingdoms that do not call on Your Name”*** Psalm 79:6.

Pray for the Persecuted

To deal with the very real hurts and injustices in this world it is necessary for us to pray for God’s justice. Those who are persecuted need the comfort of these prayers.

“Let the saints rejoice in His honour and sing for joy... May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentences written against them. This is the glory of all His saints. Praise the Lord.” Psalm 149:5-9

Spiritual Warfare

Prayer is, in fact, spiritual warfare. One weapon is prayer for conversion of spiritual enemies; another is prayer for judgement on those who finally refuse to be converted. We handicap the army of God when we refuse to use both of these great weapons that He has given us. It is at all times a part of the task of the people of God to destroy evil.

If you have been guilty of dulling your sword, by neglecting or undermining these Psalms, repent of that sin, sharpen your sword anew and go forth to do battle in the Name and for the Glory of Jesus - until ***“the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the water cover the sea”*** Habakkuk 2:14

This has been adapted from Chapter 8 – ***Praying for Justice***, of ***Putting Feet to Your Faith*** by Dr. Peter Hammond (2015) available from Christian Liberty Books (admin@ChristianLibertyBooks.co.za).

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Other books available from Christian Liberty Books:

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PO 358 Howard Place 7450 Pinelands, Cape Town, South Africa

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