

**General Topics :: Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare****Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/16 22:01**

Dear saints, I will be utilizing this thread in the next few weeks to collect and edit some writings on spiritual warfare which I am preparing to compile into a book, not unlike the process I did with "Understanding Mortification" last year. Lord willing, this new book will be available sometime in early summer. For now, I would like to share the articles with the readership of Sermon Index with the prayer that many believers will find new confidence when facing spiritual warfare through the grace of God and the blood of Christ.

It is good for a soldier to know something about the adversary he is facing on the battlefield. Indeed, the Word of God admonishes us to not be "ignorant" of the enemy's schemes (2 Cor. 2:11) and to be ever-prepared for the aggression of evil. I pray these articles contribute to these means, as the very designs of darkness are explored, exposed and then given tactical responses in accordance with the scriptural revelation of New Covenant grace.

Brother Paul

Re: Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2013/1/16 22:44

Praise the Lord brother, I am looking forward to these contributions and they encourage me personally for my walk with the Lord. We walk as children of light in a crooked and depraved generation that lacks moral restraint. They are wicked men because there is a Wicked One that holds them sway. His devices are against us but they will not prevail (Psalm 37).

Only Christ will help such pilgrims as we end our journey well for His praise and glory. Your first book was a great balm to some on the narrow path to life.

Re: Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare, on: 2013/1/17 0:30

Hello PaulWest:

Looking forward to the posts. I have been wanting to learn more about spiritual warfare and how it applies to us in the Body. "The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."

Have you read through Gurnall's book on Spiritual Warfare, The Christian in Complete Armour?

KM

Re: Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare - posted by ET101, on: 2013/1/17 0:39

This is such a privilege for me. I've been praying 'Lord, please teach my hands to war' and God is currently doing just that. . .so this will be a blessing to me. Thank you!

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/17 1:05

Well, someone definitely doesn't want me posting this information here. I had the first chapter "The Secret War" edited with all the scripture references inserted (over 30 of them), clicked submit and was promptly told I do not have permission to post here. I lost everything. I know I was logged on to the site, but got booted anyhow. Well, it's too late to re-edit everything now. I'll have to come back tomorrow and try it again.

This book will be very revealing as to the ways of the enemy and I will be providing hundreds of scripture references. I've been under dire attack these past few months, beginning shortly after I published "Understanding Mortification". I would really appreciate the prayers from any saints who feel led by the Spirit to uplift me before God. In addition to publishing this book, I am also preparing to preach the gospel once again on my city's main plaza. Thank you again for your support. I am a weak man and so desperately need God's grace to accomplish His work.

Your brother in Christ Jesus,

Paul

Re: - posted by ET101, on: 2013/1/17 1:16

Yes, I am led to pray for you. I will pray.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/1/17 8:15

QUOTE:

"Well, someone definitely doesn't want me posting this information here. I had the first chapter "The Secret War" edited with all the scripture references inserted (over 30 of them), clicked submit and was promptly told I do not have permission to post here. I lost everything. I know I was logged on to the site, but got booted anyhow."

I suspect you will think you have now gained more info to add to your book...

Do look forward to these posts - the one on Mortification was very good.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/17 11:00

Thank you Sandra. I always remember you having an interest in things funereal and the spiritualization of death in general. I pray this series will be an equal blessing to you! As far as this goes:

Quote:

----- I suspect you will think you have now gained more info to add to your book...

Well, these types of obstacles are nothing new, and indeed they are touched upon in the book. Last night when I made the comment about "someone" not wanting me to post these articles, it was more tongue-in-cheek than anything else. I was as exasperated that I lost everything!

Blessings!

Brother Paul

Re: - posted by mama27, on: 2013/1/17 11:30

I have asked the Lord to remind me to pray for you. The warfare is intense for so many. Am always blessed by your writings....

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2013/1/17 11:33

PaulWest

When around religious people remarks leading to obstacles as you stated that were tongue and cheek tend to be taken seriously simply because with some people the devil gets in the details and seemingly every move becomes spiritualized. It is my belief that it is a reason why the church is a bit weak because in some circles some believe the devil is at every corner.

Re: Chapter One - The Secret War - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/17 14:09

*original post edited and republished

Re: Chapter One - The Secret War (continued) - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/17 22:55

Those who have been chosen of God to radiate the life of His Son in this war are given a daily death sentence. This death sentence consists of eclipsing the desires of the flesh so that Christ might have preeminence through their vessels. This measure of flesh-eclipsing is proportionate to the diligence one maintains in walking in the spirit. And walking in the spirit requires a deliberate daily resolve. It involves a conscientious effort in guarding our minds from evil thought-patterns and ever realigning them Heavenward (Luke 9:23; John 3:27,30; Romans 8:13; I Corinthians 15:31; II Corinthians 10:5; Colossians 3:5; Hebrews 12:2; I Peter 1:13; I John 5:11).

What many believers do not realize is that this world has been designed by Satan to prevent this realignment. That Satan is the ruler of this world is without doubt. Through his rule, even the basic God-ordained requirements of food for sustenance and intimacy for procreation have been diabolically perverted by the constant bombardment of advertisements to the flesh. In every corner of this world, we find humankind hopelessly entrenched in the satiation of the flesh. Being dead in sin and blind to the majesty of God, man's habitation is consigned to a dismal and empty plane of Adamic carnality. The grand design of spiritual darkness is to ensure his spirit eyes are never opened, and if they are, never elevated. If we take too light an approach to this awareness, we will soon be derailed and devoured by the roaring lion who pulls the strings and works the levers of this ruined world (Genesis 6:5; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Romans 1:24; II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2,5; Philippians 3:19; I John 5:19).

The gaze by which we train our spirits on Him who is altogether lovely is subject to gravity. It takes real effort to resist the pull and maintain a daily loftiness of faith, trust and spiritual integrity toward God. The fight the old saints wrote so prolifically of, and the fearsome war in which the Christian must for a lifetime engage, is not to be found against flesh and blood, but in the maintenance of this unfettered gaze upward. Devils and charlatan preachers, humanistic philosophies and the quest for money are just some of the many different lead weights used by the enemy to sink our minds down into the dregs of carnal rapport. When the mind becomes preoccupied with fleshly pursuits, the vibrancy of communion between our spirits and His becomes eclipsed. Darkness then prevails upon light, and the soldier is drawn from the safety of the Cleft into the open battlefield where he is soon ensnared by the baiting of his own lust (Song of Solomon 5:16; Matthew 7:15; I Corinthians 10:4; Galatians 5:16, 19-21; Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:8; James 1:14; I Timothy 6:10; II Timothy 2:22; II Peter 2:1).

Re: Chapter One - The Secret War (continued) - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/1/18 22:55

It IS a war, of that there is no doubt. And the older you get the worse it IS.

QUOTE:

"When the mind becomes preoccupied with fleshly pursuits, the vibrancy of communion between our spirits and His becomes eclipsed."

So true.

Yes, that Mortification thread was very good. That one and the one "Let's Talk About Peace" are among my favorite threads on SI.

I had that mortification thread in mind when I wrote about Lazarus some time ago. I still find it utterly fascinating how Jesus took a dead body - four days dead - and resurrected it! I suppose you could see into it better than me because of your vocation. In any case, I find this miracle among the most profound in the NT. Apparently the Jewish leaders did as well because they wanted to kill Lazarus! Makes me wonder how they thought they could kill him and that he would stay dead - Jesus just might resurrect him the second time! Kind of funny to think about...

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/19 10:32

Quote:
----- I still find it utterly fascinating how Jesus took a dead body - four days dead - and resurrected it! I suppose you could see into it better than me because of your vocation. In any case, I find this miracle among the most profound in the NT.

Good thoughts sister. Lazarus's resurrection to me is a picture of our own spirits laying dead in tombs of darkness, mummy-wrapped in graveclothes of iniquity and bondage. Not only are we dead, but our spirits fester in the rancid putrefaction of sin and trespasses. Our spirits are held in death until One stronger than death comes to liberate them with Light and Life. Enter Jesus of Nazareth.

But that is not all. The miracle of Lazarus' resurrection also teaches me about evangelism. I have come to see true evangelism as "raising the dead" through the preached blood of Christ. It is in the vacuum of spiritual darkness, where the light of Christ is meant to invade. Notice that Lazarus lay dead in his crypt until the invitation, "Come forth!" burst through the darkness with divine animation. As earthen vessels carrying Christ's light, we are called to project this same life-giving invitation into the crypt which is this present evil world. But who will go amongst the wicked principalities and hellish phantoms to rescue the dead? I believe there are yet many Lazaruses waiting to come forth from their tombs, set free by the preached blood of Christ.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/1/19 13:17

Paul, I may be running ahead of you, hope not, but I hope you will address the issue of how the devil counterfeits the work of the Holy Spirit in areas of conviction of sin.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/19 13:24

Quote:
-----Paul, I may be running ahead of you, hope not, but I hope you will address the issue of how the devil counterfeits the work of the Holy Spirit in areas of conviction of sin.

Excellent point. False conviction was expanded upon in my first book "Understanding Mortification", as well as the trap of false peace. It is brought up again in this series. Thank you for bringing this up!

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2013/1/19 15:06

This is probably one of the best threads I have seen here in 8 years. Keep it coming!

Re: Chapter Two: A Correct Understanding of Christian Victory - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/19 17:17

2. A Correct Understanding of Christian Victory

Many believers have a wrong understanding of Christian victory. They think victory is an unbroken span of sinless perfection where one does not transgress in word, thought or action. But this alone is an inaccurate picture of triumph. True victory, true triumph in Christ leading from glory to glory is actually comprised of segments of overcoming linked together by confession and subsequent blood-washing. There is not a Christian alive who can get through a day without having to acknowledge the impurity of some internal revelation brought by the Holy Spirit, according to his or her current light (Psalms 84:7; II Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:12-21; I John 1:8; 2:1).

The Holy Spirit is always faithful to bring knowledge of sin to the understanding of the child of God. This is the purpose of light. Victory is not so much resisting darkness as it is returning to the light. Every Christian is able, in some capacity, to resist darkness in the face of the light he or she currently has. The problem arises when one enters into varying degrees of darkness minus the corresponding grace of God. A believer may be plagued with a sense of impurity, and yet, opposing, confessing and repenting of the impurity constitutes an on-going victory. This victory is granted through the instantaneous effect of blood-cleansing (John 16:8; I Corinthians 10:3; 14:24; II Corinthians 2:19; Philippians 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; II Peter 2:9).

It is therefore not the person who hides an outbreak of sin who is counted victorious, for these flesh-stiflings are merely a masking; a mortal concealment, a clever corking of a volcanic eruption occurring beneath the surface of the skin. It is not the believer who plugs the volcano, but he confesses and turns from the lava as it burns his conscience who is counted truly victorious. He needs no cork at all, for the grace-filled blood of Christ is able to make the fire recede. The instantaneous effect of the blood is one of cooling, one of healing, one of fire-recession, absolute cleansing and instant restoration (Matthew 11:29; Luke 11:39; Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 4:3; 9:14; I John 1:9).

The periods between these sinful impulses and their cooling are linked by the blood of Jesus Christ, and these are what present a sense of triumph to the child of God. Without the blood, the cork of the law is needed to stop the volcano from erupting and overflowing out through the flesh. This corking via the law is where many believers become injured, having fallen prey to legalistic teachings which thrive through self-condemnation.

To avoid the pitfalls of legalism, the child of God needs to have an understanding of the instantaneous effect of Christ's blood and how it relates to victory. The sooner this truth is appropriated by faith, the sooner the cork of the law can be rendered obsolete. How we regard the cork is, in fact, all the difference between the Old and New Covenants. A gradual cooling beneath the surface of the volcano should be the normal condition for all New Covenant believers - with those being more mature in God laying hold of His grace more habitually for the cooling.

But for those who suffer on account of an occasional flare-up in the flesh, they should know that upsets are the Father's way of making the way of the cross even more precious, more attractive, more needful. We often see that through the rain-watered ashes of a burnt forest, new seedlings spring forth into life. Victory, like the trees of a burnt forest, will be restored with instantaneous effect, when the heart is humbled unto confession and washed.

The period of blue sky and volcanic dormancy will grow longer in time, and the more the Christian grows in grace, the more he will learn of the power of the blood of Jesus in conjunction with the Spirit's grace. The Holy Spirit is ever-faithful to alert the conscience of impending eruptions. If the conscience happens to get burnt during this discovery, do not allow yourself to come under condemnation but confess the burn immediately. Let this practice become a habit, and you will be well on your way to greater revelations in the Word, anointing in your ministry, and extended sojournings in victory.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2013/1/19 17:36

Quote:
----- The Christian life is a secret war. It is a war unlike any other ever waged in the history of the world, for it is fought within the secret hills and valleys of a battlefield which carnal eyes cannot see. The fighting is hidden, the suffering is silent.

The soldiers who fight and fall, only to get back up and continue fighting are granted measures of ever-increasing light. They are protected by God and enjoy divine rejuvenation daily. Their many wounds are treated; their souls are healed. If they continue to fight and not abandon rank, they are promised food, armor and restored health. They are assured of final victory...

This is a powerful picture of our invisible reality.

MC

Re: Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare - posted by used4him, on: 2013/1/19 17:58

Thank you Paul West for all the study you have done, and the words written here. I am guessing that you have written due to personal experience. That is always what makes what is written more effective. I have a mental picture of a soldier greeting Jesus in heaven with shiny new looking armour on, and another one has beat up, dirty armour. Which do you think Jesus will say to: "well done, good and faithful servant?"

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/23 11:19

Thank you so much dear brethren, for all your input and thoughts. I really appreciate and encourage discourse on this subject! I am trying to edit all these writings and tie them together with Biblical references, and this takes time. I am doing all this while working full time at the funeral home and helping my wife raise two small kids. To affirm what has already been postulated, yes, these teachings all come from my own trials and errors in walking with God. However, I dare not teach an experience of my own without corresponding scriptural credence. Additional material coming shortly.

Brother Paul

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/1/23 15:59

Quote:

Many believers have a wrong understanding of Christian victory. They think victory is an unbroken span of sinless perfection where one does not transgress in word, thought or action. But this alone is an inaccurate picture of triumph. True victory, true triumph in Christ leading from glory to glory is actually comprised of segments of overcoming linked together by confession and subsequent blood-washing.

I agree with this brother. This something I have struggled to make people understand. When we talk about victory they think we are talking about sinless perfection, which cannot be achieved in our human body.

A victorious Christian life can be described in 1 life - Sin shall not have dominion over you (Romans 6:14). Dominion means to master. Sin can never be my master. When I was filled by Holy Spirit and got victory over Sin by his grace, I was never under the rule of Sin. The moment any unholy word came out of me, I will repent the immediate instant. I had control over my flesh by the power of Holy Spirit.

Quote:

There is not a Christian alive who can get through a day without having to confess the impurity of a wayward thought, a hasty word, or a deed born of a reactionary impulse to some challenge to his or her own fleshly self-preservation (Psalms 84:7; II Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:12-21; I John 1:8; 2:1).

I do not believe this generalization is right. Let us take Apostle Paul as an example, do you think he was using an unwholesome word sometimes? I am sure he lived without any known impurity. That is why he was able to say 'follow me as I follow Christ'. To Phillipians he says 'do whatever you see in me' (Phillipians 4). If he was falling often and battling with known sin then how could he say this? How could he say in Acts that his conscience is always clear before God and men? If Paul had such a life then how is 1 John 1:8 correct?

The answer is Paul had a victory over all known sins in his life. Which means he never committed them again. But there were still NEW sins that he discovered every day by his daily walk with Christ. He was confessing it and needed Blood of Jesus to cleanse him. No matter how much victory we have in our Spiritual life, we always need the blood of Lamb because we do not know what we did unconsciously.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/1/23 17:07

I would suggest you to read Zac Poonen's 'Know your enemy' book, it is available free in CFC website. It deals with similar subject with more practical examples and solution. Like all Zac Poonen's teachings it is also 100% scriptural.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/23 17:50

Brother, Zac Poonen himself has said that the Lord is constantly bringing knowledge of sin in areas of his own walk where repentance is needed. On a daily basis. I know this is true for myself; is it not for you? Are 100% of your thoughts and intentions pure and godly all the day long? Forget actually speaking or doing - are all your thoughts pure? This is what I am getting at. The secret pride that you are feeling rise up in defense as you read this, knowing I am challenging and disagreeing with you. Acknowledge it; I feel it in me as well. Is confession and repentance not needed? Brother, if you can confess it and repent of it "now" through God's grace (which comes by humility), you are to be counted victorious. The law cannot effectuate this. Neither can psychology. It is by the power of grace (I know you understand all this). In order to be victorious even by definition, there must be a fight that is won. Victory is not by a cessation of repentance due to a finality in overcoming in a particular area, for the flesh can never be improved and our overcoming is through Christ and is predicated upon our humility at the moment of temptation. The moment you stand up and say you have a performance-based "victory" is the moment you begin setting yourself up for a fall.

To say there are no daily issues to confess and repent of and by this one is constituted as walking in triumph, I believe, is being dishonest with yourself and in stark contrast with 1 John 1:8. And I think Zac Poonen - whom I know personally and have spoken with on this very point - would agree with me. The Lord still corrects him at the hidden level no one sees. The Lord corrects you and the Lord corrects me at our own levels by the measure of light we currently have. I live in a constant state of repentance, and there I can tell other men to follow me as I follow Christ. Paul shouting at the High Priest can still tell others to follow him as he follows Christ; the Holy Spirit will fine tune the rest. By the way, the book you speak of I own and have read it and it is wonderful! God bless you richly.

Brother Paul

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/1/23 18:28

I think you totally misunderstood me. I believe in confessing and repenting. I agree with that part of your writing. Please read my post again. Only part I had a slightly different view is in generalizing that all men stumble. The example I took is Paul and not you, I or even Zac poopen. Paul still had to confess and repent but he did not struggle with known sins like I do. Else he could never say someone to follow him. 1 John 1:8- is spoken regarding unconscious sin. This is what brother zac believes. If it was regarding conscious sin then how did 1john 2 says 'if we sin we do not belong to him'?

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/23 18:40

Quote:
-----The example I took is Paul and not you, I or even Zac poopen. Paul still had to confess and repent but he did not struggle with known sins like I do. Else he could never say someone to follow him.

Zac Poopen? :)

With all due respect, I think you've gotten hung up on the word "struggle". We seem to be looking at it through different lenses. You may be seeing at a physical transgression (correct me if I am wrong) of a known besetting sin. This cycle of sinning, confession, forsaking, repenting is definitely a "struggle" but I do not relegate it to a physical manifestation. You can struggle against a temptation that no one sees and win the victory through Christ again and again. To say that that Paul didn't "struggle" with the temptation to be angry, impatient, discouraged, prideful, sexually enticed...well, I just can't buy it. I think he fought often against it...and overcame through grace. Spirit-led mortification kills the struggle; but the struggle comes back. If it doesn't, I guess that struggle-free person has blessedly "arrived". But this has not been my experience, nor Paul's according to Philippians 3:10-12, nor Zac's, nor with anyone I have met on this earth.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/1/23 18:53

Brother I am yet to read your last post. My questions are not to challenge you but to know the answers. These are the questions that I have for which I have found answers. I am willing to change my views. Please don't get offended. There is no pride here. I believe we can have a healthy discussion as we both agree on many common grounds.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/23 19:06

Dear brother I am not offended in the least! This is actually a very good occasion to fellowship and put forth a godly example in the forum, because I think we agree on just about everything; the syntax is most likely confusing us. Plus, I've read many of your posts on SermonIndex and have always been blessed by them and in overwhelming agreement. If there is any confusion or muddling of points in this discussion, I take the full blame right now and apologize in advance. But I do think our ideas and understandings on sanctification and justification are one and the same.

God's richest blessings upon you,

Brother Paul

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/1/23 23:44

Quote:

You can struggle against a temptation that no one sees and win the victory through Christ again and again

Again I am not sure about this terminology you are using here. We do not struggle with temptation. You will know very well that temptation by itself is not sin. Only when it is conceived in our heart it leads to sin. (James 1:15). I personally believe there is no need to struggle with temptation because if we truly call on the name of Lord he will rescue us as he has already put escape path for us. (1 Corinthians 10:13 is a promise of God). The problem is our inability to call for help because we have a hidden love for that sin.

The Struggle against a particular sin is to commit it again and again. Every time we fall for it, the spirit will convict us (John 14) and brings Godly Sorrow leading to repentance. For example a believer getting angry again and again but every time he repents confessing his Sin in the name of Jesus.

Quote:

To say that that Paul didn't "struggle" with the temptation to be angry, impatient, discouraged, prideful, sexually enticed...well, I just can't buy it.

I am not saying this. Paul would have definitely been tempted in all areas like us. Even Jesus himself was tempted like us in all areas but without sin. The point I am trying to make is Paul did not fall for the same Sin again and again. He might have been tempted to be angry but he did not keep falling for it. He did not commit it again and again. He God victory over anger. Similarly for all sins known to him like anger, discouragement, lust etc against which Paul wrote to us. If he was falling for the same sin against which he spoke and wrote to Churches then he can never say to those Churches that they can follow him as he follows Christ. Else he would be a liar.

Now what does this mean to me? When I repent for an angry word that I have spoken I would also believe that God will give me grace not to speak in anger again. I will not think that it is common to commit it because every known believer is struggling with it. Every believer has the temptation to get angry but not everyone is committing it. Many have victory over it by the grace of God. In my own life by this faith I have seen victory in many areas of my life.

Brother Zac himself says that he never got discouraged for the past 40 years. He is no longer struggling with it.

Quote:

There is not a Christian alive who can get through a day without having to confess the impurity of a wayward thought, a hasty word, or a deed born of a reactionary impulse to some challenge to his or her own fleshly self-preservation (Psalms 84:7; II Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:12-21; I John 1:8; 2:1).

My problem with the above quote is it sounds that everyone is committing and falling for sin. Which is not true. They are actually discovering new sins by the conviction of Holy Spirit and that is what they repent from.

It also sounds like it is fine for us to keep falling for same sin. Which is also not true.

Our example is Jesus who never committed even one sin and our hope according to 1 John 3:3 is we will be like him one day and hence we will cleanse ourselves of any Sin that the spirit convicts us, hoping we will be freed from it. This is the hope that leads to victory.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/24 8:11

Quote:
-----My problem with the above quote is it sounds that everyone is committing and falling for sin. Which is not true. They are actually discovering new sins by the conviction of Holy Spirit and that is what they repent from.

Brother, I have read the quote you have found exception with again and again and I just can't see where you are deriving everyone keeps committing and falling for sin - and at that, the "same" (aka besetting) sin. I am not advocating willful, repetitious sin, or the practicing of sin. If that is what it sounds like to you, I must change the wording or something, because it is not what I meant. What I have written denotes dealing with new discoveries of sin and repentance, to the leading of a blood-cleansed conscience (of course, this also covers besetting sins - but this point is so obvious I feel it needs not to be mentioned). Zac has said in his messages that he is in a constant state of repentance; Andrew Murray's writings reveal the same, abiding in the fountain of Christ's blood all the day long. All I was saying is that there is not a Christian live today - if he is being honest with himself - who does not need the blood of Christ to deal with secret revelations of sin (aka falling short of the glory of God). I am repudiating bloodless perfectionism. I admit I could have worded it differently, and I will, thanks to you.

Brother Paul

Re: Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare, on: 2013/1/24 9:44

Brother Sree isn't it likely that when Paul spoke of being trustworthy and by reason "follow my example as I Christ" Paul was not pretending to be Christ Himself. Rather he was advocating having the same mind of Christ which he (Paul) put on daily. In that Paul would have also been an example of what to do when sin does have its way with us. Similarly isn't it equally as likely that Paul didn't neglect to comprehend the things he wrote regarding all believers being given a way of escape from all besetting sin. It seems incomprehensible that Paul would not have been the first to acknowledge his own inner inclinations to those he ministered to, simply by way of encouragement and as a practise of humility for the sake of Christ it would have been necessary. Otherwise he would have caused a great many people to stumble himself by seeming to be perfect. In fact he called himself, that which he understood of himself, "I am the chief among sinners" (Aortic).

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/1/24 9:55

Quote:

All I was saying is that there is not a Christian live today - if he is being honest with himself - who does not need the blood of Christ to deal with secret revelations of sin (aka falling short of the glory of God). I am repudiating bloodless perfectionism. I admit I could have worded it differently, and I will, thanks to you.

Thanks a lot brother for the clarification. This is clearly a danger when God blesses us with spiritual victory, it is a difficult task for even God to keep us humble and seeking his grace (proof is my own life). This is the reason God breaks us well before blessing us with his grace (as rightly stated in your article). We will always need the blood of Jesus no matter how much spiritually mature we become in our Christian walk. I think the above quoted lines convey your idea better than the previous one.

Jesus in Sermon on the mount taught us how to pray by saying 'Forgive our sins as we forgive the sins of others'. We all

ways need this in our prayers even if our conscience is clear before God like how Apostle Paul lived with no Conscious sins.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2013/1/24 10:05

hi all i know is that the best of us would fall at His feet as if dead if we saw Him in His glory and see how needfull we are and how little we have truly advanced in holiness.jimp

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/1/24 10:31

Quote:

Brother Sree isn't it likely that when Paul spoke of being trustworthy and by reason "follow my example as I Christ" Paul was not pretending to be Christ Himself. Rather he was advocating having the same mind of Christ which he (Paul) put on daily. In that Paul would have also been an example of what to do when sin does have its way with us. Similarly isn't it equally as likely that Paul didn't neglect to comprehend the things he wrote regarding all believers being given a way of escape from all besetting sin.

Excellent point!!! This doubt actually came to my mind as well. What if Paul was setting an example of following Christ rather than actually living like Christ. It could be true.

But there are other verses that we need to consider as well which are in similar note like 'follow me'.
Philippians 4-9:-The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Here Paul is saying whatever you see in me practice those things. If Sin was often getting into the way of Paul then how could he say that? How could he say practice everything you see in me? What if few things that people see in him was a sinful thing?

I believe that Paul was sinless in the areas he knew (based on the victory he got in past in those areas), the Philippians were not spiritually mature, hence they were definitely of lower standard than him. So he wanted to be a witness for the Christ's life in their midst. It is like to teach in a nursery school you do not need to be a PHD in all things.

This is exactly our calling as well - Acts 1-7 says our being (life) itself will be witness of Jesus when we receive the baptism of Holy Spirit. It is a promise of Jesus. Paul received it. If he received it then you and I can as well receive it if we believe. No one in old covenant could say such thing like Apostle Paul did. Even John the Baptist himself could not say such things.

Quote:

In fact he called himself, that which he understood of himself, "I am the chief among sinners" (Aortic).

I agree but this is Paul from his own perception. Same nursery school teacher may feel she is a fool when she stands before a person who has a doctorate. So the more Apostle Paul walked in Christ the more his sins were revealed to him and he considered himself as a sinner who is only saved because of Grace of God. But this did not make him not to be a witness for the life of Christ in the midst of Churches that he established.

This is true in my life as well, when I hear about terrorists or sex offenders, I thank God that if not for his grace I will be worse man than them.

Quote:

It seems incomprehensible that Paul would not have been the first to acknowledge his own inner inclinations to those he ministered too, simply by way of encouragement and as a practise of humility for the sake of Christ it would have been necessary.

Yes that is necessary and Paul has done that in many scripture. Example Romans 7 talks about how Paul Struggled under legalism doing things that he did not want to do. Romans 8 talks about the victory that Christ gave him by making him walk in his Spirit, causing him to have no obligation for yielding to flesh. But those were from past.

For example to show my kid that touching fire can burn my hand, I do not need to put my hand in fire. I can just tell her or show her my past burnt wounds and how painful it was. Now that I have matured I do not keep repeating those mistakes.

Re: Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare, on: 2013/1/24 11:11

Quote:
-----Excellent point!!! This doubt actually came to my mind as well. What if Paul was setting an example of following Christ rather than a actually living like Christ. It could be true.

But there are other verses that we need to consider as well which are in similar note like 'follow me'.
Philippians 4-9:-The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Sree

Brother it occurs to me that the whole council of scripture would be a better teacher than you or I. The difference between pretending to be like something and being something is clear enough. But if this is what was intended I have become a complete fool. When I wrote those words Galatians "not I but Christ" came to mind and as always what can one do. Write everything which comes to mind or simply seek to share another more attainable truth. Even though it is frowned upon most of what I share is based on personal experience rather than theological knowledge alone. So in writing thus about Paul I was really thinking of the men who I have met who dwelt on a hill and did a good job of overseeing the flock, but would not come down and be seen as mere men. One in particular really caused me so many problems because of the position he took. Not that he was in any way an unsound brother, I just needed help to understand my own failings. Jesus was without sin, so He was able to both have compassion on sinners and at the same time forgive sin. Paul was about building the church as a wise master builder and had no authority to forgive sin. Yet he definitely had to challenge it. It may be just sentiment on my part but I imagine Paul to have been a pretty challenging man on the one hand and at the same time an example of fallen humanity learning to walk by faith on the other. Not for his sake, rather for the sake of those who he was called to serve. Hence "follow my example". It is one thing to condone sin by building a theology of excuses, but it is a far better thing to teach and reprove as well as reveal your own humanity and weaknesses, which while they may not be visible to others, are nevertheless known to ones self. The outward good example can be followed, but a willingness to reveal inward realities without causing others to stumble is a true gift I believe. This is what I meant. Arming yourself with such a mind looks like sound spiritual warfare to me and sticks a finger in Satan' accusatory eye!

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/1/24 12:39

Quote:

The outward good example can be followed, but a willingness to reveal inward realities without causing others to stumble is a true gift I believe.

I am not able to exactly understand your point. But if I am not mistaken this above quote of yours summarizes your thoughts.
I am in agreement with it. This is what I am currently doing in my Church, as most of them are much more spiritually mature than me including our moderator Greg Gordon!!! The only way I can encourage them is by sharing how God rescued me from my shortcomings without sharing deep into my struggles as it might cause others to stumble. There is just a fine line of difference and we need God's grace to do it. It is a gift.

When I was new to faith some 4 years back. My Church elder whom I look up to talked to me personally about how he was tempted in Sexual areas and how God rescued him and how these temptations now have no place for him in his Christ.

stian walk. As a 25 years old guy this experience shared by him encouraged so much, gave me hope that I can win the battle as well. My respect for him increased.

Re: Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare, on: 2013/1/24 14:02

Quote:
-----When I was new to faith some 4 years back. My Church elder whom I look up to talked to me personally about how he was tempted in Sexual areas and how God rescued him and how these temptations now have no place for him in his Christian walk. As a 25 years old guy this experience shared by him encouraged so much, gave me hope that I can win the battle as well. My respect for him increased. Sree

Yes this is it in simplicity. The elder served you well in his attitude and probably kept you as well. What a blessing.

Re: , on: 2013/1/27 13:54

Brother Paul:

In reading these excellent posts by you I was reminded of Austin Sparks sermons on Spiritual Warfare and Prayer, please see a quote below:

"To put that in another way: the more spiritual we become, the more spiritual does the warfare become; and the more spiritual the warfare is in our consciousness and in our knowledge, so we may realize that we have become more spiritual. When we are carnal our warfare is carnal, and I refer to believers and not to unbelievers. The unbeliever is not spoken of as carnal. He is natural. When we are carnal as believers, our warfare and our weapons are carnal. That is, we meet men on their own level and answer back their challenge with that with which they challenge us. If they come out in argument we counter with argument; if they come out with reason we meet them with reason; if they come out with fierce temper we meet them in the heat of the flesh; and if they come out to us with criticism, well, we give them what they give us and try to go one better, meeting them always on their own level.

That is carnal warfare, using carnal weapons. When we cease to be carnal and leave all carnal ground, becoming wholly spiritual, we find ourselves in a new realm at the back of men, dealing with spiritual forces directly and not with merely carnal forces. We have come into touch with something at the back of carnal man, and the carnal man is utterly helpless in the presence of a spiritual man for the simple reason that he cannot get the spiritual man to come down to his level. Therefore he is disarmed, and sooner or later he will have to recognize that that spiritual man is his superior. But the superiority is not just in that the spiritual man is on a new level. It is that he is meeting not the man naturally, but the forces behind the man. It is spiritual warfare now. We cease to fight after the flesh; we cease to fight man; we cease to battle with flesh; our warfare is in another realm altogether. That represents spiritual advance, spiritual growth, and it represents spirituality. And when we come into real spiritual warfare a spiritual state is pre-supposed. In that realm the natural man's resources are utterly useless. They are ruled out, because for that warfare only spiritual equipment is either permissible or effective. The warfare then is with spiritual weapons, spiritual resources and spiritual equipment. So Ephesians 6 finds us in the heavenlies, battling, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, but we are equipped with a spiritual armour, the armour of God" (Austin Sparks, In Touch with the Throne by T. Austin-Sparks, Chapter 2 - Prayer as Warfare, <http://www.austin-sparks.net/english/books/001707.html>).

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/1/27 18:32

Incredibly powerful post, brother. Sparks had a great depth of knowledge into these things. His writings warrant repeated readings and deep meditative thought. I intend on adding to this thread very soon - as soon as I can get away from the mortuary - and comment more thoroughly on this and the sanctification issues Sree brought up. I am confident God will speak to us in a most powerful way. Lives will be changed through this study, if we approach it with humility and honesty concerning our inward condition and how the partaking of God's divine nature relates to it. An understanding of these things brings incredible knowledge and new vistas of truth that can set us free from the power of sin and the influence of Satan upon our flesh and mind.

Brother Paul

Re: Chapter 3 - Growing in the Dark - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/2/1 9:25

3. Growing in the Dark

If God's ways are not according to human logic, this truth is nowhere more evident than in the way He grows His children in sanctification and wisdom. Saplings sprout from the earth under direct sunlight and in optimal temperatures, but in contrast to this, God's children grow in the darkness, at night during times of trial and testing. They are refreshed in the sunlit presence of the Lord with spiritual reprieve and rejuvenation - but they grow in holiness and sanctification in the dark. As seeds germinate beneath in the sun-deprived darkness of the soil, and as the Lord knits babies together in the darkness of their mothers' wombs, so the Lord knits our spiritual bones and substance together in dark wombs of affliction. Did not Samson's hair grow back while He was in darkness? Did not God recapture Jonah's obedience while in the dark belly of a fish? Was it not from the darkness of the wilderness that Jesus came forth with the Spirit of the Lord upon Him for ministry? Did not even Almighty God form the earth within an initial void of created darkness, before the command of light?

Look at an earthly child. He eats and plays during the day, when sunlight encompasses his world. But at night, while sleeping, the food he ate miraculously transforms into bone and muscle. It is in the darkness of sleep and in the cocoon of sunless dormancy where his actual growth takes place - and to the extent that when he awakens, he is noticeably taller and his features all the more defined and mature. All parents have observed this bittersweet metamorphosis in their children.

Beloved, God's children grow in the dark as well. In the dark cocoon of trials and difficulties are their brilliant colors formed, and wings of faith made to bring them to God's throne of grace. This is why we are taught not to despise the chastening and correction of the Lord, and why we are to embrace His rod in the furnace of tests and trials and temptations. It is in the fire where the precious metals of earth gain their worth in the estimation of men. The Christian, likewise, is tempered and seasoned and grown in uncomfortable atmospheres which seem unfruitful for the furtherance of value. We know our that righteous Father forever seeks the utmost good for His children, and if this means weeping in a temporal den of failure and misery like Peter, then we must endure His rod of purification and never doubt His love.

Remember this the next time you fail. The night cometh; the fire is kindled - and our voluntary suffering in the flesh is God's will for the promotion of Christ's Life in our vessels. The flesh suffers so the precious elements of the spirit can come forth with brilliancy. Yes, enter into God's appointed chamber of growth with weeping and mourning over your own unprofitable resolutions, your myriad of failures, your broken aspirations to please Him. But know that God's plans for your life are not negated in the least within the cocoon of darkness, but rather forged upon the anvil of suffering. If you trust Him, He will see you through the furnace. He will hold you in His mighty Hand while you sleep, and when the sun finally rises, you will have grown. And your growth will be noticeable to all.

The lowly caterpillar resigns to the bonds of the cocoon only to one day fly away in the light of liberation and beauty. The worm's means of freedom grew while he slept in the darkness, and yours will as well. Allow God keep you in the lair of darkness to bring you into glorious knowledge of the liberty of grace. His plan for your life is to adorn you in the beauty of Christ; to mint you with His life, and to impart His divine nature in you to such a degree that you might fly above all the darkness of sin and bondage of the earth's pull.

Sometimes a believer will fail a test of God and enter into a season of darkness. Perhaps he was living a life of victory, walking with a clean conscience before God and enjoying the resources of Christ's Life, when a temptation hit and suddenly took away their peace and snuffed their light. They thought they were strong; they thought they could stand up to it and resist as they had many times in the past. They had been walking in the Spirit that morning - by the evening, however

er, they find themselves cast down and once again in the dregs of a besetting sin. Because they loathe themselves to such a degree, there is a great reluctance to be recovered before God. This is because they feel they are fighting a hopeless cause, and that their Christianity is just not "working", despite knowing and experiencing all the verses and truths pertaining to the divine nature. Satan is quick to invade the darkness and convince them that any continuation of walking with God is futile.

These children, in their depression, must be encouraged with the truth of all-loving, all-wise Father who allows certain things to happen for the furtherance of their good. This is not to say that God condones or causes sinful acts. We know from scripture that God will allow the tempter of souls to strike at the hearts of His children – for a specific purpose. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness specifically to be tested by Satan; Jesus foretold of Peter's allowance to be sifted by request of Satan; Satan asked to destroy all which righteous Job held in possession, and God granted all of these. If the enemy had asked to sift someone like Peter (who was strong in the faith, but weak in the flesh), the enemy will also ask to sift someone like you and me. And God may allow it in time. When He permits the enemy to strike, a strong presentation to engage in evil will suddenly come to your mind. It will come as a rebellion against the light God has already given you on the subject of enticement. Previously, you could hold your ground against it and resist it with power – but suddenly it's coming in like a tsunami and you're not ready. The powers of darkness are opportunistic. They wait until your mind is weak, and until your flesh is howling for release. They wait for the light of your conscience to dim before poisoning.

When a believer fails God, he always fails against the will of his regenerated inner man. He so loathes sin, yet in those dire moments he feels himself suddenly helpless, overpowered and flesh-dominated. It is never the Lord's will that we fail during these times of testing, but if we are going to fail, He foreknew it and yet still permitted it. It is hard for us to wrap our minds around this concept because we are accustomed to processing information in patterns of human logic. It's difficult for us to compute God allowing an event to transpire, knowing it will cause us to sin. But didn't He already know Peter would deny Christ - and yet, being fully able to prevent it, chose instead to allow Peter to fall? Yes. The Lord had a great lesson to teach Peter, which could only be acquired in the darkness of despair brought on by failure. The Lord is not an earthly teacher. An earthly teacher, when she gives a test, does not know her pupils' grades until after the test is taken. But God knows all the grades beforehand, and yet still administers the tests in order to teach His children the subject matter of grace in a supremely profound way.

The reason God allows such tests is to demonstrate to us that only Christ can pass them. When we fail a test in God's school, it is because we took it ourselves and did not allow Christ to take the test for us. A failing grade always indicates an insufficiency of grace. The great end of all God's testing in allowing the devil to sift us is to amplify the righteousness of Jesus Christ, destroy all boasting, and convince us of the necessity of Holy Spirit empowerment for living the Christian life. When we take a test and fail, our eyes are usually blind to the fact that we took the test ourselves. There is a reluctance to look up to God because of our sense of hopelessness. A defeatist mindset encompasses us and we begin to see ourselves as worthless subjects. Ah – but this is precisely the reason why our Teacher of teachers administered the test! It is to foster within us the very understanding that we are unable to master the subject matter apart from Christ. An earthly teacher introduces the subject matter to her students for them to display it comprehensibly on the test; God, in contrast, uses the test's incomprehensibility to demonstrate the subject matter to His children. And the subject matter is always the grace which comes through Jesus Christ. These lessons of grace are often learnt in a dark classroom, with Satan as God's appointed proctor over the test material.

If we fail a test and are in the dark, God would have us get up immediately and continue on in faith. Our Father wills that after each test-failure we would approach the blood of Christ through confession of our failure and be instantly restored. He calls us to look into His Word to see how and why we flunked. The Word of God is like a mirror which sits upon a wash-basin filled with Christ's blood. In this mirror we are to look, confess, and wash. That is His remedial program. When you fail any test, you return to this basin. The more you come to it through humility and the will to master the test's subject matter, the more you will be transformed with the wisdom which comes from above.

So, my dear reader, never stay down after you flunk a test in God's school. Pick yourself up in the dark after you fall and go to the mirror of God's Word and wash in the fountain of Christ's blood. This is where you grow. Here is a tip for your next test: God allows the enemy to tempt the hearts and wound the souls of His children usually because of pride. If He sees you are beginning to leave your first love or have forgotten how He cleansed you from your former sins, these may also warrant a surprise exam to where you find yourself in a chamber of seasonal darkness. Do not stay down in the dark. Come up to the mirror and confess. Get cleaned up! The subject matter you were unprepared for was the employment of the grace of Jesus Christ. The test's purpose – as with every one of God's tests – is to teach you that you cannot pass any of them but for the grace of the life of Jesus in you.

...to be continued

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/2/1 18:22

Very encouraging post brother. I felt like someone who watched my life and thought battles have written it down. Makes me believe more in 1 Peter 5:8:-

Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

Such writing prove to me that there are brothers who are in the world who have experienced similar sufferings.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2013/2/1 18:35

amazing post paul west ,,verry encouraging as sree said

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/2/1 18:51

Quote:

Sometimes a believer will fail a test of God and enter into a season of darkness. Perhaps he was living a life of victory, walking with a clean conscience before God and enjoying the resources of Christ's Life, when a temptation hit and suddenly took away their peace and snuffed their light. They thought they were strong; they thought they could stand up to it and resist as they had many times in the past. They had been walking in the Spirit that morning - by the evening, however, they find themselves cast down and once again in the dregs of a besetting sin.

I have been in this place that you describe here. The problem I found is - 'They thought they were strong'. That is why they fell. Apostle Paul says that 'anyone who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall'. The reason for the fall is we think we are standing and hence we are strong. The glory should always go to God, no matter how much resistance we have to flesh. God resists the proud and gives his grace to humble. The moment we think we became strong and stop giving the glory to God that he deserves, he takes his grace away from us. Without his grace my flesh will have me for a feast!

It is like a father who guides his son to ride bicycle. The son is able to ride because his father is holding the bicycle and balancing it in his hands. The moment the son thinks that he got the balance and now he does not need his father's hands, the hands are taken away. The son ends up falling.

Only thing I experienced different compared to your post is how I have fallen. The fall does not come suddenly, it is always gradual, it starts with self glory and ends in condemnation. The son riding this bicycle will start shaking and losing balance before he finally falls. Same way I start shaking the moment I am out of God's grace. There is always a warning that comes before we fall. This is my personal experience brother, I don't have a scriptural proof for this.

Quote:

When we fail a test, it is because we took the test ourselves and did not allow Christ to take it for us.

It took me close to 2 years to understand this truth.

Re: Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare - posted by lovejt (), on: 2013/2/1 19:22

Hello brother Paul: I really appreciate this subject being focused on and your compilation of everything. In December, the Lord put it in my heart to focus on this very thing as well. I have been going about it slow and gradually. Started with War On the Saints and Defeated Enemy from Sister Jesse Penn Lewis. Assume you have gone thru those. Have also listened to various messages on the subject. I believe the Lord is putting this on many of our hearts to prepare us for things to come and with where we are in our walk.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/2/3 19:09

Quote:
-----Only thing I experienced different compared to your post is how I have fallen. The fall does not come suddenly, it is always gradual, it starts with self glory and ends in condemnation. The son riding this bicycle will start shaking and losing balance before he finally falls. Same way I start shaking the moment I am out of God's grace. There is always a warning that comes before we fall. This is my personal experience brother, I don't have a scriptural proof for this.

What you have described here is indeed how it occurs. It's a slow ungirding of the loins of the mind until one has become too weak to withstand a sudden onslaught. Like I mentioned before, the powers of darkness are opportunistic. They make observations and calculations and are very intelligent. They beat you down little by little by getting you to compromise in your thought life. Their advertisements targeted at the flesh are untiring.

A fall is an outward projection of a reality that has already taken place in the inward parts. Pride is so elusive. It infiltrates the mind and spreads like poison. It's like carbon monoxide - you can't smell it or see it or even sense it unless you have a special detector. The Holy Spirit is like a Co2 sensor for pride. As long as we maintain humility and always see others as more important than ourselves, we can hear His faithful alarm. But when we begin to grow proud in our thoughts and fail to heed His initial alarm, the signal will fade. Eventually we will grow intoxicated with increasing impure thoughts and selfishness. When we're finally weakened enough by the "fumes" of pride, along comes a flaming dart that levels us. This is where a brother crumbles and clicks on an internet porn site; this is where you lose your patience and shout at your spouse or kids. Fill in the blank.

The important thing is to remember the relationship between pride and grace. I imagine a seesaw with grace on one end and pride on the other. One goes up, the other down. This is why to keep the grace end up and the pride side down, Paul exhorts us to keep our minds in lowliness of self and to always esteem others better than ourselves (Phil. 2:3).

Brother Paul

Re: 4. Worldly Entertainment and Distractions - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/2/11 20:28

4. Worldly Entertainment and Distractions

The object of worldly entertainment is in the usurpation of our spiritual joy. It is a cheap decoy, a fake diamond, a nugget of fool's gold in exchange for the true currency of joy in Christ. The enemy of the soul waits for the joy of the Lord to abate in believers before presenting them with the sham of entertainment. The powers of darkness are opportunistic in this respect. They bide their time in the shadows while God's children bask in the joy of their Lord; they daily watch for signs of diminishment in the pursuit of spiritual rejuvenation; they observe the efforts spent in devotion and spy on their quiet time. When the occasion is ripe to offer the golden apple of entertainment, they do so, and, like Ehud, slip the dagger quietly into the fat of the soul.

As the poison of entertainment begins its spread, the joy of the Lord is replaced by visceral delight. As the child of God founders here, the powers of darkness strike him a second time. Here they strike with a delusional acceptance that entertainment might be successfully married to God's joy. Like Naaman, they find themselves meandering between two temples: the shrine of a false god and the temple of the true God. A profane altar is erected within the temple of the Holy Spirit, the altar of the heart is commandeered, and the incense of fleshly enjoyment is burned in lieu of the Holy Spirit's fire.

The power of soul entertainment and the influence it has over the flesh has an electrifying draw, and, in the end, detrimental consequences to the "new man" created in us by God in the image of Jesus Christ if not trumped by spiritual joy. The two cannot co-exist for long, and entertainment will always win the fight over joy for dominion in the human heart when the mind is set on carnal endeavors. The powers of darkness know this truth very well, which is why the world has be

en designed to be a lair of entertainment, a colossal web to entrap men and women for the purpose of euthanizing their minds from the realities of God and the impending doom of hell.

To effectively counter the dagger of entertainment, the mind's loins must be girded and trained upon the glory of Jesus Christ above. The believer must pray for the grace of a new mindset adaptation, for a shift to take place within wherein the gaze of his faith is diverted from earth below to heaven above. We as children of God must learn to recognize when the shadows are drawing longer and our inner men are beginning to hunger. And upon this recognition, we must learn to instantly fly to the blood of Jesus Christ where God has provided light, food and shelter for our beleaguered spirits. Any hesitation to fly to Christ in these moments puts our spirit men in jeopardy of being out-matched by the fake glitter and false gold of worldly entertainment.

Because our minds are naturally poised toward earth-bound objects and passions, an effective strategy employed by spiritual wickedness is to constantly provide diversions and distractions to keep the follower of Christ from heavenly pursuits. The world in which we live is replete with such a myriad of alluring vanities, fruitless enticements and empty attractions as to make each inch of our sojourning here a potential bog to gratify our insatiable intellect and electrify the flesh. To effectively circumnavigate these bogs, a certain measure of determination and diligence is required on behalf of the Christian in obtaining God's grace to withstand these pitfalls and maintain an unmolested mind on our stalwart path to heaven.

These distractions present themselves at first in small increments. Initially they are but the polyps that forewarn of cancer if not excised upon detection. Though they may at first appear benign - that is, some harmless divergence from the narrow path of holiness - they are, in fact, strategically-designed weapons used by the enemy to infiltrate our minds and set down destructive roots. The purpose for this invasion is to create a mental fortress which seeks to strangle the life of one's inner devotion to God. The reason it is so difficult to pray, to read God's Word, and to engage our minds in deep spiritual meditation for a prolonged period of time is because unseen powers and principalities are always surrounding us and warring against these efforts. Their mission is to keep our inner men from making contact with God and gaining strength by the power of His Spirit. All who live for righteousness will be persecuted by these evil forces, for the child of God wrestles not against flesh and blood insurgents.

Song of Solomon 2:15; Matthew 6:24-34; 13:19; Luke 18:15-17; I Corinthians 7:35; Philippians 4:8; I Peter 1:13; Judges 3:21-22; II Kings 5:17-19; Matthew 14:6; Luke 12:19, 21:34; Galatians 5:17, 6-7; Ephesians 3:16, 6:12; II Timothy 2:4

4. Worldly Entertainment and Distractions (continued) - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/2/12 8:04

4. Worldly Entertainment and Distractions (continued)

Satan conditions believers over a period of time with minuscule doses of compromise and loose thinking to where the inner man slowly starves while the flesh builds. The ultimate design of spiritual darkness is to desensitize the Christian through small measures, to where at last he or she will crumble under a flaming arrow of temptation and yield to sin.

When the arrow strikes the mind of the believer in this condition, it sticks and infects. The poison defiles the believer's conscience and immediately establishes a root in the heart. The bow from which the arrow is propelled is most commonly strung by the lure of entertainment and other worldly concerns, and the strength by which the bow is drawn found in the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life. When these twin powers are awakened and given preeminence over the influence of the spirit, the the poised arrow is launched.

Satan has arrows poised at the hearts and minds of God's unhealthy children. Believers become spiritually sick at the initial slacking of their fervent devotion to God, for when we cease to occupy ourselves with Him, we cease to be healthy. The Lord uses the designs of darkness to bring forth the symptoms to show the child that he is sick. Satan's x-rays never miss the target; his arrows always hit the unhealthy areas of our inner life and cause them to flare up. The Holy Spirit quickly brings conviction to the area. Like Peter sinking into a dark sea, the child in this moment must cry out to his Lord in horror and agonizing confession: "I am perishing! Lord, I am sinking down to my death in an ocean of sin! Save me!"

Upon confession and repentance, the Lord saves and restores His arrow-stricken children instantly through the blood of Jesus Christ. Their consciences are once again sprinkled and cleansed; they brought back safely into the boat. But here the designs of darkness will attempt a new strategy upon seeing he is once again secure in the Arc of the New Covenant: the siren of false condemnation.

False-condemnation comes about from having an improper understanding of two things: our central positions of adopted sonship in Jesus Christ, and the cleansing power of His blood during times of our failure and sin. A defiled conscience and weak understanding of grace is a dangerous combination - it is a man in a raging sea without a life jacket. In these situations it can be difficult to bring ourselves back into God's presence through faith in blood of Christ when our souls are downcast. The longer we hesitate to be restored heavier the guilt becomes. The sirens of Satan broadcast that the blood alone is not sufficient, that we must "do" something additional to make an effective reconciliation. A hopeless sense of condemnation then sets in - while instant justification and restoration are only a faithful confession away.

The heart can become so weighted-down with the pangs of condemnation that placing faith in the restorative efficacy of Christ's blood can seem an impossible task. May we therefore remain humble and attentive to the leading of the Spirit in always keeping our hearts with all diligence.

II Peter 3:18 Hebrews 4:16; I John 1:5, 7, 9; II Corinthians 2:14; Galatians 2:19

Re: 5. Darkness Defeated through Humility - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/2/14 7:38

Far too many believers seem to have only grasped the message of forgiveness of sin, when the gospel of Jesus Christ is essentially a message of deliverance from Satan's power. As a result they go up and down in cycles of excitement and depression, happiness and anxiety, victory and defeat. They know they can experience God's forgiveness of sin through Christ, but on how to overcome these same acts of sin they are completely powerless. Most Christians think that memorizing scripture verses or fasting or prolonged prayer will somehow equip them with this power. The devil would have them remain ignorant to the secret of salvation from sin's enslavement, and see Christ instead as only their Great Forgiver. But we need to see that Jesus is not just our Forgiver - which the blood of a goat could grant - He is also our Great Deliverer and Savior from the power of sin! His death on Calvary disarmed the devil and took away sin's dominion from the soul of redeemed man.

Most Christians allow themselves to come under the influence of preachers and teachers who are themselves defeated inwardly and have not come into the New Covenant - and therefore they can only preach the forgiveness of sin. The principalities and powers which govern this world's system do all they can to blind believers from the message of deliverance from sin's power. Majoring almost exclusively on the forgiveness of sin, they make it easy to believe in the hopelessness of deliverance. This, along with the heresy of sinless perfection makes for a very persuasive argument for evangelical Christians to avoid the topic of deliverance altogether.

Sexual lust, fear, discouragement, the love of money, anxiety, jealousy, pride of life, greed, hypocrisy, laziness, gluttony, anger, impatience, disbelief, self-acclaim, malice - the child of God faces these inward giants with his shield raised, sword-in-fist and teeth clenched as they wreak havoc in his devotion life, family life and daily affairs. Has God simply left him alone on the battlefield to be vanquished again and again by these sins with nothing but forgiveness, or is the grace of God available for the Christian soldier to overcome them all and step on their necks in victory? If you have resigned your soul to an endless cycle of defeat and forgiveness, then I believe you've missed the most wonderful aspect of your birthright in Christ. Like Esau, a Jacob has used the carnal to cheat you out of the spiritual.

Do not let Satan rob you anymore. Salvation from sin's power is your birthright: Jesus Christ is your Deliverer by faith. If you are yet expecting to be delivered from sin through the efforts of self-determination and religious willpower, a thousand years will go by and you will still be defeated. You will go to your grave having never tasted of the glorious triumph over sin offered to you through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Many believers never enter into this experience simply out of ignorance of this one truth: The grace of God is the power which enables us to overcome sin's dominion, and this power is wholly appropriated through faith, and not through any type of human effort or fleshly reformation. Indeed, they who seek to slay Goliath using the sword and armor of Saul undertake a mission of suicidal lunacy! We can never in a million years win a spiritual battle by the arm of flesh. We wrestle not against flesh and blood - and therefore we cannot use flesh as a weapon. Those who combat the designs of darkness must do so lawfully - that is, with the spiritual weaponry of God - or face defeat again and again. Our battles are altogether spiritual; they are the Lord's, and as such they are won only through His power of grace. Any other method turns a believer into a defeated legalist.

The lawful way to fight the designs of darkness is to call upon the power of the Lord's grace when we are tempted, in our time of need. We must learn to summon His power when we hear the Philistines' trumpets sounding in the distance,

to trust Him when the war drums begin beating, and come boldly to the throne of His grace at the first rumbling of their iron chariots. If we prepare our spirits to face the enemy in the resistance of the Lord, the overcoming life of Jesus Christ will be ours. We must then make it a habit to call on Jesus in the very moment of temptation – not one minute before or after. The Lord is a “present” source of refuge. As we presently call upon Him for victory, the waters will open and swallows will allow the foe and leave us rejoicing once again upon the seashore of our sojourning. We will triumph every time if only we learn to humble ourselves before the battle and confess the fight is the Lord’s.

The way to defeat the designs of darkness is through the humility of our own confessed insufficiency. If you would know the secret of God’s strength in battle, you must first know the truth of your own weakness. The true Christian life is one of victory by the Strong living through the weak.

...to be continued

Preventing the Invasion of Darkness - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/2/23 13:40

It is a daily duty to keep the heart with all diligence. It is both an obligation for holiness and a necessity for spiritual health to keep careful watch over the heart’s breathings, because the new heart is susceptible to spiritual attack. A good illustration of an unkept heart is a moon suspended in space without an atmosphere of protection. Without an atmosphere, trajectories can impact its surface and cause craters of depression. The unprotected heart is like a moon which has fallen prey to all the flying garbage of spiritual space. Without a buffer zone of grace, lustful temptations can strike the surface and cause all sorts of spiritual depressions.

Through the designs of darkness, hostile thoughts and impulses target our minds and hearts daily. These spiritual trajectories seek to make impact and cause explosive damage to our walks with God. They aim to wound our consciences with the remembrance of sin and create a frustration between us and God’s grace. God’s grace is given to “keep” the heart from becoming overpowered by these attacks. It is given to preserve the conscience from defilement. Therefore, if you are in Christ, let Him answer the door to your heart if a stranger knocks from the outside. You have been ransomed from hell by His blood; find your rest in His protective grace.

Before our rebirth, when we lived in the flesh to the fulfilling of our lusts, we were like orphaned moons without an atmosphere, empty and void without God in dark space. But Jesus rose from the dead and sent down the Holy Spirit to encompass our quickened spirits with grace. We are no longer orphans; we are now the sons and daughters of God and heirs to a Heavenly Kingdom of eternal glory. As the earnest for this promise, the Father has given us a foretaste of perfection here on earth through the instruction and protection of the Holy Spirit. He abides to strengthen our inner men and shield us from the fiery trajectories of Satan: from the comets of lust, the meteors of pride and discouragement – and of whatever else the designs of darkness can conjure up to hurl at our atmosphere in the attempt to cause depression through the conception of sin.

Our spirits are not in a fixed state of strength. As our physical bodies weaken if they do not eat and sleep so our spiritual bodies also wane in strength when not rejuvenated through the Holy Spirit. We are constantly winding down with fatigue as we confront the evil of each day. As we weaken in spirit, the world begins to gain momentum and influence over our rebellious flesh. It is for this reason we are exhorted to be renewed and transformed in the spirit of our minds each day in God’s Word.

Our flesh is hostile to the health of our inner men, and therefore it must be put down to prevent a war. The powers of darkness control the world’s system to deliberately spur the flesh to rise in battle. But God shows Christians how to stay strong in spirit by remaining connected to the grace of His Spirit. The moment we separate from His power, we become like fish pulled from the sea. We must remain humble to stay in the sea of His grace, for it is in this sea where we receive restorative life and new power. Our remaining humble and full of grace is the only way to protect our hearts and minds from the invasions of darkness.

...to be continued

Re: A Correct Understanding of Christian Victory (continued) - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/2/25 7:58

A Scottish biologist inadvertently discovered penicillin in 1928 when he noticed a radius of destroyed bacteria surrounding a piece of mold in a plate culture. Since that time, antibiotics have been mass produced and used to treat millions of people with infections. This great epiphany in science parallels a deep truth in spiritual warfare: the arming of the mind of Christ to the inhibition of fleshly lusts. In the same way bacterial colonies cannot proliferate within the proximity of the power of penicillin, so the lusts of the flesh cannot colonize when a child of God walks in the Spirit and is armed with the mind of Christ (Galatians 5:16-18).

The "armament" of the mind in the Bible is based upon a Greek term for weapon. It denotes an ancient warrior holding a shield and javelin. In this context, the Christian does battle against the lusts of the flesh which war against the soul (I Peter 2:11). The soldier who is not armed for this conflict will be overrun and infected by the advancing troops which seek to draw out the lusts of the flesh. To guard the mind against the bacteria of sin, it must be daily renewed and armed in Christ. But how is this accomplished in terms of experiential victory in Christ?

A death must occur to the principle of self to where the overcoming life of Another Power is activated. This death is reckoned through the believer's own identification in Christ's death. The result is an internal submission to the mortifying influence of the Holy Spirit's power over the will of the flesh. Every Christian must be daily occupied in the overcoming of spiritual contaminants seeking to enter his mind and heart through the designs of darkness. To ensure victory, we must allow the Word of God to dwell in us and rule our hearts through the peace of death. If we would be more than conquerors, we must attune our hearts to obey the Spirit's soft dealings of death. As lone pieces of mold amidst perverse colonies of bacteria, we must see ourselves as dead on the plate but alive to the Master who infuses our dead bodies with the grace and faith and power and overcoming life of the Lord Jesus. O hallelujah! This is the reality of the New Covenant victory, and the way through which God brings triumph to His children. "...as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (I Peter 4:1-2).

Pride is Antithetical to Grace - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/2/28 9:24

Our spirits are not in a fixed state of strength. Just like our physical bodies weaken if they do not eat and sleep, so our spiritual bodies also wane in strength when not rejuvenated through the Holy Spirit. We are constantly winding down with fatigue as we confront the evil each day brings, and as we weaken in spirit, the world begins to gain momentum and a greater influence over our rebellious flesh. It is for this reason we are exhorted to make no provision for the flesh, but instead to be renewed and transformed in the spirit of our minds each day through God's Word.

Our flesh's vibrancy is hostile to the health of our inner men, and therefore the flesh must be put down to prevent a war. The powers of darkness control the world's system to deliberately spur the flesh to rise in battle. But God shows Christians how to stay strong in spirit by remaining connected to the grace of His Spirit. The moment we separate from His power, we become like fish pulled from the sea. We must remain humble to stay in the sea of His grace, for it is in this sea alone where our spirits receive restorative life and new power. No other place on earth offers true life and rejuvenation to man's spirit but through Christ in God.

We lose our abode in this blessed place of life and protection when we grow proud. This is because God resists the proud, for pride is the indicator of an inward boosting of our satanic nature's rebellion and self-sufficiency from God. Pride is antithetical to grace, for God's power is perfected through weakness and humility but frustrated when we begin to boast in ourselves. The moment we begin to think we are something—or entitled to some fleshly merit or acclaim—His protective power is cut off from our spirits, the atmosphere of grace vanishes, and God Himself begins resisting us. What does this resistance mean? When we neglect the keeping of our hearts in humble correspondence with the Holy Spirit, He denies our efforts in combating temptation and leaves us graceless to fall to the bullies of darkness; He denies us wisdom in the discernment of error and allows us to believe a lie. The very grace we need to overcome and survive the Christian life is taken away and all of man's proud efforts in gaining it back are resisted.

If we do not repent of our pride and come back into a right standing of humility before the Father, the results can be tragic. One such tragedy can come through a seared conscience (I Timothy 4:2). The Bible teaches that the conscience of man is allied to the Word of God (Romans 2:15). When a person continually rejects the Holy Spirit's reprimand to his sin, the signals of his conscience eventually become cauterized and they no longer sound an alarm (Romans 1:28; Ephesians 4:19; II Thessalonians 2:11). To keep the voice of our conscience strong and pure, we must seek to remain humble at all times by taking the "lower seat" at the feasts of life, by counting others as more important than ourselves, and by i

Immediately confessing our failures, no matter how slight (Proverbs 25:6; Philippians 2:3).

When the conscience becomes seared through the tolerance of sin and pride, the natural response is to begin pushing God out of our lives altogether. When men no longer embrace God's estimation of themselves – that is, that they are satanic in nature if not partaking of the divine nature, dead in sin, in need of daily grace, and wholly separated from Him but by the atonement of Jesus Christ – God gives them over to embrace deception. He will allow the pride of human intellect to marry the flesh and create systems of atheism and evolution, and He allows the proud soul to come into union with the flesh and give birth to metaphysics, eastern mysticism, and other false belief systems. The designs of darkness bring these shrouds of deception to further buttress man's independence from God. For both the religious and irreligious alike, sin and pride are no longer issues - man is free to pursue his heart's desires without sacrificing his dignity and acquiescing that he is a powerless captive of Satan.

...to be continued

Re: The Secret War - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/4/6 11:12

Dear saints, this is the final edited version of the first chapter of the book. The book in its entirety is due for publication, Lord willing, in late summer 2013.

1. The Christian Life is a Secret War

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." (II Timothy 4:7)

The Christian life is a war unlike any other ever waged in the history of the world, for it is fought upon the secret hills and valleys of a battlefield which carnal eyes cannot see. The fighting is hidden, the suffering silent. The belligerents are eternal spirit forces manifesting attrition within the temporal canvas of time. All followers of Christ are immediately conscripted into this war upon their New Birth conversions, and yet not all children of God have taken up arms. These are the conscientious objectors to spiritual aggression, and as a result they do not overcome Satan but remain fleshly defeated and spiritually impotent in the partaking of their Father's Divine Nature (I Corinthians 9:7; II Corinthians 4:7; I Timothy 1:18; II Timothy 2:3-4; 4:7; Philemon 1:2; II Peter 1:4).

The soldiers who fight and fall, however, only to take up arms again and continue fighting are granted measures of ever-increasing light. They are protected by God and enjoy divine rejuvenation daily. Their many wounds are treated; their souls are healed. If they continue to fight and not abandon rank, they are promised food, armor and restored health. They are assured of final victory, though the individual battles are fierce and sometimes lost (Psalms 23:3; 34:19; 37:24; 51:12; Proverbs 4:18; 24:16; Isaiah 40:31; Luke 22:32; II Corinthians 4:9).

These same soldiers soon discover another most wonderful truth: the lost battles are used for their good. Their defeats are found to be designed by God for an ultimately beneficial purpose. Through the unfathomable wisdom of God, failure becomes the seedbed from which His children grow in grace as they advance unto perfection through the trials of their faith. The Holy Spirit is given to abide within the bosom of each and every soldier of God's army to point to Jesus Christ and to the ever-blazing light of His holiness. His is a revelatory light. It reveals the designs of darkness; the corrupt strategy of God's foe; the very schemes of Satan. His light prepares the soldier beforehand and equips him with power to overcome in the time of battle. The Holy Spirit is given that the follower of Christ might live a life of perpetual triumph, full of the sweet fragrance of the divine life of Christ and everlasting joy (Song of Solomon 1:3; II Kings 6:8-12; John 15:26; 16:13; Romans 8:28-29; I Corinthians 15:57; II Corinthians 2:14, 16, 9:8; I Timothy 4:15; Hebrews 6:1; I John 5:6).

When a man's eyes are opened to the depth and height and length and width of God's love for him, and what it cost God to send Jesus Christ to ransom his soul from hell, this amazing love becomes a great shield of faith by which the fiery darts of Satan are instantly quenched. The Bible declares God's love for His ransomed children to be just as great as His love for Jesus Christ. The Word of God declares us to be His eternally-adopted sons and daughters through the blood of the New Covenant, the precious redeemed saints of His own own ransomed inheritance, God's very treasure (see John 17:23; Romans 8:39; Ephesians 1:18, 3:18). There is no word in the English language to verbalize the loving endowment between God and His saints in spiritual terms.

Tragically, many saints fighting in the foxholes of righteousness have forgotten these truths. How soon they forget that before they were formed in the womb, God knew them. He knew what sort of upbringing they would have, the abuse of u

godly influences that would eventually infiltrate their upbringings to steal their innocence. That He would see all their future pain and moral failure, their betrayal and insecurities. God partook of their experience, and chose them anyhow according to His sovereign pleasure. He invites them now to a most glorious exchange: to know and partake of His own eternal purpose by which they have been created and predestined. This purpose is fulfilled through their conformity to Jesus and their subsequent justification, sanctification and glorification in Christ as they helplessly abide and look unto Him with ever-increasing faith (Jeremiah 1:5; Galatians 1:15; Ephesians 1:5-6; Hebrews 2:17).

When we at last come to see our positions of beloved centrality in Christ and the measure of God's compassion toward His own, the comprehension of our relationship with Him as "Abba-Father" will take on a new dimension. It will become for us both a shield and salve. God has abundant grace to bind broken hearts through the knowledge His compassionate love, sustained even through trials and defeats (see Romans 8:38-39), and as we continue to confess and forsake sin, we shall soon notice God giving us greater knowledge of the enemy and the devices he employs to stumble us. This tutelage of the Holy Spirit is designed to direct the soldier to the power of blood of Jesus Christ to which the sin-mortifying grace of the New Covenant can be consistently availed (Psalm 30:5; Romans 6:14; II Corinthians 2:11; 4:17; Galatians 5:22; Hebrews 9:14; 10:29; I Peter 5:10; I John 1:7; Revelation 12:11).

Secret victories lend to the open fragrance of life in Jesus Christ. The pinnacle message of this book is that you can overcome the designs of darkness and be a vessel of deep edification to many. There is not an enemy in the ranks of Satan which God's grace cannot instantly vanquish. There is not a temptation of the flesh and mind which cannot be broken and cleansed through the holy blood of God. The joy of the soldier never need be broken— even during times of defeat. The Lord would encourage us all through these pages to have faith not only in the sovereignty of His love in pertaining to the restoration of His wounded soldiers, but in the power of His grace in the overcoming of the roaring lion's pounce (II Corinthians 6:10; Philippians 4:4; Ephesians 6:10; II Timothy 2:1; I Thessalonians 5:16; I Peter 5:8).

Those who have been chosen of God to radiate the life of His Son in this war are given a daily death sentence. This death sentence consists of eclipsing the desires of the flesh so that Christ might have preeminence through their vessels. This measure of flesh-eclipsing is proportionate to the diligence one maintains in walking in the spirit. Walking in the spirit requires a deliberate daily resolve, for it involves a conscientious, collaborative effort with the Holy Spirit in guarding our hearts and minds from evil thought-patterns and ever realigning them Heavenward to where we are seated with Christ in God (Luke 9:23; John 3:27,30; Romans 8:13; I Corinthians 15:31; II Corinthians 10:5; Colossians 3:5; Hebrews 12:2; I Peter 1:13; I John 5:11).

What many believers do not realize is that this world has been designed by Satan to prevent this realignment. That Satan is the ruler of this world is scripturally uncontested, and that through his rule, even the basic God-ordained requirements of food for sustenance and intimacy for procreation have been diabolically perverted via the constant bombardment of advertisements to the flesh. In every corner of this world, we find humankind hopelessly entrenched in the satiation of the flesh's lusts. Being dead in sin and blind to the majesty of God, man's habitation is consigned to this dismal plane of Adamic carnality where death reigns through sin. The grand design of spiritual darkness is to ensure that man's spirit eyes are never opened, and then if they are, never elevated to receive the sin-overcoming power of grace from the King of Glory. If we take too light an approach to this awareness, we will be derailed from our holy war and devoured by the roaring lion who pulls the strings and works the levers of this ruined world (Genesis 6:5; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Romans 1:24; II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2,5; Philippians 3:19; I John 5:19).

The gaze by which we train our spirits on Him who is altogether lovely is subject to gravity. It takes real effort to resist the pull and maintain a daily loftiness of faith, trust and spiritual integrity toward God. The fight the old saints wrote so prolifically of, and the fearsome war in which the Christian must for a lifetime engage, is not to be found against flesh and blood, but in the maintenance of this unfettered gaze upward. Devils and charlatan preachers, humanistic philosophies and the quest for money are just some of the many different lead weights used by the enemy to sink our minds down into the dregs of carnal rapport. When the mind becomes preoccupied with fleshly pursuits, the vibrancy of communion between our spirits and His becomes eclipsed. Darkness then prevails upon light, and the soldier is drawn out from the safety of the Cleft of Christ into the open battlefield where he is soon ensnared by the baitings of his own lust (Song of Solomon 5:16; Matthew 7:15; I Corinthians 10:4; Galatians 5:16, 19-21; Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:8; James 1:14; I Timothy 6:10; II Timothy 2:22; II Peter 2:1).

As with the first Adam in the garden, God's children through the Second Adam are also intended to be fruitful and multiply and have dominion over all the earth, sky and sea. But the fruitfulness of this New Covenant is that of the Holy Spirit, the multiplication is in the discipleship of more fruit-bearers of the Spirit, and the dominion is in their overcoming of all the cares of world, the lusts of the flesh and the schemes of the devil. This book was written to expose Satan's lures and to

show how God's soldiers might exercise dominion over all the wiles of this already-defeated foe. But before we begin t his marvelous exhortation, it is paramount that we first have a clear understanding of what the true, victorious Christian li fe is (Genesis 1:26; I Corinthians 15:45-49; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9; Colossians 3:12).

Re: Pride is Antithetical to Grace - posted by Earendel (), on: 2013/4/6 14:14

I haven't read everything in this thread yet, but one thing that keeps coming to mind is...it's not the struggle with the flesh (ourselves as much), it's not a war against sin in us, as much as it is a war against them who hate us the most, who mak e war against us.

It's definitely in the spiritual realm (eph 6:12 comes to mind.), and they attack us (tempt us) as often as they can through the veil of our flesh. And not just that, but also through that which is outside of us - the words and actions of others as w ell. Persecution, false accusations, theft...etc.

But these come to try us as well, to see if we will forgive. And we must forgive, because it goes against salvation if we d on't.

The war we fight isn't against people, it isn't against ourselves who want to love God more than life, but it's against princ ipalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heav enly places...

...many are the trials and afflictions of the righteous elect, but the Lord delivers us out of them all.

They (satan) cannot just attack us at will, though they would, as we are the elect of God. They have to get permission fro m God to do so. But God is faithful to us, and will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able...as it is written, so we have God's promise in that.

Job comes to mind in all of this and is very relevant. And like Job, satan has to accuse us before God (which he does da y and night, even as it is written). And like Job, through accusations before the throne of God, they (satan), through accu sation, gain access to us - and thus we fight the good fight as found in Eph 6:12.

But the day of vengeance, and the day of their undoing is at hand, (so close now) their day is coming to an end soon...R evelation 12:7-12

Every time I pray "Thy kingdom come..." that scripture comes to mind.

...and when that war happens, eph 6:12 will end for us,

Imagine the revival on the Earth that will occur when Michael's war happens - a revival occur and all hell will break loose on Earth. (the multitude that no man can number...)

Re: A Correct Understanding of Christian Victory (edited) - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/4/7 17:57

2. A Correct Understanding of Christian Victory

A large part of the New Testament deals with spiritual warfare, with armor, with refreshing, rejuvenation, with prevailing over the enemy through the blood of Jesus Christ and dominion over sin's power through grace. God clearly wants us t o live our lives to where we are constantly overcoming fear, the love of money, discouragement, bad moods, criticism, s exual lust, pride, unrighteous anger. Victory over these must be our testimony. A preacher must be able to preach delive rance from sin's power with boldness and certainty, and a Bible teacher must be able to show believers through the Wor d of God how to overcome Satan. And both the preacher and teacher must be able to demonstrate the actuality of this vi ctory through the fruit of the Spirit in their own walks and family life (John 8:32; Romans 8:37; I Corinthians 15:57; Ephes ians 6:11; I Timothy 3:9; Revelation 12:11).

To confound the haughty wisdom of the world, Jesus calls only the weary and heavy-laden, and not the strong and able to victory. He calls only the defeated and thirsty. He calls only the hungry, the helpless, the diseased in spirit to rest. All who are tired of suffering under the tyranny of sin He calls to Himself, and they soon find blessed deliverance. He makes all things new. He opens wide the prison doors and sets besieged spirits free and aflame with God's love. The freedom He grants is absolute, His love unspeakable, His joy ever-abounding. He invites all with ears to hear and hearts to yearn to come unto Him and die and be resurrected with His divine nature. He offers a winning, joyous life, full of His overcoming grace and triumph. He offers a foretaste of heaven on earth through the earnest of the Holy Spirit. There can never be anyone with any excuse to not be willing to be made willing to become a candidate for this glorious calling (Matthew 5:3, 11:28; John 12:24; Romans 1:20; I Corinthians 1:26-28; II Corinthians 1:22; 5:17; II Peter 1:4).

On the flip side, the further a Christian drifts from Christ and declines this calling, the longer the shadows will begin to grow as the light of God abates in his life. If we notice shadows elongating in our lives, we must check our proximity to Christ. It is never a matter of our own willful resistance to evil, for as empty voids we cannot resist the darkness. True victory consists of returning to the Light of Christ, for it is from the Light of His Life alone which darkness flees (John 1:5, 8:12, 15:5).

Many believers have a wrong understanding of Christian victory. They think victory is an unbroken span of sinless perfection where one does not transgress in word, thought or deed. But this is an inaccurate picture of triumph. True victory in Christ which leads from glory to glory is found in overcoming temptation through the instant obtainment of God's grace in confessing and forsaking every ungodly impulse as it enters our mind to defile the conscience and conceive sin. There is not a Christian alive who is immune from confessing the impurity of some internal revelation of unchristlikeness by the Holy Spirit, in accordance to the current light of their own level of sanctification (Psalms 84:7; II Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:12-21; I John 1:8; 2:1).

The Holy Spirit is always faithful to bring the knowledge of sin to the understanding of God's children. This is the purpose of light. Christian victory, therefore, is found just as much in the resistance of darkness as it is in the returning to the light. Every Christian is able, in some capacity, to resist darkness in the face of the light he or she currently has. The problem arises when one enters into varying degrees of darkness minus the corresponding grace of God. A believer may be plagued with a sense of his or her own impurity, and yet, the inward act of opposing and confessing the impurity constitutes one victorious before God. This victory is granted through the overcoming power of God's grace and the instantaneous effect of Christ's blood-cleansing through faith (John 16:8; I Corinthians 10:3; 14:24; II Corinthians 2:19; Philippians 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; II Peter 2:9).

It is therefore not the person who hides an outbreak of sin who is counted victorious, for these efforts of flesh-quenching are but a mere masking; a mortal concealment, a clever corking of a fierce volcanic eruption occurring deep beneath the surface of the skin. It is not the believer who plugs the volcano, but he who flees from the lava as it threatens to burn his conscience who is counted truly victorious. Such a man needs no plug for the volcano, for the gracious blood of Christ is able to make the fire recede. The instantaneous effect of grace is one of cooling, one of healing, one of fire-recession, one of utter cleansing and instant restoration (Matthew 11:29; Luke 11:39; Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 4:3; 9:14; I John 1:9).

The period between the rises of these volcanic impulses and their abatements are what present a sense of triumph to the child of God as he continually walks in the Spirit of Christ. Without these, the cork of the law is needed to stop the volcano from erupting through the flesh. This corking via the law is where many believers become weary and heavy-laden, scalded by the lava and having fallen prey to legalistic teachings which thrive through the self-condemnation of failed human willpower (Colossians 2:23).

To avoid the pitfalls of legalism, the child of God must have an understanding of the power of Christ's blood and how it relates to victory by grace through faith. The sooner this truth is appropriated, the sooner the cork of the law can be rendered obsolete. How we regard the cork is, in fact, all the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The instant cooling of the uncorked volcano should be the normal condition for all New Covenant believers. But even then, those who suffer burning should recognize the pain of failure is often the Father's way of making the cross even more precious, more attractive and needful through the employment of fiery trials. Do not new seedlings soon spring forth through the burnt ground of a forest? Likewise, victory in the spirit of a believer is restored when the heart is humbled unto confession and the conscience cleansed in the justifying blood of Christ (Romans 5:3,4,9; I Peter 4:12-13; Hebrews 10:22).

The more the Christian grows in grace, the more he learns of how the power of the blood of Jesus works in conjunction with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is ever-faithful to alert the conscience of impending volcanic eruptions.

He shows us our sin in the darkness for it to be crucified in the light. Dear saint, if your conscience happens to get burnt during times of sin-discovery, do not allow yourself to come under condemnation, but confess the burn immediately! Let this practice become a habit, and you will be well on your way to greater revelations in the Word, anointing in your ministry, and extended sojournings in victory (Matthew 10:27; Romans 8:1).

When thinking of the principles of Christian victory I am often reminded of the Scottish biologist who inadvertently discovered penicillin in 1928 when he noticed a radius of destroyed bacteria surrounding a piece of mold in a plate culture. This famous epiphany in science spiritually parallels the arming of the mind of Christ to the inhibition of fleshly lusts. In the same way harmful microbes cannot proliferate within the proximity of the influence of penicillin, so the lusts of the flesh cannot spiritually colonize in the vessel of a child of God who is armed with the mind of Christ (Galatians 5:16-18).

The "armament" of the mind in the Bible is based upon a Greek term for weapon. It denotes an ancient warrior holding a shield and javelin, ready to go to war. In this context, the Christian does battle against the lusts of the flesh which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11). The soldier who is not armed for this conflict will be overrun and infected by the advancing troops which seek to draw out the lusts of his flesh. To guard the mind against the bacteria of sin, it must be daily renewed and armed in Christ. But how, it is often asked, is this accomplished in terms of our actual, experiential victory in Christ?

A consideration of death must occur in the principle of self to where the overcoming life of Another Power is activated. This death is reckoned through the believer's own identification in Christ's death (Romans 6:3). The result is an internal submission to the mortifying influence of the Holy Spirit's power over the will of the flesh. Therefore, if people who have not yet been baptized into this death can hear the gospel preached, and lift their hands and shout hallelujah, it is a false gospel. For the true gospel breaks before it heals, accuses before it acquits, crucifies before it resurrects. Every Christian must be daily crucified to overcome the onslaught of spiritual contaminants seeking to enter his mind and heart through the designs of darkness. We must allow the Word of God to thoroughly dwell in us and rule our hearts from the place and peace of death. If we would be more than conquerors, we must attune our hearts to obey the Spirit's soft dealings of death. As lone pieces of mold amidst perverse colonies of bacteria, we must see ourselves as dead on the plate but alive to the Master who infuses our dead bodies with the grace and faith and power and overcoming life of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. We can kill an Egyptian with our bare hands and hide him in the sand, or we can allow God to sink the entire Egyptian army to the bottom of the ocean. One is a picture of covertly striving against sin through fleshly effort, in which any legalistic victory we gain is upon shifting, foundationless sand. The other is a picture of God's triumphant grace, absolute and sure, with sin's dominion cast to the ocean's floor (Exodus 2:12; Micah 7:19).

Man is a match, made to be struck with death so he can be burst aflame with the conquering Life of Christ. This is the reality of New Covenant victory, and the way which God brings triumph to His children! "As Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Peter 4:1-2).

Re: God's Children Grow in the dark - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/4/8 10:50

3. God's Children Grow in the Dark

"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." (Micah 7:8-9)

If God's ways are not according to human logic, this truth is nowhere more evident than in the way He grows His children in sanctification and wisdom during times of failure and defeat. Saplings sprout from the earth under direct sunlight and in optimal temperatures; but in contrast to this, God's children grow in times of darkness, in the midst of trials and tests. They are refreshed in the sunlit presence of the Lord with spiritual reprieve and rejuvenation—but they grow in holiness and sanctification in the dark. As seeds germinate beneath soil, and babies are knit together in the darkness of their mothers' wombs, so the Lord fashions our spiritual bones and substance together in dark wombs of affliction. Did not Samson's hair re-grow after his eyes had been put out? Did not God recapture Jonah's obedience while he lay in the dark belly of a whale? Was it not from the darkness of the wilderness that Jesus came forth with the Holy Spirit upon Him with power to set the captives free? And did not Almighty God form the earth within the void of created darkness, before the initial command of light? (Genesis 1:3; Judges 16:21-22; Jonah 2:1-10; Luke 4:14)

Look at an earthly child. He eats and plays during the day, when sunlight encompasses his world. But at night, while sleeping, the food he ate miraculously transforms into bone and muscle. It is in the darkness of sleep and in the cocoon of

sunless dormancy where his physical growth takes place, and to the extent that when he awakens, he is noticeably taller and his features all the more defined and mature. All parents have observed this bittersweet metamorphosis in their children.

God's children grow spiritually in the dark as well. The wisdom of God allows the enemy's designs of darkness to be used in the perfecting of Christ-conformity, in fulfillment of Romans 8:28. It is in the dark cocoon of trials and difficulties where a Christian's brilliant colors formed, and where the wings of faith are made to bring him to the throne of grace. This is why we are taught not to despise the chastening and correction of the Lord, and why we are to embrace His rod in the furnace of chastisement and in the allowance of fleshly temptations (Proverbs 3:11). It is in the fire where the precious metals of earth gain their worth in the estimation of men. The Christian, likewise, is tempered and seasoned and grown in inhospitable atmospheres which seem unfruitful for the furtherance of his value. We know our that righteous Father forever seeks the utmost good for His children; we must therefore endure His blessed rod of purification and never doubt His supreme love while suffering in the face of our seasonal pain (I Peter 1:6; 4:12). Remember this blessed truth the next time you fail in His grace.

The night cometh; the fire is kindled - and our suffering in the flesh is God's will for the promotion of Christ's Life in our vessels. The flesh suffers so the precious elements of the spirit can come forth, like gold, with brilliancy (I Peter 1:7). Enter then into God's appointed chamber of growth with weeping and mourning over your own unprofitable resolutions, with your myriad of failures, and all your broken aspirations to please Him. But in the midst of these, know that God's plans for your life are not negated in the least within the cocoon of darkness, but rather forged upon the anvil of your suffering in the flesh. If you trust Him, He will see you through the fiery furnace and you will come out the other end without a strand of hair singed. He will hold you in His mighty Hand while you sleep, and when the sun finally rises, you will have grown. And your growth will be noticeable to all (Daniel 3:25-27; I Timothy 4:15).

The lowly caterpillar resigns to the darkness of the cocoon only to fly away in the light of liberation and on the wings of beauty. As the worm's freedom was perfected in a lair of darkness, so God's strength is made perfect through the chamber of suffering. Allow God keep you in this chamber until you can reckon by faith your actual death in Christ and come into the glorious knowledge of His grace. His plan for your life is to adorn you with the beauty of Christ; to mint you with His life, and to impart His divine nature in you to such a degree that you might fly above all the darkness of sin and Satanic bondage of the earth's pull (Romans 6:6-11; II Corinthians 2:19; Colossians 3:3; II Peter 1:4).

Sometimes a believer will fail a test of God and enter into a season of darkness. Perhaps he was living a life of victory, walking with a clean conscience before God and enjoying the resources of Christ when a temptation hit, overwhelmed him, took away his peace and snuffed his joy. Prior to this, he thought he was strong; he thought he could stand up to and resist the temptation as he had many times in the past (I Corinthians 10:12). He had been walking in the Spirit that morning; by the evening, however, he finds himself cast down and once again in the dregs of a besetting sin. Because he loathes himself to such a degree, there is a great reluctance to be recovered before God. This is because he is made to feel he is fighting a hopeless cause, and that his Christianity is just not "working", despite knowing and experiencing all the verses and truths pertaining to the divine nature in overcoming sin. Satan is quick to invade his mind during these moments and convince him that any continuation of walking with God is futile.

We must be encouraged with the truth of all-loving, all-wise Father who allows certain things to happen for the furtherance of our good. Never an instigator of sin, we know from scripture that God will at times allow the tempter of souls to strike at the hearts of His children for a specific cause. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness specifically to be tested by Satan; Jesus foretold of Peter's allowance to be sifted by request of Satan; Satan asked to destroy all which righteous Job held in possession, and God granted all of these (Luke 22:31). God will allow the designs of darkness to try us to us. When He permits the enemy to strike, a strong presentation to engage in evil will suddenly come to our minds. It comes as an invitation to rebel against the light God has already given us on the subject by which we are currently being tempted. Previously, we could hold our ground and resist it with resolve - but now it crashes upon the shores of our mind like a sudden tsunami, catching us off guard. The powers of darkness are opportunistic in this regard: they wait until the mind is weak and the flesh is strong enough to overpower the spirit's restraining grace. When the moment is right, they pounce. When we are not overcoming darkness, the darkness is overcoming us. This is a universal law set in motion by God, and cannot be changed. Light always triumphs over darkness, and the two are forever at odds; but it is the darkness which is sneakily opportunistic in filling voids when light begins to abate.

When a believer fails God, he fails against the will of his inner man (Romans 7:22-25; Galatians 5:17; I John 3:9; 5:8). He so loathes sin, yet in those dire moments he feels himself at once helplessly dominated by the flesh. It is never the Lord's will that we fail during these times of testing, but if we do fail, He foreknew and permitted it yet. It's difficult for us to

o compute God allowing an event to transpire, knowing it will cause us to sin. But didn't He already know Peter would deny Christ - and yet, being fully able to prevent it, chose instead to allow Peter to fail? Yes. The Lord had a great lesson to teach Peter, which could only be acquired in the darkness of despair brought on by failure (Luke 22:32).

The Lord is not an earthly teacher. An earthly teacher, when she gives a test, does not know her pupils' grades until after the test is taken. But God knows all the grades beforehand, yet still administers the test in order to teach His children the subject of grace in a supremely profound way. The reason God allows such tests is to demonstrate to us that only Christ can pass them. When we fail a test in God's school, it is because we took it ourselves and did not allow Christ to take the test for us. A failing grade always indicates an insufficiency of grace. The great end of all God's testing in allowing the devil to sift us is to amplify the righteousness of Jesus Christ, destroy all boasting, and convince us of the necessity of Holy Spirit empowerment for living the Christian life (Romans 8:3; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:11; Hebrews 10:8).

When we take a test and fail, our eyes are usually blind to the fact that we took the test ourselves. There is a reluctance to look up to God because of our sense of hopelessness. A defeatist mindset encompasses us and we begin to see ourselves as worthless subjects (II Corinthians 2:7). Ah - but this is precisely the reason why the Teacher of teachers administered the test! It is to foster within us the very understanding that we are unable to master the subject matter apart from Christ. An earthly teacher introduces the subject matter to her students for them to comprehend it on the test; God, in contrast, uses the test's incomprehensibility to demonstrate the subject matter to His children. And the subject matter is always grace through Jesus Christ. These lessons of grace are often learnt in a dark classroom, with Satan as God's appointed proctor over the test material.

If we fail a test and are in the dark, God would have us get up immediately and continue on in faith. Our Father wills that after each test-failure we would approach the blood of Christ through confession of our failure and be instantly restored. He calls us to look into His Word to see how and why we flunked. The Word of God is like a mirror which sits upon a wash-basin filled with Christ's blood (James 1:23). In this mirror we are to look, confess, and wash. That is His remedial program. When you fail any test, you return to this basin. The more you come to it through humility and the will to master the test's subject matter, the more you will be transformed by the wisdom which comes from above (James 3:17; Hebrews 12:11; I Peter 5:6). Always remember this: At anytime, if you rise high enough above even the most fiercest and darkest of storms, you'll find the sun shining in the midst of a cloudless, blue sky. When Satan descends, the child of God must ascend. The Old Covenant's realm is beneath the sun where nothing is new and all is vanity; the New Covenant beckons and empowers us through grace to sail forever beyond the sun, where all things are new and everlasting joy abounds.

Never stay down after you flunk a test in God's school. Pick yourself up in the dark after you fail and go immediately to the mirror of God's Word and wash in the fountain of Christ's blood. If the Lord sees you have begun to leave your first love, or have forgotten how He cleansed you from your former sins, these may warrant an exam to where you suddenly find yourself in a chamber of seasonal darkness to deflate your budding pride (II Peter 1:9; Revelation 2:4). Embrace God's rod - but do not stay down in the dark. The subject matter He is teaching you is employment of His grace through a return to humility. The purpose for all His tests is to teach us the impossibility of passing any of them save for the grace of Christ manifest in us. Christians are most vulnerable to fail a test when they have been most victorious under the illusion of pride. We must therefore stay forever low before the Master, and never forget that the Authorship of any victory we experience is always His.

Re: 4. The Design of Worldly Entertainment - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/4/8 23:29

4. The Design of Worldly Entertainment

The design of worldly entertainment is in the usurpation of spiritual joy. Entertainment is but a decoy, a glass diamond, a nugget of fool's gold in exchange for the true riches found only in Jesus Christ. The enemy waits for the joy of the Lord to abate in believers before presenting them with the sham of entertainment and worldly amusements. The powers of darkness observe God's children and watch for signs of diminishment in their spiritual rejuvenation; they observe the quality of devotion and spy on their quiet times with God. When the occasion is ripe to offer the apple of entertainment, they do so, and like Ehud and Joab, slip the knife deceptively into the belly of the soul (Judges 3:20-22; II Samuel 20:10).

As the poison of entertainment begins its spread, the joy of the Lord is replaced by visceral delight. And as the child of God flounders here, the powers of darkness strike a second time. Here they strike with a delusional acceptance that entertainment might be successfully married to God's joy. As with Naaman the Syrian, they find themselves meandering bet

ween two temples: the shrine of a false god and the temple of the true God (II Kings 5:18; Matthew 6:24). A profane altar is erected within the temple of the Holy Spirit, the heart is commandeered, and the incense of fleshly enjoyment is burned in lieu of the Holy Spirit's fire.

The power of soul entertainment and the influence it has over the flesh (if not overcome by spiritual joy) has an electrifying draw, and, in the end, detrimental consequences to the "new man" created in us. Entertainment and joy cannot co-exist for long, and entertainment will always win the fight over joy for dominion in the heart when the mind continues to be set on carnal endeavors (Luke 12:19). The powers of darkness know this truth very well, which is why the world has been designed to be a lair of entertainment, a colossal web to entrap men and women for the purpose of euthanizing their minds from the realities of God and the impending doom of hell.

To effectively counter the dagger of entertainment, the mind's loins must be girded and set upon the glory of Jesus Christ. The believer must pray for God to foster within him a new mindset adaptation, to shift the gaze of his faith from earth to heaven (Hebrews 12:2; I Peter 1:13). We must learn to recognize when the shadows are drawing longer and our inner men are beginning to hunger. And upon this recognition, to fly to the blood of Jesus Christ where God has provided light, food and shelter for our beleaguered spirits (I John 1:5,7,9). Any hesitation to fly to Christ in these moments puts our spirit men in jeopardy of being outmatched by the fake glitter and false gold of worldly entertainment.

Consider the lure of money. A man's success in life is not to be measured by the height of his salary or the fatness of his possessions, but by the depth of his yieldedness to God. Can a believer chase after money and still serve God? According to Jesus, the simultaneous pursuit of money and God is impossible. And not only that, the believer who loves money will eventually come to hate God. It is good to examine ourselves in this respect. Are our minds forever focused on increasing our salaries and getting newer and bigger and better possessions? Are we discontent with what God in His wisdom has allotted us on earth? An archangel in heaven once wanted more than what God had allotted for his station, and this lust for more transformed him into a devil in an instant (Isaiah 14:12-14; Matthew 6:24; Luke 12:15; I Timothy 6:6-10).

We need to see that the love of money is Satanic at its core, for it reflects an inward boast of pride, of thankless discontent and damnable self-rule. This is a trait Adam inherited from Satan, and was spread to us all who were in his loins when he bowed the knee to the serpent. All who run after materialism and earthly wealth subconsciously despise God's plans and are in intrinsic opposition to the will of their Creator. No wonder Jesus said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven! If we think we are immune from this deception, we must remember: a deceived person does not know he is deceived until he brings the counterfeit note to the Bank. And by then it is too late to escape exposure and prosecution (Psalm 119:36; Proverbs 23:4; Matthew 19:34; Romans 5:12; Colossians 3:5; Hebrews 13:5).

Because our minds are naturally poised toward earth-bound objects and passions, an effective strategy employed by spiritual wickedness is to constantly provide diversions and distractions to keep the follower of Christ from heavenly pursuits (Luke 21:34; I Corinthians 7:35; I Peter 2:11). The world in which we live is replete with such a myriad of alluring vanities, fruitless enticements and empty attractions as to make each inch of our sojourning here a potential bog to gratify our insatiable intellect and electrify the flesh. To effectively circumnavigate these bogs, diligence is required in obtaining knowledge of God's grace to withstand Satan and maintain an unmolested mind on our stalwart path to heaven (II Corinthians 2:14; Philippians 4:8; Hebrews 4:16; II Peter 3:18).

These distractions at first present themselves in small increments. Initially they are but the polyps that forewarn of cancer if not excised upon detection. They appear benign (that is, some harmless divergence from the narrow path of holiness); but are, in fact, strategically-designed weapons used by the enemy to infiltrate our minds and set down destructive roots (Song of Solomon 2:15). The invasion's purpose is to create a mental fortress which seeks to strangle the life of one's inner devotion to God. The reason it is so difficult to pray, to read God's Word, and to engage our minds in deep spiritual meditation for a prolonged period of time is because invisible spirit powers and principalities surround us and constantly war against these efforts. Their mission is to keep our inner men from making contact with God to gain strength by the power of His Spirit (Ephesians 3:16). Believers who live for righteousness and who seek to be transformed by God will be mercilessly persecuted by these evil forces, for such believers wrestle not against flesh and blood, but with demons. These forces seek to desensitize believers over a period of time through minuscule doses of compromise to where at last the child of God crumbles under a flaming arrow and yields to sin (Ephesians 6:12; II Timothy 3:12).

When the arrow strikes the mind, it sticks and infects. The poison defiles the believer's conscience and immediately establishes a root in the heart. The bow from which the arrow is propelled is most commonly strung by the lure of entertainment and other worldly concerns, and the strength by which the bow is drawn is found in the lusts of the flesh and in the

pride of life. When these twin powers are awakened and given preeminence over the influence of the spirit, the arrow is launched.

Satan has arrows trained at the hearts and minds of God's unhealthy children. Believers become spiritually sick at the initial slacking of their fervent devotion to God, for when we cease to occupy ourselves with Him, we cease to be healthy. The Lord uses the designs of darkness to bring forth the symptoms to show the child that he is sick. The Lord ensures that Satan's arrows never miss their targets; they always hit the unhealthy areas of our inner life and cause them to flare up for detection. The Holy Spirit then quickly manifests the stricken areas to us through the knowledge of sin (Galatians 5:19-21). Like Peter descending into the sea, the stricken believer in this moment must cry out to God in quick confession of his failure.

Upon this confession, the conscience is once again sprinkled with the blood of Christ and the believer is brought back safely into the boat (Hebrews 10:22). Here, however, the designs of darkness will attempt a new strategy. Upon seeing the believer is once again safe in the Arc of the New Covenant, the siren of false condemnation will sound. Here, Christians who are not actively, methodically and untiringly resisting the onslaught of condemning thought-patterns will soon find themselves overrun and paralyzed and reeling off course. These impulses can be errantly theological and doctrinal in nature; they can be pornographic; they can be materialistic; they can be wrathful; they can be untrusting, doubting; they can be of bitterness, of unforgiveness or vengeance. These are all doorways for the powers of darkness to sink claws into the mind of a believer. But a Christian under the grace of the New Covenant has the power to reject all of these wicked invitations, and call on Jesus Christ the very moment they begin stirring the waters (Matthew 8:25-26; II Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 4:26-27).

The Lord never removes Satan's invitations, but instead uses the power of grace to elevate us into positions of overcoming. Grace is the water by which God lifts us, like Noah, over all the mountains of temptation in the world. When God shut Noah in the boat, Noah died to the world and the world died to Noah. Likewise, the overcoming Christian is he who is hid in Christ, the Ark of the New Covenant. What hill of gold is He not able to lift us above? What mountain of lust? What ridge of despair are we not able to transcend? As long as we are shut off from the world and dead in Him, there isn't a mountain in all of creation we cannot overcome. But without grace, we will never rise. Without grace, we will instead seek ways to go through the mountain instead of over it, to go around it instead of above it, and to dodge it rather than resist it. In all these cases, failure is assured (Genesis 7:16-17; Galatians 6:14; Philippians 4:13).

A defiled conscience coupled with a weak understanding of grace is a dangerous combination, for it puts a man in a raging sea without a life jacket, and in these situations it can be difficult to bring ourselves back into God's presence through the blood of Christ when our souls are downcast. The longer we hesitate to be restored, the heavier our sense of guilt becomes. The sirens of Satan will begin to broadcast that the blood alone is not sufficient, that we must "do" something additional to make an effective reconciliation, and that we are not who the Bible says we are in Christ. A hopeless sense of condemnation then sets in—while true justification and faith-charged restoration are but a confession away (Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:5; I John 3:19-21).

When our spirits are depleted of grace, we stop going forward and become sitting prey on the side of the narrow path for the enemy. This is why so many Christians live lives of chronic defeat and depression, despite all their Bible knowledge and Christian social activity. They are poverty-stricken and starved of grace; their inner men are famished and too weak to rise. As a result, the enemy is able to have his way with their flesh and manipulate their thoughts. They need renewal! Healthy Christians, on the other hand, are daily-renewed Christians, full of grace and overcoming strength and victory in the Holy Spirit. They are able to pull their thoughts down into captivity and put Satan at flight every time he advances. They see themselves as living amidst an ever-flowing fountain of blood and grace. They are very careful in keeping watch over their minds and hearts. They are quick to confess secret sins and humble themselves in the inward parts. They cherish their Father's holiness and seek to be continuously filled and refilled with His Spirit to face the wicked challenge each day brings (Matthew 7:13-14; II Corinthians 10:5; James 4:7).

We must seek God for the daily renewal of our inner men to overcome sin in the moment-to-moment ordeals of temptation and spiritual warfare. We must have faith for this! If we come across a suggestive image, an impure thought, a piece of gossip, or an invitation to indecently amuse ourselves to the detriment to the life of God in us, we must turn our heads and flee from it as though it were a deadly virus! A decision must be made each day to where we allow God to renew us in the spirit of our minds. Our values must be realigned from the earthly to the eternal by resolving to take no thought for tomorrow and rest in His Word. The joy and relief that comes from this humble realignment is instant, but we must make this realignment quickly, for Satan can catch us off guard and trap us in our carnality if we linger too long. The heart then can become so weighted-down with the pangs of condemnation that placing faith in the restorative efficacy of Christ's blood

ood can seem an impossible task. May we therefore remain humble and attentive to the leading of the Spirit in keeping our minds renewed and hearts sanctified with all diligence (Deuteronomy 4:9; Proverbs 4:23; 23:19; Ephesians 4:23; I Peter 3:15).

Re: 5. Preachers in Darkness - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/4/14 12:16

5. Beware of Preachers in Darkness

Preachers in darkness will come to you with real evangelical doctrines, with seminary knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, and with flowing exegesis delivered in spectacular eloquence. In all their eloquence, however, they will never tell you how difficult it is to enter through narrow way, or how few actually make through the gate. They'll instead widen it for everyone who says the sinner's prayer and acquiesces to an intellectual affirmation of the gospel. With all their dazzling oratory and mastery of hermeneutics you will not find one mention on how to overcome the lust of the eyes. They will teach you all about Joseph and his brothers in Egypt, but not how to overcome anger. They will teach you the proper Greek term for grace, but not how to be free from anxiety through grace. They'll explain to you the right contextual interpretation for Sheol and Hades in Scripture, but not how to triumph over the love of money and sexual addictions. And if they do speak of the crucifixion of the self-life, it is in high-brow, theological terms which cannot be practically assimilated by the common listener (Matthew 7:13; I Corinthians 1:23; 2:4; Ephesians 4:14; Philippians 3:18; Colossians 2:8; Hebrews 13:9).

A preacher in darkness will extol the great praying exploits and Bible reading habits of dead saints, and unwittingly give Satan ammunition to bring you under condemnation. He will manipulate your emotions via soul-power to get you to tithe with the allurements of receiving an even greater reciprocal blessing from God (usually in the form of some earthly, financial dividend) to further feed your lust for more money. A preacher in darkness will tell you only that the cross of Jesus Christ is God's means of forgiving your sins and improving the social, psychological and financial status of your life, but will not tell you that forgiveness of sin, healing, redemption from hell, and material prosperity were all available under the Old Covenant to any faithful Jew who obeyed the law (Psalm 103:3-5). You'll find no rain in the cloud to water you with the grace of Jesus Christ who actually delivers captives from the inward power and tyranny of the flesh's nature—a deliverance which no law-abiding, sacrifice-offering and tithing Jew could ever hope to experience under Moses (Matthew 1:21; 6:6; John 1:17; II Corinthians 9:7; II Peter 2:17).

If secret lust still reigns in our hearts, we are enslaved. If our enthusiasm and great aspiration in life as Christians is only to make money and maximize our materialistic gain while on earth, we are deceived. It doesn't matter which church we attend, how well we know the Bible or how long we've been saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. A slave to sin is a slave to sin, no matter how correct his theology or how passionate his testimony. And a slave lives in darkness. Scripture forewarns that the man who casts devils out of others but who does not allow Jesus to cast sin out of him, goes to hell; the man who heals the sick but who does not allow Jesus to heal the sickness of sin in him, is sent to hell; and the man who preaches the cross of Christ but who refuses to take it up himself cannot be a true follower of the Lord. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by all the miracle and "deliverance" ministries of men and women who operate in the fiery prophetic but are yet in secret bondage themselves. If a ministry does not provoke you to reckon yourself dead to sin and daily take up the cross of self-death, such a ministry is a fraud no matter how gifted the preaching is, how many miracles are performed, demons cast out or people healed (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 14:27; John 8:36; Romans 6:18, 20; I John 2:4).

A great means by which the designs of darkness seek to deceive men and women through Christian preaching is found in the power of the soul. Deliverance occurs when gospel preaching is done through the Holy Spirit; psychology occurs when it is done through the soul. The vast majority of Christian ministry in the United States—both charismatic and non-charismatic—operates purely at the psychological level of intellect and emotion. Most preachers are unaware that they are being used by the forces of darkness through soul power, and so their listeners also cannot discern this usurpation due to the great emotional influence the soul has over their true spiritual condition. Through the employment of dynamically repetitious music, cadenced preaching and cerebral dissertations, multitudes of believers bereft of true Holy Spirit regeneration are made to feel sanctified, cleansed and justified on a weekly basis. The goal of this tactic is to deceive everyone into believing that real spiritual life is being proffered in the meeting, instead of just psychological blanks being fired in the air (Romans 16:18; Philippians 3:19; Colossians 2:8; Hebrews 4:12).

Our eyes need to be opened to the truth that charged emotions and intellectual persuasions alone are incapable of bringing the Life of God into a dead vessel. This blessed transmittal can take place only within the confines of the quickened spirit. The spirit is the nucleus of the Life of Christ in a man, and if the Word of God does not vivify man's spirit with the transforming power of Jesus Christ, it will remain but dead psychology to the soul and mind. Feeding the soul with God's Word will inflate Bible knowledge and move the emotion, but it will not dismantle strongholds of addiction or break the

power of the devil over one's life (Romans 8:11; I Corinthians 8:1; 15:45; II Corinthians 3:6). The divine provocation to surrender to the Holy Spirit in progressive measures of Christ-conformity is completely unavailable through the soul. The effects of soul are but transitory even under the greatest of preaching and ministry: in just a few days after a soul experience, the eyes will start lusting again, anger and impatience will re-flare, the anxiety and the cares of the world will return. Under even the most eloquent of soul-preaching, captives of sin soon discover the newly found freedom they thought they had was all but an illusion! The door to their freedom only led to the prison courtyard.

In exchange for real spiritual freedom, the captive is made to feel loved in the prison. He is made to feel blessed, endowed with special gifts, theologically adroit, and faithful on account of his weekly fellowship, volunteering for various tasks and in his paying of tithes and offerings (Jeremiah 6:14; 23:17; Ezekiel 13:10). Because the captives purport to feel the presence of the Lord through their preaching and music week after week, they conclude God is pleased with their walks. The reality, however, is that they are blinded by their own emotions and sit enslaved to sin in spiritual darkness. The Lord does not interfere and thus allows them to be defrauded by the wares of soul, resulting in the church's inability to differentiate between the worship leader and pastor's energy and the genuine ministry of the Holy Spirit. Satan's design for keeping a church in this condition is to prevent believers from seeking the grace of God to break the power of sin's dominion over their lives (Ecclesiastes 8:11; Psalm 50:21).

Another tactic by which darkness prevails in keeping believers enslaved is by allowing them to think that being free from the power of sin equates to being in a state of sinless perfection (I John 1:8, 10). Multitudes are therefore deceived by this grand tactical design: they either congregate to one heretical camp which purports they are without, and therefore cannot, sin; or to the opposite camp of cyclic defeat and forgiveness without any hope of ever overcoming sin's power and partaking of Christ's triumphant victory while on earth. Both camps continue to operate in darkness and defeat (Philippians 3:13; Hebrews 6:1).

We must stop listening to the kind of preaching which does not teach us how to overcome sin, but only causes us to be harder or softer on ourselves than God is. We must also beware of preachers who place a huge emphasis on radical prayer and Bible reading agendas, but who cannot teach believers from the Word with simplicity how to overcome Satan's temptations and rejoice evermore. We must know how to tell the difference between Holy Spirit conviction and satanic condemnation in our journeys of sanctification. We must be able to see that the Holy Spirit will never put a man on a guilt trip for not giving enough money, praying enough, or reading the Bible enough, and that the pressure to make these religious bricks comes from Pharaoh's taskmasters and never from God. Indeed, if we listen to such taskmasters we will find there is never an end to the bricks. The more bricks we make today, the more will be required tomorrow! (Exodus 5:8; Matthew 6:5-6; 11:28; I Thessalonians 5:16)

Yet another tactic by which the powers of darkness seek to deceive believers through Christian ministry is to get them to concentrate on demonic "deliverance ministries" instead of sin-deliverance ministries. In truth, any type of deliverance ministry which does not deliver a man from sin is no deliverance ministry at all. Do not be deceived by those who equate the casting out of demons as true deliverance, for it is not. Many preachers with demon-deliverance ministries (and many believers who have had demons cast out of them) will only hear from Jesus on the final day, "I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice sin" (Matthew 7:22-23). If a preacher can only point out your sins but not teach you how to overcome them, he is wasting your time. If a preacher can only speak of forgiveness of sin but not deliverance from sin, he is wasting your time. If all a preacher can do is cast out devils and heal your body physically – but not teach you how to partake of Jesus' divine nature and consistently overcome sin through grace, he is not worth your attention (Hebrews 4:16; II Peter 1:4).

It is truly amazing how many faithful, church-attending Christians still do not know how to overcome the powers of darkness despite all the sermons they've heard and devotional materials they've read (II Timothy 3:7). Despite all their Bible knowledge and time in prayer most believers remain totally defeated by sexual strongholds, debate and strife, unending criticism, negativism, money worries and fear. And because of these strongholds, the Holy Spirit cannot operate through them to bring deliverance to others, nor can God trust them with His prophetic Word in their mouths or pen. Their ministries and testimonies can only go as far as to touch the soul in pampering the intellect and stirring the emotions. And this is the great deception. Any ministry which does not change you inwardly by provoking you to a greater surrender in the humility, purity, sobriety and conformity to Jesus Christ in every aspect your life is but a cloud without rain (Jeremiah 15:19; Proverbs 25:19; Jude 1:12).

Re: 6. Preventing the Invasions of Darkness - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/4/15 19:49

6. Preventing the Invasions of Darkness

Scripture tells us it is our duty to keep our hearts with all diligence, for the heart is susceptible to spiritual attack and can easily go after idols if not guarded. An unkept heart is like a moon without an atmosphere; a moon which has fallen prey to all the flying garbage of spiritual space. Without an atmosphere of grace, lustful temptations will strike the surface and cause all sorts of spiritual depressions through the conception of sin (Proverbs 4:23; I Peter 3:15; I John 5:21).

The designs of darkness target our minds and hearts daily with hostile thoughts and impure impulses. These spiritual trajectories seek to make deep impact and cause explosive damage to our walks with God. They aim to wound the conscience with the remembrance of sin and thus create a frustration in the obtainment of the grace of God (I John 3:21).

God's grace is given to "keep" the heart from becoming overpowered by these attacks. It is given to preserve the conscience from defilement through the partaking of Christ's nature. Because of this, we must allow Christ to answer the door to our hearts when strangers knock from the outside. We must be extremely careful when dealing with issues we know the powers of darkness are apt to steal our peace over; for example, we should always treat matters relating to money as though they were a loaded spring trap. We should handle any dealings with members of the opposite sex in identical fashion— with extreme caution and spiritual sobriety, ever-cognizant that these are often used as bait by the powers of darkness. There may be other issues which can pose as traps that need special attention. In all of them we are exhorted to be vigilant, sober, and abounding in the grace of God so the shield of faith can continue to protect our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. We are not our own masters. We have been ransomed from hell by His blood; we must learn to find our rest and security in His protective grace (I Corinthians 6:20; 14:20; Philippians 4:7; I Peter 1:19).

Before our rebirth, when we lived in the flesh to the fulfilling of our lusts, we were like orphaned moons in deep space without an atmosphere. We were alienated from God, full of darkness and void of protection. But Jesus rose from the dead and sent down the Holy Spirit to encompass our quickened spirits with grace and give us atmospheres to where the cosmic trajectories would no longer have dominion over us. We are no longer orphans lost in space - we are the ransomed sons and daughters of God and heirs to a Kingdom of eternal glory. For the earnest of this promise, the Father has given us a foretaste of perfection through the filling, instruction and protection of the Holy Spirit. He indwells our bodies to make us more like Jesus through the exchange of the divine nature. He strengthens our inner men with might to shield us from the fiery trajectories of Satan: from the comets of lust, the meteors of pride and the discouragement of every evil design which can be conjured up and hurled at the surface of our hearts and minds (John 14:18; II Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 2:3; 6:16; Colossians 1:21; James 2:5).

But even here our spirits are not in a fixed state of strength. Just like our physical bodies weaken if they do not eat and sleep, so our spiritual bodies will also wane in strength when they are not daily rejuvenated through the Holy Spirit. We are constantly winding down with fatigue as we confront the evil each day brings, and as we weaken in spirit, the world begins to regain momentum and a greater influence over our rebellious flesh. It is for this reason we are exhorted to make no provision for the flesh, but instead be renewed, transformed and purified in the spirit of our minds through obedience to God's Word (Romans 13:14; Ephesians 3:16; I Peter 1:22).

The result of a transformed mind is not in the removal of an obstacle, but in the lifting of us over it. This is the principle of overcoming. Many Christians expect God to remove their problems, instead of lifting them above them with overcoming grace. As a result, such Christians never enter into the New Covenant life of perpetual triumph. The things God desires to take away from our lives— the love of money, the secret lust of the eyes, the boast of life— are often the very things we do not want to give up. These sins He delights in taking away, but when it comes to our own inconveniences He instead lifts us above them, thus building the strength of our faith through resistance and mortification (James 1:2-4; II Peter 1:5-8). Since the flesh's vibrancy is hostile to the health of our inner men, it must be put down to prevent a war. The designs of darkness deliberately spur the flesh to rise in battle against the spirit to damage our conscience. But God shows Christians how to stay strong in their inner men by remaining connected to the grace of His Spirit. The moment we separate from His power, we become like fish pulled from the sea. Humility keeps us in the sea of His grace, for it is in this sea alone where our spirits receive restorative life and new power (John 15:5; Galatians 5:17).

We lose our abode in this blessed place of life and protection when we grow proud. This is because God resists the proud, for pride is an indicator of the inward flex of our satanic nature's rebellion and self-sufficiency through the tree of knowledge. Pride is antithetical to grace, for God's power is perfected in our weakness, dependency and humility. His grace is frustrated the moment we begin boasting in ourselves. The moment we begin to think we are entitled to some fleshly merit or acclaim, grace withdraws from our spirits, the protective atmosphere vanishes, and God Himself begins to resist

us. What does this resistance mean? When we neglect the keeping of our hearts in humble correspondence with the Holy Spirit, God Himself denies our efforts in combating temptation and leaves us graceless to fall to the bullies of darkness. The very power we need to overcome and survive the Christian life is taken away and all of our independent efforts in gaining it back are resisted. Our minds soon become invaded with strongholds, and ultimately we can come to believe error through a seared conscience (Job 5:13; Isaiah 2:11; Obadiah 1:3; II Thessalonians 2:11; James 4:6).

When we do not repent of pride and come back into a right standing of humility before the Father, the results can be tragic. As already mentioned, one such tragedy can come through a seared conscience (I Timothy 4:2). The Bible teaches that the conscience of man is allied to the Word of God (Romans 2:15), but when a person continually rejects the Holy Spirit's reprimand to his sin, the signals of his conscience can become cauterized to where they no longer sound an alarm to the spirit (Romans 1:28; Ephesians 4:19; II Thessalonians 2:11). Sin's power becomes an executioner's hood which is slipped over the conscience's head and fastened by the rope of pride. To keep the voice of our conscience strong and pure, we must seek to remain humble at all times by taking the "lower seat" at the feasts of life, by counting others as more important than ourselves, and by the immediate confession of all our failures to God, no matter how slight or hidden they may be. Humility begets grace, grace begets victory over sin, victory over sin begets a pure heart, a pure heart begets the anointing of God upon your life, and when God's power rests on a man there is a great temptation for him to become proud – and thus the Christian's cycle of life in the school of God runs full circle as he yet again humble himself (Proverbs 25:6; Luke 14:10; Philippians 2:3).

When the conscience becomes seared, the natural response of man is to begin pushing God out of his life altogether (Romans 1:23). When men no longer embrace God's estimation of sin – that is, His indictment of their satanic nature which renders them all to be in darkness, dead in sin and alienated from God of the Universe but by the blood atonement of Christ – when men love not the truth of these sovereign decrees, God gives them over to embrace all sorts of deception and abominable practices as they speed their way into the outer darkness and fire.

He will allow, for example, the boast of human intellect to marry the flesh and create systems of atheism and evolution; He will allow the deceived soul to come into union with the flesh and give birth to various false religious systems, metaphysics and fraudulent mysticism. The designs of darkness bring these shrouds of deception to further buttress man's independence from God. In all of these Satanic designs, for both the religious and irreligious alike, a deceived man is blissfully free to pursue his heart's desires without acquiescing that he is a slave to sin and a blind captive of Satan. His eyes will be opened to this horrifying truth only after his mortal demise when his soul and body separate (2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Timothy 2:26; Hebrews 9:27).

To learn something about the rudiments of the New Covenant Christian life, we can take a lesson from a dead person reposing in a casket. Where are his rights, his earthly ambitions? They are gone, for he is now passed. Where is his boast of life? It is gone, for he has now passed. Where is his reaction to men's praises and criticisms? All is silent, for he has passed. Where are his worries of the stock market and rising gas prices? They are no more, for he has passed. Drop a bag of ten million dollars on his chest and yet he will not move. Let pornography or fear try to draw him out of the box, but still he cannot be stirred to life, for he has passed. We too are called to "reckon ourselves" the same as this dead man, dead in our caskets of Christ, crucified and loathsome to the world. The world, in turn, must become the same dead, grotesque thing to us. Anything less than real death in Christ leading to eternal life is not true Christianity, but fraudulent life in Adam leading to eternal death. For in Adam life is death, but in Christ death is life. The designs of darkness work to convince man of the exact opposite (Romans 6:6; Galatians 6:14; Colossians 3:3).

Satan is able to strike your mind in such a way as to paralyze all your theology and knowledge of the Bible in an instant. We must make sure that our abiding is not in a shadow, but in the Reality which casts it. Therefore, when Satan comes to you, he should find you dead. He should find you crucified with Christ and hid in God, dead to the world, dead to sin, dead to the lusts of the flesh, with all your earthly members, including your tongue and thoughts, mortified and nailed to the cross. For a corpse cannot be stirred; a corpse cannot be made to gossip, chase money, become depressed, lose its patience or sexually fantasize. When the tempter comes, he should find nothing but a naked corpse hanging limp on a cross. It's too late (John 14:30; 16:33; Romans 6:7).

A decision must be made anew every morning to where the Christian has determined to yield the entire day to the death-cross of Jesus Christ. His tongue, his eyes, his mind all must be nailed to the wood. Much emphasis has been placed on Bible reading and prayer as first-thing-in-the-morning imperatives, but these activities will bear lasting fruit only when they are done in the blessed aftermath of this daily resolution. Our morning prayers must rise as incense above the altar of our own sacrificial deaths in Christ, and all our Bible reading must take place only after we've committed the deliberate mortification of our own self-will into His Hands (Luke 23:46; Philippians 2:5-8).

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/4/18 23:18

Dear saints, this is the final chapter from the book. I pray that you've enjoyed this work, and have gleaned some strong meat that the Lord can begin using in your life. May you all be blessed and edified through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Brother Paul

7. Darkness Defeated through Humility

When we are not overcoming darkness, darkness is overcoming us. This is a universal law set in motion by God, and cannot be changed. Light always triumphs over darkness, and the two are forever at odds; but it is the darkness which is sneakily opportunistic in filling voids when light begins to abate. Impure sexual lust, discouragement, the love of money, anxiety, jealousy, greed, hypocrisy, gluttony, anger, impatience, disbelief, self-acclaim, malice, fear - the child of God faces all these inward giants with his shield raised, sword-in-fist and teeth clenched as they wreak havoc on his devotion life, family life and daily affairs. The question must therefore be asked: has the Christian soldier been left alone on the battlefield to be vanquished by these giants with nothing in his defense but forgiveness, or is the grace of God available for him to systematically tread upon all their necks in victory? If you have resigned your soul to an endless cycle of defeat and forgiveness, then I believe you have missed the most wonderful aspect of your birthright in Christ. Like Esau, a lying Jacob has used a carnal morsel to cheat you out of your inheritance (Genesis 25:29-34; Joshua 10:24-25; Hebrews 12:16).

Do not let Satan rob you anymore. You can overcome them all! Shall I say it again? You can overcome all the designs of darkness, all the corruption of the world, and all the battles of the flesh through Christ Who makes you more than a conqueror. The real Christian life is one of total victory, each and every day. Daily deliverance from sin's power is your New Covenant birthright, and Jesus Christ is your Great Deliverer by faith. If you are yet expecting to be delivered from sin through the efforts of self-determination and religious willpower, a thousand years will go by and you will still be defeated. You will go to your grave having never tasted of the glorious triumph over sin offered to you through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:31-39; 11:26; II Corinthians 2:14; Colossians 1:13; I Thessalonians 1:10; II Timothy 4:18).

Most believers seem to have only grasped the rudimentary message of forgiveness of sin, when the essential message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is one of deliverance from sin and Satan's power. As a result, most Christians go up and down in cycles of excitement and depression, happiness and anxiety, victory and defeat. They know they can experience God's forgiveness of sin through Christ, but on how to actually overcome these sins they are powerless. Most Christians think that memorizing scripture, fasting or prolonged prayer will somehow better equip them with this power. The devil would have them remain ignorant to the secret of total freedom from sin's enslavement, and instead only see the cross of Jesus Christ as a means of their forgiveness after defeat. They need revelation that Jesus is their Great Deliverer! Most Christians do not understand that His death disarmed Satan and took away the power of sin's dominion from the soul of redeemed man. This is tremendously good news! It means all the designs of darkness have already been vanquished through the cross - and we, as God's children and heirs to His Kingdom, are now free to walk in our triumphant inheritance by the faith and merit of God's Son (John 8:36; 12:31; 16:11; Galatians 3:3; Colossians 2:15).

We are now able to overcome sin's dominion as we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit through death. This death-reckoning is wholly by faith and precludes any type of human effort, psychology or fleshly reformation. We can never in a million years hope to win a spiritual battle by our own faculties of the will, by relying on the arm of flesh! David wielding King Saul's sword, gritting his teeth and charging Goliath on the battlefield is a picture of suicidal lunacy! David's defeat in this case is certain. Yet this is the idiotic mission we undergo when we attempt to fight the hosts of darkness without God's grace. The designs of darkness can be combated only through drawing back of the sling of the Cross and sending forth the Rock of Ages, the Life of God's Son, into the face of the enemy clad in all God's spiritual weaponry and armor. Christ's victory is certain (Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 6:10-18; I Samuel 17:38-51).

It is when we attempt to do battle by the sword of psychology and humanistic effort where we doom ourselves to perpetual defeat. We should never try to change ourselves in God's school, for God will not accept the change even if we are able; we must instead allow Him to make the change in us, and have patience in this process. Our duty is only to keep our consciences clear by continually confessing, loathing and forsaking sin. To simply collaborate with the Holy Spirit in yielding. When Satan brings ungodly thoughts to our minds, we must be able to instantly say "This fight is not for me" and fly to Christ for grace to overcome. We will find Him faithful every time in providing a way out of the temptation (I Corinthians 10:13; James 4:7; Hebrews 2:18).

We must learn to call upon the Lord the very moment we are tempted, for He is our "present" source of refuge (Psalm

46:1). As we presently call upon Him for victory, we will see the waters open and swallow the temptation before our eyes. He will deliver us yet again from the tyranny of sin, and cause us to rejoice evermore upon the seashore of our sojourn. Beloved, we will triumph every time if we only learn to humble ourselves and resign the fight to the Lord's hands. When the giants of temptation come, God will make an escape route for us each time through the Red Sea of Christ's blood to the shores of total liberty: "The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:14).

If we would know the secret of God's strength in battle, we must first know the truth of our weakness. The real Christian life is one of victory authored by the Strong living through the weak. The way to defeat the designs of darkness is through the humility of our own confessed insufficiencies. This means we must never make an outward expression which contradicts our inward reality. God's grace to transform us comes always by way of humility, by stripping off the mask. If we would be victors in Christ we must never seek to gain man's approval at the expense of cloaking this honesty. The nature of Christ living through man is what makes him more than a conqueror, and hence, the man who puts on Christ need never lose his peace, joy or his confidence in victory, for all these are Christ's: Christ has defeated Satan! Christ has overcome the world! Christ has risen from the dead! When the same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead inhabits our mortal bodies, we too shall partake of His divine nature and the life of God will elevate us to positions of supernatural conquest in Him (Romans 8:11; 13:14; I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 12:10; Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 1:27).

Dear Christian, you have read this book thus far, and are serious about your walk. Are you ready now to step into your birthright which renders you more than a conqueror through Christ? Learn then to yield to the leadings of the Holy Spirit, beginning in your thought life. Take time to be holy in your thoughts, for holiness is a habit. Give the Holy Spirit free reign to begin overseeing and controlling your mind. Allow Him to regulate your thoughts and do not resist His dealings of death to your flesh. This will take time and be very painful at the onset. You will soon come to kiss the very cross upon which God is slaying you, for it will be the blessed instrument by which Life of Christ is exalted in you through the humility of death (Philippians 2:8-9). This is the magnificent secret by which the overcoming grace of God comes unto us: through the humbling of ourselves unto the death of the cross. Gently turn away from sinful impressions when they are first presented to you, by confessing in your heart, "This is sin. This is not for me." God will see that you are serious in forsaking sin and equip you with supernatural grace to resist Satan and overcome. As a result of this, your heart will remain pure, your conscience undefiled, your faith will build and ceaseless prayer will rise like incense from your spirit to His all the day long (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8).

Upon you will come a peaceful rest that surpasses all knowledge. The Lord will begin to give you powerful revelation in His Word that relates to your sanctification. You will be blessed with incredible wisdom to share with others and a genuine compassion for hurting people. You will have discovered the pearl of great price, and will happily give all you have for it, for you will see that all the knowledge, wisdom, riches and beauty on earth is but dung and garbage in comparison. Satan does not want you operating within this realm, which is why so much of this book is centered upon overcoming his designs through grace (Matthew 13:46; John 14:27; Philippians 2:4; 3:8; 4:7).

Perhaps you have been taught that victory over sin is not possible in this life. This is a lie of darkness, a design of Satan. You can have victory as you lay hold of God's New Covenant promise through faith. You must come to the place where you can claim every promise in the New Testament pertaining to spiritual joy, victory, overcoming sin, grace, triumph, perfection, humility, meekness and godliness, and then have faith that God will actuate every single one of them in your life. Most defeated believers will not believe God's Word, but rather cling to a form of godliness which denies His power. As a result, the vast majority of Christians do not reckon themselves as dead. They remain alive in the vanity of their thought lives, in their memories of past failures, and in the recollections their dysfunctional childhoods and abusive relationships. The pride of the flesh will not let these things go, and so God allows them suffer under demonic oppression and strongholds. And here they will die, unless they at last come to their senses and throw in the white towel of surrender (Habakkuk 2:4; II Corinthians 5:7; Philippians 3:13-15; II Timothy 3:5).

Once a man reckons himself as dead in Christ and thus unable to further defend, justify or sanctify himself, he will begin to actuate by faith a spiritual reality which occurred eons ago when God crucified him in Christ. When we cease from all our fighting to preserve our fleshly ambition and dignity, when we lay in the grave all our past regrets and tragedies, when we come at last see ourselves as deceased in the casket of Christ, and laying in blessed repose from the power of sin (realizing that God crucified our "old man" in Christ so that the body of sin would be destroyed and hold no more dominion over us), the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ will supernaturally come into effect whereby we are able transcend all the designs of spiritual darkness. We will have entered into the grace of the New Covenant (Romans 6:6; 8:2; I Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 3:3).

This power which enables us to walk in the Spirit is proffered upon us only as we enter into our identity and subsequent

humility of Jesus Christ's death. We must die for this grace. We must settle all our delinquent accounts on this earth, forgive whomever we need to forgive, close out all our spiritual debts, forever relinquish all our secret ambitions and entitlements to this life, and go home to God and die. The moment we see ourselves as dead is the moment the earth will quake and the rocks of our cyclic defeats will break. The prison door of our strongholds will be flung wide and we, the captives of sin, will be set free (Acts 16:25-34; Romans 13:8; I Corinthians 15:31, 50).

All the designs of Satan are defeated through death, and the Lord shows us how to stay dead through the systematic mortification of our members on earth. When we can come to see the blood of Christ as an ever-flowing fountain beneath which we abide and fellowship with God in the Light, continuously purifying the conscience and building our faith through grace, the Spirit of the Living God will then burst forth from our bellies to water other hurting believers and point them to the same place of death and total deliverance from whence we came. Oh praise God! The Christian life is a glorious life, full of power to overcome with absolute freedom and joy! A foretaste of Heaven on earth! (Proverbs 11:25; John 7:38; Colossians 1:12-13; 3:5)

Dear Christian, please remember that the greatest secret to all growth in the Christian life is humility. A Christian's walking in humility is the grand design by which all the designs of the devil are defeated. A humble man or woman receives immediate light on every area of their life which falls short of God's glory, and with this light, the accompanying grace to set it right and continue on to perfection. Ask God to begin the process of fostering Christ's divine nature in your life and then come to the Master with all your weakness and failure and misery. His only requirement from you is poverty in spirit and a thirst to have your heavy burden of sin-enslavement removed. He will do all the rest; He will absolutely change your life. A river is waiting to flow from your bosom, and God is impartial through whom it proceeds, for He gives abundant grace to all who call on Him in true humility (Proverbs 11:2; 15:33; 22:4; Matthew 5:3; Acts 10:34; I Corinthians 3:18; II Corinthians 3:5; Colossians 3:12; I Peter 5:6).

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/5/4 21:51

The book is now available: <https://www.createspace.com/4137315>

Dear saints, if anyone would like a free copy of it sent to their email address, please just let me know. The book has been heavily edited, streamlined and literally inundated with hundreds of scripture references. "Understanding Mortification" is being updated as well, with a larger font for a smoother read. I was told not too long ago that several of copies of "Understanding Mortification" were recently introduced into the Arizona prison system, as a discipleship resource for prison inmates. God is clearly blessing these works. I give Him such praise and thanksgiving for it!

Please let me know if you would like any of these resources. They are freely available to all who ask.

In the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Brother Paul West

Re: Designs of Darkness: Advanced Tactics of Spiritual Warfare - posted by trueblue, on: 2013/5/5 10:55

There are some great insights in this message brother..what you think???

<http://www.pillarcc.org/sermons.php?id=10&month=&year=&string=christian%20warfare&series=>

Re: - posted by trueblue, on: 2013/5/5 10:57

christian warfare 2 is the message im talking about..He draws comparisons between military warfare and the strategies of the devil.

Re: - posted by ET101, on: 2013/5/7 7:48

Paul;

Congratulations on completing an immensely important work! I've been looking forward to it.

I don't currently have regular internet, but when I do, I'll be getting stuck in to reading it. God-willing, perhaps even the very first book as part of my seminary programme!

God bless!! Congratulations!! Thank you!!