

Foundations for Ministry and Spiritual Warfare in Africa

Researched by Rev. Gary Stephens

May 2000

Preface: For North Americans and Others

The human condition seems to be going from bad to worse. While at best this may be the result of thinking the past is better, at worst there may be a great deal of truth in the assertion (2 Timothy 3: 1-9). Increasingly, ancient forces of tribalism and conflict are reasserting their power and influence. In some countries this results in civil war and genocide; in others, the goals of reconciliation and the common good have become replaced by competition between special interests and subcultures.

Will civilization cope with these forces of disintegration? It is hard to say. Western culture has sought guaranteed security in all its various forms. In some countries this has resulted in a socialism that attempts to eliminate risk or change from human existence. In North America the political position of liberalism has been powerful advocate of this direction. The important word here is "guaranteed" There must be minimal risks in life. The freedoms and perils of the frontier are, from this perspective, a thing of the past. Ironically so is the importance and dignity of individual. In this frame of mind, the purpose of life is to focus on pleasure and need. Since we can never be completely secure or satisfy all our wants, modern man is filled with anxiety, anger, and violence.

Tragically, the Christian Church has neither understood the fundamental issues of the times, nor has it risen to the challenge. Individuals, families, and churches are filled with emptiness. Emptiness breeds sin. Christians who know and love Jesus are very unclear about their identity and purpose in the world. They have fallen into a kind of spiritual depression. To cope with this depression many Christians have turned to idols to try to find what they think they've lost.

It is against this background that I have written these "Ministry Notes". Though I do not seek to prove this thesis, it is this author's belief that a genuine democratic understandings of what man can be is rooted in Christ, and the identity he gave to his followers through his life and work. If we are to continue to be the light and salt of the earth, we must recover the importance of every Christian. Genuine, eternal purpose is to be grasped in the midst of confusion. Real community is to be preserved in the midst of social disintegration. For this to happen, the significant role of each believer needs to be received and acted on with joy and expectation. These "Notes" are neither complete nor systematic. They are a primer intended to point the reader towards the freedom, responsibility, and nobility of being "in Christ" that no system or situation can take away. It points

towards the action that flows from that identity. And it points to the fact that Satan will seek to destroy all this if he can.

I am much indebted for many of the ideas on spiritual warfare to Mark I. Bubeck's The Adversary and Overcoming the Adversary. I am also indebted to the folk of First Baptist, Stockholm, ME for enduring this material in a series of Wednesday night studies. They were very patient.

Table of Contents

Preface: For North Americans and Others ii

- ◆ *Some Basic Approaches 1*
- *Common Conceptions Of Ministry 3*

Part II: Ministry In the Bible 3

- ◆ *Ministry in the Old Testament: The Priesthood 4*
- From the Old Testament to the New 6*
- Ministry in the New Testament 7*

Part II: Ministry in Action: 12

- ◆ *The Spiritual Gifts 12*
1 Peter 4:11 13
- ◆ *The Spiritual Gifts Defined 14*

Part III: Spiritual Warfare 18

- ◆ *Foundation One: Union with Christ 18*
- ◆ *Foundation Two: The Holy Spirit 19*
- ◆ *Specific Activities of the Holy Spirit: 20*
- ◆ *Discerning the Spirits: Practical Considerations 24*
- ◆ *Characteristics of Satanic (or demonic) Activity 26*

Part IV: Spiritual Warfare and Ministry 27

- ◆ *The Whole Armor of God: The "Belt of Truth". 28*
- ◆ *The Whole Armour of God: "The Breastplate of Righteousness" (Zechariah 3) 28*
- ◆ *The Whole Armor of God: The readiness that comes from the gospel of peace" 30*
- ◆ *The Whole Armor of God: The Shield of Faith. 31*
- ◆ *The Whole Armor of God: "The Helmet of Salvation" 33*
- ◆ *The Whole Armor of God: The Sword of the Spirit 34*
- ◆ *The Whole Armor of God: the "Allness of Prayer". 35*

Conclusion 38

Bibliography 39

Introduction: For All Readers

There are many ideas about Christian life. Some come to Christ wanting to get something. They think of Jesus as someone to use. He is no more or no less than an idol, or a “big man”. Generally, these people do not claim the name “Christian” for long. If they do, it doesn't mean much to them. They will hurry home after church to care for their fetishes, or to seek out the juju for help. They will sacrifice to one idol today and another tomorrow. These people will have little understanding of what this book is about.

Ministry means nothing to these people. The Cross means nothing to them. Jesus is far, far away. Their god is their stomach. They are suspicious of all pastors. They go to church to greet people and play act. When bad times come they accuse God and turn their backs on the church and the Christian Faith.

Secondly, there are the committed, *active* Christians. Sometimes these people are pastors. But they don't have to be. Christ means something to them. They want to tell others about Christ's cross and empty tomb. They obey, or at least they want to obey, when they read the Bible. They really care about other people, not just what they can get from them. They know something about love, forgiveness, atonement, life, and hope. They know that they are going somewhere; they are not afraid; they live with a strange dignity; they are royal; they seem to give life and joy to others. These people will instantly recognize many of the truths in this little book.

Then there are the many people in the middle. They are in the church, and on Sunday morning they look to the pastor, or the one who speaks to give them hope and joy. The rest of the week they are often confused, and beset by many doubts. These are troubled people. Though they have asked Jesus to come into their hearts, they are unclear about what Christ has done for them. Sometimes, after an inspiring Sunday service, they think that they can be good enough for God. But very soon that thought brings with it much depression and anxiety. Temptation is very strong in their lives. Outside of the things they *have to do*, they have little joy or little energy to care about others. They do not feel that they have anything spiritual (and eternal) to give to others. Certainly, they do not speak about God, Christ, or Scripture.

These people do not realize that they are in a great battle. They want God; they want to be good; they want to go to heaven. They want so many things, but they have no confidence or direction in Christ. Their excitement comes from the

things of life: children, the harvest, market day, and feasts. Down deep there is a shadow in their hearts.

These are all the people who need to know, or know more of who they could be and what they could have in Christ. To be a Christian is to be a part of something much bigger than we are. Ministry is just that.

Ministry Notes for African Christians

◆ Some Basic Approaches

In many places there is a crisis of purpose and identity in the Christian church. Often this crisis is simply perceived as decline, or "our church is not growing", or we are not "going anywhere". In many cases, the solution to the perceived problem is to get a new pastor. "He will do something for us."

There is an often some truth is this solution. Pastoral leadership can fail, or prove to be inadequate. However, the failure often is not what we perceive it to be. The fault is generally not with the pastor's hard work, or his ability to do the work of ministry. Rather, it is in his inability to train the flock to be active Christians in the church and the world. Training is one thing; motivation is another. Often the flock (the church, individuals) is unwilling to shoulder its destiny and responsibilities. For a church to be effective, Christians *must recognize* themselves as a "ministers" of Christ and be willing to be trained, and to be active in using the resources that they already have in Christ. Carl Wilson says it this way:

"Ministry Training is critical to the expansion of the (Christian) Movement. At this point most organizations and local churches reach their peak. If they do not train believers other than the pastor to evangelize and build disciples, their expansion stops. Their maximum potential is reached without a continuing growth and a broadening impact. True multiplication occurs only when disciples are trained in evangelism and disciple building. No matter how dynamic the pastor, no matter how financially stable and well organized the church, expansion will not continue if people are not trained to minister."

Carl Wilson, With Christ In The School Of Disciple Building

Many Approaches to developing this "ministry" have been developed. Books with these emphases have much to offer the Christian active in ministry.

1. Target Group approach: example, Growing through Divorce.
2. Methodology: example, Caring Enough to Confront.
3. Spirituality: example, True Spirituality, Improving Your Serve.
4. Discipling: example, With Christ In The School Of Disciple Building.

All these approaches can have basically the same goal, but different approaches to "wisdom" in ministry, depending on the concern of the author and *how close* that author is working to the human need at hand.

Understanding these perspectives helps one fit each emphasis into a "whole-person", balanced approach.

◆ The **Target Group** approaches focuses problem solving. A particular group of persons has particular needs, like that of loneliness, fear, illness, etc. The target group might be a particular tribe an unrecalled people group. No matter, in each case the needs of the group are understood and biblical ways of meeting those needs are suggested.

◆ The **Methodological** approach focuses on a particular ministry skill, or set of ministry skills. The skills can then be applied to different kinds of problems. Good example of this emphasis is the books on communication, a skill that is crucial to ministry in all sorts of situations. Even without access to books, we know that skills like this are to be sought and developed.

◆ The **Spiritual or Theological** approach reflects on the inner or unseen factors in ministry and spiritual growth. Here issues such as grace, humility, and forgiveness take center stage. In the most effective texts, these unseen, spiritual realities form the basis for practical matters such as church structure, family life, and our actions on the farm, workplace, etc.

◆ A **Disciple making** approach traces the process by which a person moves from unbelief to maturity in Christ. This perspective may see discipling as beginning before conversion, or after. This approach always involves some insights from the other three approaches. Disciple making is the goal of the church that brings everything together into practical action. The Great Commission commands "make disciples" (Matthew 28: 19,20), not "minister." However, at the heart of "making disciples" is ministry in its most challenging form.

Clearly, each of these approaches has vital importance, and they all fit together in a healthy personal spiritual life and effective church. But they are not the places to begin. We will begin with the Bible's perspective on ministry and the identity of the believer.

- **Common Conceptions Of Ministry**

What is ministry? Who is a minister? These are basic questions that have great significance for how one sees one relationship to ministry. Some of the answers to the question "Who is a Minister? are:

The Usual Answer from Church Members:

"Our Minister", the pastor is the minister of our congregation.

There is some Biblical justification for this answer, but it misses the New Testament's understanding of what ministry is all about.

The "Dictionary Meaning":

◆ **Minister (noun) refers to an *agent*, one officiating or assisting the officiant in church worship. A clergyman, esp. of a Protestant communion.**

◆ **Minister (verb): to perform the functions of a minister of religion; to give aid or service.**

According to this definition it is possible for anyone who is an agent (for something or someone), or anyone who gives aid or service to be a *minister*. As we will see, the Biblical perspective on ministry uses both aspects of this definition.

The Biblical Definition or Perspective: There is some truth in the each of the above definitions. However, each is inadequate. We must ask of the Bible these questions: What is ministry? Who is a minister? Why is ministry important?

Questions:

1. What do think the word "ministry" means? Who is a minister?
2. Do you think you could be a minister?

Part II: Ministry In the Bible

If one examines the Bible, it is interesting to note that the idea and practice of ministry begins in the Old Testament, where words from the root *sharat* are used 96 times. Twenty of these are translated "to minister" or "minister", and the rest of the occasions, "to serve". Importantly, many of these occurrences involve the priests or Levites in the worship of Israel. This is significant, for though it was

never stated like this, the priest and the Levite were the "ministers" of the Old Testament.

Many churches hold to the Old Testament view in theory or practice. They declare that the person who conducts the worship services to be the "minister". In the Roman Catholic Church he is also the priest--quite in the Old Testament tradition. Or they elect their pastor de facto to be the one who "ministers" within and without the congregation while others look on.

However, the New Testament teaches the Priesthood of all Believers: In his epistle Peter speaks of the church as a "royal priesthood". What does this mean? Crucial to the development and practice of ministry in the New Testament is an understanding of what it means for every believer to be a priest. And basic to that understanding is an appreciation of who the priest was in the Old Testament.

◆ **Ministry in the Old Testament: The Priesthood**

In the Old Testament World priests and prophets were a common part of all religions. Of there were many reasons for this, perhaps the clearest was man's fear of God, and the divine. In Exodus 20:19 the people say to Moses "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die." Israel requests a mediator to stand between them and God. Even though he was called a prophet, Moses fulfilled this role, and afterwards priests, prophets, and kings until the coming of Jesus Christ carried it on.

How did the priest carry out this work of mediation, or ministry? And what significance did it have? We will focus on the *responsibilities* of the priest, the *example* of the priest, and how one *became* a priest.

The Responsibilities of the priest were quite varied.

Though the priest was central in guiding God's people as a community, much of their focus was on worship and the meeting of individual needs.

◆ The priest served as "worship leader". It was the responsibility of the priest to lead, or supervise, the worship of Israel that went on day and night at the Tabernacle or the Temple. (Exodus 30: 7-10; Leviticus 6:12; 23:28) This included tending the fires, offering incense, and conducting the Day of Atonement. Israel was continually at worship. Worship was the center of the community's life.

◆ The priest was as "atonement maker". It is well known that the priest guided the series of offerings that enabled the worshipper to be atoned with God. The stages of that atonement came as follows:

- Sin *had to be dealt with* through the sin or guilt offering.
- The worshiper committed himself completely to God through the burnt, or grain offering.
- Fellowship with God was re-established with God through the fellowship offerings, which could include vow, thank, or freewill offerings.

Several Points Should Be Noted:

- This ministry involved expiation, consecration, and fellowship. Step by step the believer was brought into a renewed relationship with God. Atonement is a dynamic experience in the Old Testament.
 - Their ministry was not effective in itself, but only as it offered up the blood (the life-Deuteronomy 12:23) of the animal, or the sacrifice of the individual.
 - They were responsible for carrying out the rules of sacrifice, rejecting unacceptable animals (Leviticus 22: 17-33; Malachi 2: 1-9).
- ◆ The priest is important as a "teacher": In several places the priests were given the task of reading and teaching the law. Deuteronomy 31: 11 states that "when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing." Leviticus 10: 10,11: "You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean, and you must teach the Israelites all the decrees the Lord has given them through Moses."
- ◆ The priest as "administrator": Over and over in the Old Testament the priest administers the laws governing the Community of Israel. He administers:
- The rules of the Jubilee, redemption (Leviticus 27:18)
 - The rules concerning cleanliness, infectious diseases, purification, etc. (Leviticus 14:35)
 - The rules concerning restitution (Numbers 5:8; Leviticus 22: 14)

The Example of the Priest

The example of the priest was an important part of his identity and ministry. The rules for the conduct of a priest were broad and numerous (Leviticus 21), and it can be conjectured that many of them were given to make clear the absolute separation between pagan neighbors and the religion of Israel. The priest's way of life represented the absolute perfection and holiness of God. Some of the laws included:

- ◆ Conduct around the dead. In Egypt the priests were caretakers of the dead. In fact, central to Egyptian religion was a cult of the dead, the cult of Osiris-Horus. (ANET, p. 329)
- ◆ Appearance, and the treatment of the body. (In distinction from pagan cults where the body was often cut and heads were shaved.)
- ◆ Marriage and family life. (The entire family was holy before the Lord. There could be no connection to, or appearance of ritual prostitution, a characteristic of Canaanite fertility religion.)

How One Became A Priest.

Clearly the priesthood was hereditary. Aaron and his sons (or lineage) were to be the priests. However, tracing this line often becomes very difficult in Scripture; it is possible that some Levites were "promoted" to the priesthood. But two further considerations were involved:

- ◆ Though hereditary, the priests were consecrated, or "ordained". (Exodus 28,29) to their ministry.
- ◆ But those descendants who were in some way defective (Leviticus 21:16-23) were not permitted to take an active part in the ministry.

From the Old Testament to the New

Based on the Old Testament pattern, priesthood in the New Testament should follow some of these lines.

A leadership role for every believer in worship.

The appropriation and extension of Christ's atonement (His blood).

The teaching of God's Word.

The administration of New Covenant Gifts.

Clearly, the priest was a very important person in the Old Testament. The priests, along with the Levites (their helpers) were intended by God to be the leaders who formed the core of Israel's community. They were the "glue" that brought a sinful, and often irresponsible, people together before God. However, if everyone in God's family were active as a priest, the people of God would transform the world.

Ministry in the New Testament

The New Testament clearly teaches that every Christian is priest.

Peter says:

- "...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"(1 Peter 2:5)
- "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."(1 Peter 1:9)

Also the Book of Revelation, speaking of all the saints, says:

- "To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen." (Revelations 1: 5,6)
- "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."(Revelations 5:10)

- "Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years." (Revelations 20:6)

The Position (Identity and role) of the Christian

The position of the Christian, like the priest of the Old Testament, is one of *privilege* and *responsibility*. The NT emphasis, however, is that even the responsibilities are essentially privileges.

Privileges: The appropriation and extension (receiving and giving) of Christ's atoning work. The key word here is "grace" -which we receive from God as a gift and we "administer"--or pass on to others in our actions towards them (I Peter 4:10).

◆ **Like Aaron we can enter God's presence**, but unlike Aaron:

- We enter the Holy of Holies through the blood of Jesus Christ. We are justified. (Hebrews 10:19 -In fact, much of Hebrews is the argument that this privilege belongs to all believers.)
- We, ourselves, our bodies, have been sanctified (set apart-made holy), and we are a spiritual house, "the Temple of God" (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19) Thus, we can perform the central act of NT worship.

◆ **We offer "spiritual sacrifices"**: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship." (Romans 12: 1) "Faith is consciously to be acted on after justification." We have the privilege of offering our bodies to God for his purposes.

◆ **Direct service to God.** A comparison of the Old and New Testament Passages, as well as an understanding of Church history, clarifies this:

- Ecclesiastes 9:10. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom."
- Colossians 3: 23,24. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive and inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Notice the profound shift of emphasis here...In Ecclesiastics we work because of the brevity of life; in Colossians we work in direct service to God (though Psalm 101: 4 implies that *all* who are blameless and faithful minister, or will minister before God).

Prior to the Reformation much of Catholic thought said that man served God most purely in strictly religious settings. Luther profoundly contradicted that view. In abolishing monasticism he emphasized that the gospel could be exemplified only in the midst of secular (non-church) callings, except that Luther refused to call them secular. As he extended the priesthood to all believers, so he extended the concept of divine callings, vocation, to all worthy occupations. Our expression, "vocational guidance" comes directly from Luther. God has called men to labor because he labors. He [God] works at common occupations. God is a tailor.. He is a shoemaker...God is the best cook..."And we work. "...The mother exhibits the pattern of the love of God, which overcomes sin just as her love overcomes dirty diapers.".. but this is not easy in this world. "If the burgomaster does his duty, there will scarcely be four who will like him. If the father disciplines his son, the lad will be ugly. It is true everywhere. The prince has nothing for his pains. One is tempted to say, "Let the Devil be burgomaster. Let Lucifer preach. I will go to the desert and serve God there." It is no light task to love your neighbor as yourself. The more I have, the more vexation I have. But I will not grumble. So long as I have my job I will say, "I did not start it for myself, and I will not end it. It is for God and those who want to hear the gospel, and I will not pass by on the other side."

Responsibilities of the Christian “Priest”:

◆ To "declare the praise of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light".

This first reflected the priest's role in the Old Testament as a teacher of God's Word, and one in Israel who recounts what God has done for his people.

- Deuteronomy 31: 9-12. "So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Leviticus, who carried the ark of the covenant...Then Moses commanded them: "At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts...you shall read this law before them in their hearing. Assemble the people--men and women, and the aliens living in your towns--so that they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of the law."
- ◆ This first means the form of witness we call worship: All God's people are to be actively involved in worship.
- Colossians 3: 16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom. And as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."
 - Ephesians 5:19. "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- ◆ Worship, as witness, also involves preparation for other dimensions of service, which the NIV rightly translates "ministry". This service is first, directly to God (see the previous section), and secondly, sharing his gifts with the world.
- Ephesians 4: 11-13. "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."
 - Note the translation (NIV) here, " to prepare God's people for works of service". There is no comma between "**people**" and " **for works of service**" as there is in the King James Version. ("For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry....") The right translation for the Greek literally means "for the perfecting of the saints to [for the purpose of] (the) work of ministry.."

Generations of well-meaning Christians stumbled over that one comma. The ministry does not belong to the pastor-teacher. It belongs to the whole body of Christ, to be trained and **equipped** by the pastor.

- Thus, if the pastor is doing his work, church people are learning to serve one another and those in the world. How can one say this? First, let's examine a couple of biblical texts:
 - Ephesians 2:10. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
 - Galatians 6: 10. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family believers."
- In these passages "good" or "good works" refer to whatever is beneficial, or helpful to others. There is no limitation here, except the constraints of God's Word! In these good works the goal for the church is to attain "to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." It is clear that this is not an individual experience. The local church is like a person. Each congregation has a different "personality" and different gifts. Each church finds maturity ("the whole measure of the fullness of Christ") through its expressions of ministry ("good works"). That goal of that fullness is made clear by the example and standard of Christ's ministry in the world. His ministry to the needy, to the sinner, to the broken is the practical reality and the goal of the believer's life and ministry in the New Testament. This is meant to begin within the church family, and continue outside it.

Thus ministry becomes what is called evangelism, or witness in the world. And, clearly, all Christians are to be witnesses in three different ways:

- In personal involvement: We witness in relationships with others, living out the commitment the cross represents between God and man.
 - In actions that reflect God's redeeming grace: We make clear in practical ways the worth and potential of people before God.
 - In sincere communication: We tell about God, his works in the world, and what he has done for us.
- ◆ "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?" (1 Corinthians 6: 2)
Believers will administrate the principles of the New Covenant, which now are not ceremonial, but inclusive in nature. The believer will administrate God's law over all of the New Heavens and the Earth. Points here to keep in mind:

- It is not clear what is involved in this "judging". It could simply be a "service or work done on behalf of the king."(Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 1230) There well may be a parallel here between man's original role in the Garden of Eden, and redeemed man's role in Heaven.
- Many of the parables of Jesus point to stewardship here on earth as the way to greater opportunity and responsibility in heaven. (Matthew 25: 14-30) Heaven is not a retirement home where we sit and do nothing.
- Ultimately our role and status as priests in heaven will not be based on accomplishment here on earth, but on humility. (Matthew 23: 11,12)

Part II: Ministry in Action:

As it was pointed out in the beginning, many different approaches have been taken to Christian ministry. Some focus on the needs of the people to whom we minister ("Target Group approach"), or the practical skills which one uses ("Methodology Approach"). In this booklet we have reviewed the spiritual foundations of ministry from a Biblical perspective. That approach will be continued and deepened in this section. All genuine person to person ministry is a work of the Holy Spirit.

The privileges of a believer are in themselves resources for the New Testament priesthood. Clearly, entering God's presence, offering spiritual sacrifices, and directly serving God are crucial to a Christian's active ministry. However, the enabling of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for the Christian to carry out his purpose in life and fulfill the "high calling of God". And central to this enabling are the gifts that the Holy Spirit bestows on believers. As we discuss the gifts of the Spirit, we will touch on many questions often asked about the Holy Spirit himself, and his role in the Christian's life.

◆ The Spiritual Gifts

The Gifts of the Spirit There is no complete list of gifts in the New Testament. Rather, it seems that the lists are samplings of the many, many gifts that could exist.

Romans 12: 6-8
Prophecy

Serving
Teaching

Exhortation
Liberality

Giving aid	Prophecy	Apostles
Acts of mercy	Distinguishing spirits	Prophets
<u>1 Corinthians 12: 4-11</u>	Various tongues	Evangelists
Wisdom	Interpretation of	<u>1 Peter 4:11</u>
Knowledge	tongues	Speaking
Faith		Service
Healing		
Working of miracles	<u>Ephesians 4:11</u>	

It is safe to say that these abilities (as we will call them for the moment) have many dimensions. First of all, they are certainly meant to be a blessing. Each, in its own way is an indication of the Holy Spirit's presence. All the spiritual gifts are signs; however, some may only be recognized and "read" by believers. All the gifts are meant to strengthen the Church in what it must do in the world.

However, on a deeper level, something else is happening. The life of Jesus Christ that Jesus began in the Gospels is still being declared (in the Book of Acts). The church becomes an extension of what was begun in the Incarnation. The gifts have an eternal dimension, yet they are grafted into the humanity that we bear. They shape the pattern and effectiveness of a new identity, the church. What is the pattern of this new body? To everyone is given grace according to the gifts of Jesus Christ. (Gift, Grace, Joy = all come from same Greek root). These spiritual gifts accompany the gift of salvation. They may or may not correspond to what we call "Natural talents". Most importantly, they all point to Biblical truth and make Jesus real in the world. The church will not be an active spiritual body unless each member exercises his spiritual gift.

- The term "gift" actually includes offices, functions, and special abilities. This should warn us against trying to define a gift in too narrow a way.
- These lists almost certainly do not exhaust all the possible gifts that might be given the church.

The three aspects of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12.

- Gifts, v. 4, are the capacity to function in certain ways, such as teaching.

- Ministry, v. 5, the sphere of that function, such as teaching in a school, in the world, teaching young people, etc. This sphere can be broad or quite narrow. It is often culturally conditioned.
- Degrees of power are experienced in the exercise in the various spheres. (God the Father empowers the gift through his sovereignty). Experiences are never the same.

Corresponding to these aspects of the objective exercise of the gifts of the spirit is the subjective experience of that exercise.

- Motivation, the inward desire to express the love of God, moves us to express a spiritual gift, and a spiritual gift, since it is a part of God's love, becomes a part of that motivation.
- The sphere of joy, the great byproduct of drawing men to God, is found in the exercise of the gift in its proper sphere of its action. [C.S. Lewis, Surprised By Joy]
- The manifestation (or sense of being used), if seen to be dependent on God's right to determine the gift's effect, brings both peace and genuine submission before God.

◆ The Spiritual Gifts Defined

***Prophecy.* The gift of prophecy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to his people. A forth telling or foretelling nature may characterize the message.**

◆ Prophecy is not Scripture:

- Scripture includes prophecy, but not all prophecy is Scripture.
- Scripture is marked by the two great prophetic offices: Moses and Christ (Acts 3:22-33)

◆ Prophecy includes:

- Forth telling: (Acts 21:11) Events after Paul's return to Jerusalem.
- Foretelling: (Acts 11:28) The prediction of the famine by Agabus.
- A mixture of both: (Acts 13:1; Titus 1:12), or simply a deep truth about the present or the future.

◆ **Prophecy functions:**

- Through the agency of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:28)
- On occasion to non-believers through general revelation, again presumably through the Holy Spirit. (Titus 1:12)
- In the church prophecy is to be:
 - **Orderly:** (1 Corinthians 14: 32, 40) "The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets."
 - **Tested:** (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21) "Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good."
 - **Confirmed:** (1 Corinthians 14: 29) by the entire group of believers, or the actual events. "Two or three prophets should speak and the others should weigh carefully what is said."

◆ The effects of prophecy:

- **Action:** The setting apart of missionaries for service (Acts 13:1)
- **Planning:** An action plan for the famine that affected Judea.
- The **strengthening** of Paul's commitment by showing the costs of his return to Jerusalem (Acts 20: 22-23).

***Pastor.* The gift of pastor is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.**

◆ Involves three New Testament terms: **elder**, presbuteros, the personal position; **overseer**, episkopos, the office; and **shepherd**, poimaino, to guide, the actual task.

◆ The qualifications are very important. (1 Timothy 3: 1-7)

◆ The office is to:

- **Exemplify:** (1 Peter 5:1) to provide a foundation for everything else.
- **Lead and train:** (Ephesians 4: 11) Follow me as I follow the Lord.
- **Guard:** (Acts 20: 25-31) Protect the flock from wolves.

◆ **The gift:** "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Timothy 4: 2)

Teaching. The gift of teaching is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to nurture and instruct the members of the body of Christ in the truth and application of the Word of God, the Will of god, and the Ways of God both by precept and example. (1 Corinthians 12: 28; Ephesians 4:11; Romans. 12:7)

- ◆ Involves **full and/or systematic** understanding. (Acts 5: 20,21)
- ◆ Ability to be **corrective**. (Acts 18)
- ◆ Communicates and understanding that **prepares God's people for works of service**. (Ephesians 4: 11-14)

Word of Wisdom. This gift is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to understand and communicate God's point of view with respect to specific situations in the life of a believer or in the life of the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12: 8; but available to all, James 1: 5,6)

- ◆ The way God solved the crisis of sin and guilt. (1 Corinthians 2: 1-13)
- ◆ Practical ability to solve problems God's way. (Acts 6: 3, 10)
- ◆ Problem solving that leads to peace. (James 3: 17, 18)

Word of Knowledge. This gift is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ whereby they know pertinent or hidden information that within the circumstances could not be known except by supernatural means. (1 Corinthians 12: 8)

- ◆ Knowing the person of Christ. (Colossians 2: 2, 3; Philippians 3: 8)
- ◆ Facing reality in Christ. (2 Peter 1: 5, 6; Philippians 4: 11-13)
- ◆ "Data" that inspires action. (2 Peter 1: 8)

Exhortation. The gift of exhortation is the special ability that god gives to certain members of the body of Christ to minister the Word of God to others in encouragement, counsel, and admonition so that they are built up in faith.

- ◆ The primary word used throughout the New Testament for exhortation is the word from which we get "paraklete", or the word "comforter" for the Holy Spirit. It means to "call near, or for". Almost certainly this means to bring to mind some passage of Scripture that applies to a given situation.

◆ Often translated by the word "encouragement", sometimes it can mean to urge, to plead, or in general, to convince others to believe, act or behave according to God's Word.

(II Thessalonians 4:1)

◆ Believers are to practice exhortation (encouragement) daily in their relationships with one another.

***Service.* A deep sense of duty and devotion to the needs of others, and ability to commit oneself to those needs without feeling boxed in, and with joy.**

◆ Possibly more is indirectly said about the gift of service than any other gift in the New Testament. Think about all the references to servant, and serving. It is very hard to separate the gift of service from the general expression of service in the New Testament

◆ Jesus Christ set the example for service means (Mark 10: 45), and first of all it him that we serve. (Colossians 3:24)

◆ In this service, the actual work seems to be two-fold.

- Communicating the Gospel: (2 Corinthians 8: 18)

- Meeting the needs of others: (2 Corinthians 9: 12) Simply to benefit others (1 Timothy 6: 2), even those in the future (1 Peter 1: 12). In this sense, service is what we do with all our gifts. (1 Peter 4: 11)

◆ Faithfulness seems to be the test of the servant's work, (Colossians 1: 7) and single mindedness is crucial to his role. (2 Timothy 2: 4) "No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs...he wants to please his commanding officer." (Revelation 2: 9) " I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first."

◆ Service must be done with the strength that God provides. Otherwise, God will not be glorified. (1 Peter 4: 11)

◆ "Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 3: 13)

***Discerning of Spirits.* The gift of discerning of spirits is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know with assurance whether certain behavior has divine, human, or Satanic origins or causes.**

◆ First, this involves the distinguishing between good and evil. (Hebrews. 6: 14)

- ◆ In a larger context, it perceives the spirit world in which the Christian battles. (Ephesians 6: 12) The "Discerning of Spirits" is in some ways the discernment of motivation.
- ◆ Practiced consistently in the NT (Acts 5: 3)....

Part III: Spiritual Warfare

Sharing Jesus Christ, what he has done for us, and what he is doing in and through us (Philippians 2: 13) brings the believer into the arena of spiritual warfare. Simply put, spiritual warfare has two sides. **First, it is rebellion against God:** Spiritual warfare began with the opposition of Satan and his angels to God. (Matthew 25: 41) Evil was a reality when man was created and placed in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:1; Revelations 12: 9ff.) Satan desires to lead the whole world away from God. **Secondly, we battle against the forces of evil:** Spiritual warfare is a part of living the Christian life. (Ephesians 6: 10-11) Ministry will result in spiritual warfare. (Mark 4:15; II Corinthians 11:14)

How do we do battle in this conflict? How do we win the war? What strategies lead to victory? The answers to these questions reflect the foundations of the Christian life. It is a great discipline, however, to put these foundations to daily use.

◆ **Foundation One: Union with Christ**

◆ **One's Union with Christ** is the believer's first claim to victory in spiritual warfare. There are several analogies that help picture this union with Christ. The picture of sharing is important. We share in Christ's victory as we share in his suffering. The Biblical word for this is *participation (koinonea)*. The idea of inheritance also is helpful. Because the Father (because of Christ's death and resurrection) adopts us, we inherit what he accomplished through his life, death, and glorification. Either way the person who has asked Christ into their life is "in Christ". (Romans 6: 3,4; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:13)

- To be "in Christ" also means we are united to Christ in all of the victory that he achieved in His redemptive work. We are justified before God. We no longer have to be slaves to sin.
- "In Christ" means that we are in His resurrection. We have eternal life.
- To be "in Christ" means that we are now seated with Christ in eternity. We look at life from a different point of view.
- We are united to Christ with others through His watchful *headship* over the church.

This means that God's resources are available to the Christian. When faced with the gates of Hell, the Christian does not have to throw his hand up in defeat.

"I can do everything through him who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13)

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and his mighty power." (Ephesians 6:10)

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved..."
(Romans 8: 37)

◆ **Foundation Two: The Holy Spirit**

◆ **The Work of the Holy Spirit:** In spiritual warfare the first, and most significant, work of the Holy Spirit is to convince and convict the listener of truth-- truth about God, about the work of Christ, about sin, about man. (John 16: 5-16) Satan seeks to deceive the world. The door for his power and influence is opened through deception. For the Christian the primary deception is a sense of condemnation. The Holy Spirit releases the believer from destructive convictions of condemnation and unworthiness.

Spirit's Work

1. Seeks to show you that your infinite worth and value to God makes him desire your fellowship.
2. Seeks to show you that there is forgiveness and restoration available from God no matter how bad your sin.
3. Uses God's Word to give you hope and assurance of God's love and forgiveness.
4. Builds faith, hope, and love in your heart and increases your confidence and assurance of salvation.

Satan's Work

1. Seeks to convince you that you are so bad God wouldn't want to have anything to do with you.
2. Seeks to convince you that there is no forgiveness for you. You've committed the unpardonable sin.
3. Uses God's Word out of context to convince you that there is no hope for you.
4. Creates despair, doubt, resentment, and anger toward God, His Word, and His people. You feel that no one as bad as you could ever really be saved.

The Results of these Foundations: Release of the Believer from False Guilt:

The Christian will never be perfect here on earth. Day by day, we sin and need forgiveness for that sin. (Matthew 6:12) However, there is a kind of guilt that will not go away. This is false guilt. Often, though, a Christian is afflicted by false guilt. These feelings come from two sources. One can be led to feel guilty for doing something that is not wrong. Telling the truth (sincerely, in love) sometimes causes others to be offended. This is not sin, even though some people might tell us that this is a bad thing to do. Confessing these “sins” does no good; we are merely confessing a lie.

False guilt often comes from the experience of being tempted. It is not wrong to be tempted. Jesus was tempted, but he did not sin. (Hebrews 4: 15). And we do not have to sin, either. (I Corinthians 10:13) The problem of false guilt comes when evil thoughts come into our minds. We have not sought the thought, nor have we acted on it. But we still feel guilty. This is false guilt. If it is not recognized, it will lead to sinful action, and real guilt.

Another source of false guilt is the confusion of feelings with experience of forgiveness. This is how it happens: One has sinned and asked forgiveness from God for that sin. Being forgiven does not mean that all the things that the sin caused will go away. We may still feel bad about the injury we caused others. God has given us these bad feelings to make us remember what is good and bad. Others may never forgive us, and we will have to live with their bad feelings. Many people, because they still have bad feelings, cannot believe God forgives them and still think that they are guilty.

This is not true. Forgiveness from God is received by faith, and the Holy Spirit clarifies its effect in ones life. No matter how we feel we’ve failed, we are united with Christ through his blood shed on the Cross. We are secure in this foundation and empower to carry on with spiritual warfare through the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We now enlarge upon the specific aspects of the Holy Spirit’s work.

◆ Specific Activities of the Holy Spirit:

◆ The Spirit's Ministry: Indwelling. "You, however, are controlled not by your sinful nature but by the Spirit, if *the Spirit of God lives in you*. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, He does not belong to Christ."

Romans 8: 9

- The Holy Spirit comes to dwell within a believer at the moment of his salvation. (John 3: 6) "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but Spirit gives birth to spirit." He is a "literal presence" within the believer. (I Corinthians 6: 19-20) "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?"
- Contrary to those who emphasize a mystical (quantitative) experience of the Holy Spirit, we do not need more of Him (the Holy Spirit); He needs more of us.
- The positive work of the indwelling Spirit:
 - "Sanctification: The believer is increasingly set apart for God's use, growing in grace, peace, love, spiritual gifts." (Romans 12:1-8; I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4: 7-13)
 - Understanding God's Word: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"--but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit...We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us." (I Corinthians 2: 9-12) This is called illumination.
 - Spiritual Fruit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5: 22-23) The producing of faith is "a matter of faith practiced on a daily basis.

◆ **The Spirit's Baptizing Ministry: The Holy Spirit baptizes (another word-joins) every believer at the moment of his conversion into the Body of Christ, the body of true believers.**

The body is a unit. Though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body--whether Jew or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given one Spirit to drink. "We are one in the Spirit. (I Corinthians 12:12-13)

◆ **The Spirit's Sealing Ministry (Ephesians 1: 13-14, 4: 30; I Corinthians 1: 21,22) A guarantee of eternal security: The Son secures us. (John 10: 27,28) The Father holds us in His grasp: (John 10:29) The Holy Spirit Seals us. (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30) In Biblical times a person's seal was used to put the stamp of ownership on a document, and to denote the authority of the owner of that document. God owns his children, recognizes them, and protects them through the presence of the Holy Spirit.**

◆ **The Spirit's Quickening Ministry (Regeneration)**

- Quickening means bring the dead to life: "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive [quicken] with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions." (Ephesians 2: 4-5)

"And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you." (Romans 8:11)

- The quickening work of the Holy Spirit has three phases to it:

- We were quickened and brought to spiritual life by the Holy Spirit the day we first believed.
- We are being quickened as we daily walk in the Spirit and experience his life-giving work. (Galatians 6: 16-26.)
- We will be quickened at the Lord's coming when the Holy Spirit accomplishes that glorifying work in our mortal bodies.) I Corinthians 15: 42-58; Philippians 3:21; I Thessalonians 4: 13-18) Our bodies will not be the same.

◆ **The Spirit's Interceding Ministry. (Romans 8: 26,27; Ephesians 6:18; Jude 1:20)**

- "To pray in the Spirit simply means that we are being enabled by the Holy Spirit's control to pray according to His Word and His will. He enables us to pray and intercede in ways we could not do without His help."

- This does not require praying in tongues. (I Corinthians 14: 13-17; Ephesians 1: 15-22; 3: 14-19)

◆ **The Spirit's Filling Ministry.**

- To be controlled by the Holy Spirit's influence. (Ephesians 5: 17-20)

- To be filled with power from on high is equated with speaking his Word **boldly (with courage)**. (Acts 1:8; 4:31)

- **Basics of the Spirit's Filling:** "God means the fullness of the Spirit is to be a part of the normal, daily living of every believer." (Ephesians 5:18 The command is in the Greek imperfect tense, meaning it is to be a continued action.)

- **Regeneration**-The New Birth: (John. 1: 11-13; 3: 1-6) Divine life comes into the life of the believer. The believer is not made divine. He or she draws life from the Holy Spirit much like a fungus draws life from its host. Only, we are the host (read "temple") of the Holy Spirit, and we draw life from this visitor.
- **Elimination of Sin** from the Believer's life. (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5: 19) "Grieving the Spirit is the result of unconfessed sin in the believer's life..."That which grieves the Holy Spirit is instantly removed through confession expressed by a contrite heart. The secret is to keep short accounts with God. The moment a believer is aware of this grieving or estrangement, he needs to determine the cause, confess the sin, and deal with that to which the Holy Spirit objects."
- **Dedication-Yielding to God** (Romans 6: 13,19) Dedication involves yielding totally to God's purpose. "The Holy Spirit's work is so different from that of the spirit beings over which Satan rules. Wicked spirits seek to rule our lives through subtle trickery (Ephesians 6:11) and coercive force (Ephesians 6:12) Satan desires to manipulate us and force us to accomplish his plans. The Holy Spirit does not work this way. He respects our personal dignity and gently woos us to respond to God's will. He is not interested in coercing us, but desires that we be willing responders. We do not do God's will through our own strength but through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit within us....

"Every battle Satan launches against us somehow fits into God's sovereign plan. Even as we resist and reject Satan's purpose in attacking us, we must yield to the lessons and purposes God has in allowing us to face the battle."

- **Discerning and expressing the Truth of Our Faith.** (Matthew 10: 17-20; John 16: 12-14) The role of the Holy Spirit is not to create new, normative truth; it guides us to see, formulate, and express the truth that is in Christ and Scripture.
- **Continuation- Walking in the Spirit** "To walk in the Spirit means to depend completely upon the Spirit, realizing that he alone can and will guide us, help us, and enable us to remain faithful.
- **Guide Believers into all Truth** (John 16: 5-15) The conviction of guilt is the Holy Spirit's work, as is clear perception of God's righteousness and judgment. The Holy Spirit is often spoken of as the Spirit of Truth, and Jesus clearly says that it is the Holy Spirit who will lead the believer into all truth.

◆ **Discerning the Spirits: Practical Considerations**

Now, as we return to the discussion of the spiritual gifts, (continued from page 16) it must be quite clear that the work of Satan is very different from that of the Holy Spirit. One might think that it should be easy to recognize Satanic activity. Generally, it is. But there are many cases where Satan's work is disguised. Though God gives some believers a special ability to name spirits, it is very important that all Christians be sensitive to Satan's destructive strategies.

The New Testament, in part, speaks of Satan's activity as *demonization*. The term is used a total of 13 times. Traditionally, the Greek word has been translated by "demon possession", but that term is both inaccurate and misleading.

In Jesus' time the influence and activity of demons was widely admitted, but sometimes poorly discerned. People wondered whether John's different lifestyle indicated the presence of a demon (Matthew 11:8; Luke 7: 33). Many accused Jesus of "having a demon". The crowd confused demon activity and paranoia when, in John 7: 20, they accused him of having a demon. The Jewish leaders accused him of blasphemy and madness (John 10: 20) and said that he had a demon. (John 8: 52)

However there was a measure of discernment around Jesus. In John 10: 21 some contradicted these accusations, affirming that demons do not open the eyes of the blind (John 10: 21), and by implication, only God can heal. The Cannanite woman recognized that her daughter was seriously afflicted by a demon. (Matthew 15:22; Mark 7: 26) The Gospel writers recognized the difference between simple illness and demon oppression. (Matthew 4: 23-24) A great challenge in spiritual warfare is to recognize work of evil spirit, and to claim Jesus' power in confronting them. This calls for patient endurance and discernment on the part of God's people.

Recognizing that God gives certain Christians the gift of discerning spirits is important for two reasons. First, it indicates that one cannot diagnose an evil spirit like one diagnoses an infection or a brain tumor. Discerning an evil spirit requires spiritual sensitivity. And even if one has the gift, one may not always use it properly. Secondly, it humbles us. There is no list of symptoms that prove a person is oppressed, or possessed by a demon.

There are recognizably different levels of demonic activity. (I am indebted to Mark I. Bubeck for some of these categories; however, their interpretation is my own.)

◆ **Demonic Oppression:** Satan and his forces tempt all Christians. There are times when the temptation is more intense, when it seems all the powers of darkness are focused on one's life. Jesus went through at least one time like that (Matthew 4: 1-11) It seems also that under God's sovereign control, Satan is allowed to afflict the believer in significant ways. However, whatever Satan may think that he is doing, God is directing the outcome of the circumstances. Paul was convinced that his "messenger of Satan" was actually achieving God's purposes (2 Corinthians 12; 7-10) Job believed in a sovereign God even after the repeated tragedies that God allowed Satan to deal to his life. He believed enough to want to contend with God. However oppression can lead to a more serious problem, that of Demonic Intimidation.

◆ **Demonic Intimidation:** There is a point in a believer's life that fear can take over. The person becomes obsessed with Satan's power, assuming it to be much greater than it is, and lives in its shadow. In effect, these people default to Satan, and become his servants. Believing him to be in effective control of the world, they might even be tempted to learn his ways and use his power. They become fascinated with magic and sorcery--perhaps out of the need to defend themselves. Regardless of the motive, they lose sight of who God is and how he works in the world. Simon the sorcerer was a man captive to Satan in this way. (Acts 8: 9-19)

◆ **Demonic Possession:** Though this particular term is not used in the New Testament, there are cases in which an individual becomes an instrument of evil in such a way that they forfeit control over many behaviors that are normally subject to a logical, or human decision making process. (Luke 8: 27-29) The demon has become a parasite in the person's being. The demon's activity will eventually destroy the person, their relationships, and, if possible, everything around them. Though the person has "possessed the demon" and ends up being driven by the demon in (many) significant ways (Acts 16: 17,18), it is important to note that the spirit does not own the person. God is the owner of all, and in particular He is the owner of those whom he has redeemed through Christ's blood. (Ephesians 1:14) With that in mind, we will first consider the "possession" of unbelievers.

- **Unbelievers "Possessed"**. Those without Christ are in great danger in this world. They have no secure relationship with God. They see themselves, perhaps, as parents, rich or poor, members of a particular tribe or family, or as part of a spiritual community that includes their ancestors and nature spirits. They are afraid, and their fear has real causes. With possession these people may immediately experience the destructive power of evil (the mute, the demoniac, the boy thrown into the fire) or have power that is not human. (Acts 16:16)

- **Willing Possession:** These people give themselves to the spiritual powers around them. At times they may turn to sorcery for revenge or destructive purposes; at other times it may simply involve sacrificing to the spirits for a sick child. This places the person in the position of becoming a servant of Satan and his demons. Demons come to control that person.
- **Unwilling (or unwitting) Possession:** (Mark 9:21) Some ideas exist about how this comes about. But these are only theories.
 - A person may become involved in dangerous kinds of sins: Fortune telling.... Drug usage, drunkenness, sexual licentiousness, and lying (or) other sins of human depravity may open one's life to unusual Satanic takeover. In these cases, bondage to a particular sin precedes bondage to Satan.
 - Transference? Some evidence indicates that demonic powers seek to stay in families and ancestral bloodlines. However, this phenomenon may be dependent on a host of other conditions.
 - Territoriality? It is fairly clear that demons, under Satan who is the prince of this world, tend to claim certain areas of inhabitation. (Revelation 2: 13) This is drawn from the observation that demons affecting certain residences, peoples, and geographical areas.
- **Believers and Possession:** Clearly, believers may be afflicted, intimidated, or even used by Satan for a time. However, there are limits on the activity of Satan in a believer's life that are set by God. (Job 1; John 10: 25-30) Because of the power of God, the believer can never be permanently owned or controlled by a demon. However, that same power and protection may well bring significant discipline and suffering to the life of a believer, (I Corinthians 5: 4,5)

◆ **Characteristics of Satanic (or demonic) Activity**

Every evil thought or action bears some relationship to Satanic activity, if none other than the fact that we are willing accomplices in rebellion against God. To fall into sin, however, is not the same as being oppressed by Satan. The following symptoms *may* indicate powerful spiritual forces at work in the psychological, physical, and spiritual aspects of our lives. They will be grouped under characteristics of Satan's activity:

Satan wants to separate us from God (This might be evidence by):

- ◆ Extreme, intense, compulsive temptations.
- ◆ Overwhelming false guilt that will not go away
- ◆ The desire to curse the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ An urge to destroy God's word
- ◆ Terrifying doubt of one's salvation even though one once knew the joy of this salvation.

Satan wants to destroy (Evidence of this could include):

- ◆ Compulsive suicidal or murderous thoughts.
- ◆ Physical symptoms that have no discoverable medical cause. Sometimes these result from our fearful perception that others have "cursed" us. In these cases, if we mentally allow Satan control over our body, we can bring great grief upon ourselves.
- ◆ Fears which cause a person to do destructive things
- ◆ Terrifying nightmares.
- ◆ Sudden surges of violent rage, uncontrollable anger, or seething feelings of hostility.

If an decreasing order could be put on the importance of these symptoms, it might be this: Opposition and blasphemy against God and His word; the sense of separation from God even if we know better; destructive, murderous behavior towards oneself and others; and physical and psychological symptoms that cannot be explained through medical diagnosis or personal reflection. This follows from what we know of Satan: he is opposed to God; he is the accuser; he is the destroyer. (Revelation 9: 11)

Part IV: Spiritual Warfare and Ministry

We began with the argument that the "priesthood of the believer" is the foundation of ministry. Understanding that priesthood, and therefore the believer's role in ministry, begins with understanding the Old Testament priest, and how his role was transformed by the New Covenant. Central to the New Covenant is the work of Christ, and as ministers of the New Covenant, we come to God through Christ, and experience the blessings of the Holy Spirit. Among those blessings are the spiritual gifts, one of which is "discernment of spirits". That gift introduced the issue of spiritual warfare, an experience that comes with real ministry. Satan is an oppressor, committing to deceiving the world, blocking the effectiveness of Christ's work, and ruining the lives and witness of Christians. Spiritual warfare occurs where Christians seek to minister. Often, the more effective the ministry, the more severe Satan's attack. And yet, the experience of spiritual warfare can be the occasion for great ministry. In our inner lives, when we feel all the condemnation and hostility of Satan, we can claim Christ and all his truth.

Actually, the setting of all real ministries is spiritual warfare. Thus, employing all the conventional wisdom and helpful approaches to ministry (treated on page 1 and 2), we must realize that our "struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6: 12)

◆ **The Whole Armor of God: The "Belt of Truth".**

- Lying is quite common among believers. Put on the **belt of truth**. Honesty is essential to personal maturity, spiritual growth, and defeating the deceptions of Satan.
 - Jesus Christ is the Person of Truth. (John. 1:14; 14:6) Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans. 13:14)
 - The Word of God is the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15) Do I really accept the Scripture and therefore its authority in my life?
 - The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. The Holy Spirit will always lead us into beliefs, actions, and attitudes that are in complete harmony with the Word of Truth."
- The church is a pillar and foundation of truth. (I Timothy 3: 14,15) Bubeck notes: "Many times in my own personal life, even as a pastor, the Lord has used the church to protect me from sad error." On one hand truth is essential to stable, fruitful, long-term relationships; on the other hand the searching, truth-seeking relationships within a Christian church can be of great help in attacking error, piercing self-deception, and finding God's will.

◆ **The Whole Armour of God: "The Breastplate of Righteousness" (Zechariah 3)**

- We know that man has a conscience (Genesis 20: 5, 6; Romans 2: 15), and is subject to some sense of right and wrong (1 Corinthians 8: 7). This may well be connected to the fact that God has set "eternity" in man's heart. (Ecclesiastes. 3: 11) The conscience is part of God's creation work.
 - The conscience is not infallible. It can be "seared" or corrupted. (I Timothy 4: 2; Titus 1:15)

- The conscience is the stage upon which the life and death battle of condemnation or justification takes place. (Hebrews 9:9; 10:22; 13:18)
- A great spiritual battle rages in the arena of the believer's conscience. It is the one that occurs as Satan attacks our security in Christ. The devil's strategy of spiritual destruction is well illustrated in these excerpts from the life and death of Saul, King of Israel in the Old Testament. (It must be noted God *did condemn* Saul.)
 - Condemnation that leads to worthlessness.
(I Samuel 15: 26) "and the Lord has rejected you.."
 - A lack of worth that leads to hopelessness.
(I Samuel 28: 15) "I am in great distress...and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me..."
 - Hopelessness leads to defeat.
(I Samuel 28: 20) "Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel's words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all day and night."
 - Defeat leads to Domination by Satan and Disaster.
(I Samuel 30: 4) "Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me."
- **God alone is righteous.** He is holy, that is, absolutely morally pure within himself, and he is perfect in all his relationships. His holiness and his righteousness go together, out of his righteousness he judges the world:

(Psalm 7: 10,11): "My shield is God Most High,
 who saves the upright in heart.
 God is a righteous judge
 a God who expresses his wrath
 every day."

Righteous=Integrity

- ◆ God's Righteousness is inexhaustible.
- ◆ God's Righteousness is transferable

- The believer becomes righteous (We cannot be condemned, Romans. 8:1) through imputed and imparted righteousness.

- Imputed Righteousness:

- "At the moment saving faith comes, God takes our sins and imputes them to Christ's account; they are seen as punished in Christ."
- "When I am saved God the Father puts the very righteousness of the Lord Jesus to my account; it is imputed to me, put upon me by God as a judicial act. God now looks at me as being clothed in His own righteousness." (Philippians 3: 8-9a). He paid my debt; He relinquished my bankruptcy.

- Imparted righteousness. Imparted righteousness refers to the righteousness that God puts into my conduct and life. Genuine righteous deeds are from God's: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose."

- The Breastplate's Protection:

- "It helps give us confidence and courage. Few things are more essential to spiritual warfare than is assurance."
- "It allows us the opportunity to repudiate self-righteousness, to reject saying "What a good boy I am." God's righteousness "refines" away our own self-righteousness. (Isaiah. 32: 17) "The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever."

- The Breastplate's challenge: We face ministry and go into the spiritual battle bearing, and implementing God's imparted righteousness. We are co-workers with God. In prayer we can claim God's righteousness for ourselves, and live that righteousness out.

◆ **The Whole Armor of God: The readiness that comes from the gospel of peace"**

- The predicament: The world is at war with God, and with itself. (Romans 8:7) "The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so."

- What the Gospel says: 1 Corinthians 14:33 "For God is not a God of disorder but of peace."
 - Colossians 1:20: "To reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."
 - Ephesians 2:14: "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."
 - II Thessalonians 3:16 "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you."
- Man's Readiness: (II Timothy 2: 22) "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."
 - To seek the reconciliation of others through Christ. (Philippians 1:6)
 - To seek to live at peace with others. (Ephesians 4:3) "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."
 - To seek oneness with Christ. (II Peter 3: 14) "So then, dear friends, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him."
- Implications for spiritual warfare:
 - Satan seeks to blind our vision to God's purposes.
 - Satan will seek to embroil us in conflict. (Not all conflict is bad.)
 - Satan will use all sorts of legalism.
 - Satan will blind us to our own need for repentance.

◆ The Whole Armor of God: The Shield of Faith.

"In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." (Ephesians 6:16)

- The nature of faith: Over emphasized, it becomes faith in faith; under emphasized, it is a necessary evil.
 - The Bible teaches about faith on at least three levels:
 - Faith (or Faithfulness) between individuals. (Malachi 2:10,15)
 - Trust or certainty, and dependence on that which is unseen, namely God and His word.

- The body of truth that we know about God. (Jude 1:3; 1 Timothy 3:9)
- Faith (and its consequence, faithfulness) is both a wonderful part of man's nature, but saving faith is a work of God (Psalms 22:9). Natural faith, however, can be misdirected and used for wrong ends.
 - When the Bible speaks of proper faith, or trust, it is always with reference to persons, and their word.
 - It makes it possible to live life; it makes possible families (Malachi 2:15), and community. (Proverbs. 3:29; Proverbs. 28:2; II Corinthians 5:7)
 - It is essential to man's relationship with God. (Psalms 52:8) "But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever."
 - Faith is ones response to truth. It is intellectual at its heart; emotional in its grasp on the whole person; and practical in its consequences for behavior. Faith is living on the truth, as it is perceived. (James 2:14) It seems that some have a greater capacity to act on truth than others do. **Does Skepticism destroy the foundations of faith?**
 - Living can be a response to a lie, group of lies. (Habakkuk 2:18) "Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that teaches lies." (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy. 2:18)
 - The truth (as best as we can perceive it; example, the problem of eating meat) must therefore be sought out about everything; and acted upon. Living a lie destroys.
- The Object of Faith: the Truth: God is the only one who can save. (I Peter 1:9) "For you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls." (I Peter 1:5) "Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. The Blessings of Faith: Every treasure that comes from God can be ours through faith. How do we know that we are exercising faith when it comes to any particular thing or experience? Paul says in I Timothy 4: 4,5 "For everything God created is good,

and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer."

◆ **The Whole Armor of God: "The Helmet of Salvation"**

- The Current Assault on the Mind is as great as it has ever been: To doubt the creator, who gives blessing, and to whom we are accountable.
 - The experience of doubt is not new. (James 1: 2-8)
 - Trials are the testing of our faith:
 - Trials produce perseverance... "to persist in a state, enterprise, or undertaking in spite of counter influences, opposition, or discouragement." And perseverance will bring a maturity and completion (not lacking anything essential to our Christian life).
 - Perseverance is to pursue God. (Genesis 32: 22-32) As Jacob wrestled with God. (V. 28), "Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." He claimed a blessing in this relationship with the Lord.
 - To pursue an answer to prayer: The lack wisdom to know how to deal with the trials. Trials are always an opportunity to learn God's wisdom. Man must seek that wisdom. God gives generously. God gives without finding fault.
 - Trials produce the opportunity to be "double minded" or to be controlled by doubt.
 - A measure of doubt (Satan's work) always is with us. (In Two Mind by Os Guinness).
 - It is a question of which predominates in our life, doubt or faith.
- Doubt can be dealt with by making sure the person is genuinely saved, then placing him under the care of a well-grounded believer for:
 - Systematic teaching of the truth of God from the Bible (so our natural thoughts about God, and our prayers will not lead us into doubt.

- Memorization of large portions of the Word.
- Careful instruction in spiritual warfare.

◆ **The Whole Armor of God: The Sword of the Spirit**

• In a current Christian climate that stresses more and more "power encounters" the two primary offensive weapons of the church are prayer and the Word. (Acts 6:3-4) In the face of opposition the apostles' program their "attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word." With these two tools, Spiritual Warfare becomes dominated by "truth encounters ". This is primary offensive strategy of the Christian. Its importance:

- Satan's role and power. He is the deceiver, and has the power to bind with deception. (Jude 8,9; Act. 19: 13-20; Matthew 4: 1-11)
 - The best defense is a good offense. (II Timothy 3: 16-17) "...So that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
- **Qualities of the Word of God (Remember, we worship God, not the Word.)**
 - It bears the character of God; through it we know His mind, the mind of Christ (John 1:1; and it will never pass away.
 - It is living and active:
 - Hebrews. 4: 12: "penetrating even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."
 - Colossians 3: 16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom."
 - **It is powerful as God exercises it, and as man prays through it. (Hebrews. 1:3; James 5:16)**
 - **Scripture is meant to be used (but not in a magical way).**
 - At all times through memorization. (Psalm 119: 11, 105)
 - Application: Moral (Psalm 119:11); or discernment (1 Timothy 4:4)
 - In Spiritual Warfare: To defeat Satan's lies. (Matthew 4)
 - Thus it must be used with understanding.
 - **Correctly, at the right time and right place.**
 - Eve's problem was that she did not remember, or understand God's word.

- II Timothy 2:15: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

- Depending on the Spirit, acting through the Word. (Zechariah 4:6) "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty."

◆ **The Whole Armor of God: the "Allness of Prayer".**

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints." (Ephesians 6: 18)

- **Instructions for prayer. None of us will be successful in spiritual warfare without prayer.**

- **Pray on all occasions.**

- The Main Problem: "...life consists of a sequence of quite different places, roles, and language through which Christians are forced by family goals, peer pressure, insecurity, and their digital watches."

- "And we are told that these worlds, these boxes, must be kept separate: 'Leave your job problems at work,' or 'Don't let domestic strife affect the quality of your work.' And every Christian knows you can never tell anyone at church what is really going on at home or the office. Life is almost forced into a series of sealed compartments.

- **The solution:**

- God knows everything, all that is happening in the "boxes". He can be told anything.

- God is interested in you, all of you, all the boxes of your life.

- Praying is meant to connect every part of our lives to God, as well as connect all the parts of our life together. (1 Peter 3:7)

- **Pray with all kinds of prayers and requests.**

- The many kinds of prayer:

- a. Silent and audible prayer.
- b. Prayer without ceasing and prayer that terminates.
- c. Public prayer and private prayer.
- d. Short prayer and extended prayer.
- e. Fasting prayer and feasting prayer.
- f. Prayer with one's life and prayer with ones words.
- g. Rejoicing prayer and broken prayer.
- h. Thanksgiving prayer and asking prayer.
- i. Doctrinal prayer and emotional prayer.
- j. Resisting-the-enemy prayer and standing-with-the-Lord prayer.
- k. Spontaneous prayer and prepared prayers.

• **The language and style of prayer.** The crucial thing about prayer is that it comes from the heart, and that the words of the prayer are "heart words". Be yourself.

• **Leading public prayer.** Be yourself, but:

- Use words that others understand.
- Pray with courtesy and respect.
- Words of reverence, honor, and esteem are always appropriate, but
- Avoid show and solemnity like the plague.
- If need be, use notes or an outline. Even pray another's prayer if you can make it your own.
- Remember the brevity and simplicity of Jesus' model prayer in (Matthew 6: 9-13)

• **Praying alone, *be yourself*:**

- If it is one of those days when nothing comes, then tell God, "I want to be alone with you, but I can't think of anything to say." People who love each other don't have to talk out loud all the time they are together.
- Pray with the words you have, even if you "trip on your thoughts or tongue". Don't worry about it: God is the only one to whom you can say, "You know what I mean," and be 100% sure you will not be misunderstood.
Paul, "we do not know what we ought to pray, ...the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." (Romans. 8:26-27; John 12:27: "... What shall I say?")

• **Pray in the Spirit.** God will give guidance for praying. When to pray (Jeremiah. 14), what to say but we need to:

- Ask the Holy Spirit to control our praying and to guide us into praying in harmony with His will.
 - Deliberately reject all fleshly praying (James 4:3)
 - Pray in harmony with the truth of the Word...When we pray God's Word back to him we can be sure that we pray in the Spirit.
- **Pray from God's viewpoint:** "The World of Prayer."
- With this in mind, be alert: Be watchful for Satan's attacks. Look for opportunities to pray. Think about every situation as opportunity for one or another kind of prayer.
 - And always keep on praying for all the saints. Do not pray for just the missionary. Pray for the saints in other lands. Pray for them by name and need. Bring them to God as if they were your own family, and their needs your own need.

Conclusion

These notes have attempted to bring together Biblical data and theological reflection with life experience. They are designed to relate the disciplines of ministry and spiritual warfare. Because of this approach, it must again be said that they are complete on neither of these subjects. Nevertheless, they reflect the great need to understand ministry in the framework, or context, of spiritual warfare.

Biblical ministry, even if it relates to physical or psychological needs, is carried on in the spiritual world. Its first goal is not simply to make people feel good (though that may occur). Its goal is to tell the truth about human life, the world, God and eternity. Genuine ministry, in this sense, is carried on in a Biblical framework, in the role and tradition of Biblical priesthood, and with the great resources that came through the Atonement and the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. These resources make possible the second goal of ministry, that of sharing the grace of God. This classic definition of ministry is still important. At one time the Roman Catholic Church believed that only its priests could administer God's grace in the sacraments. But Luther came to see that grace was freely available to all who would believe, and those who received grace were free and fully qualified to pass that grace on to others.

Ministry is carried on in the face of Satanic opposition and attack. To speak truth and to stand for what is right is to enter spiritual warfare. The last thing the tempter wants is for men and women to be drawn to truth, to Christ and to experience the life changing grace of His cross.

In theory, resisting Satan is straightforward and simple. In practice it is straightforward, simple, but difficult. We live by faith in time. We live with relationships that fail. We live with goals. All this demonstrates our limited knowledge of the present and the future.

We live with aware our own sinful nature. If it were not for the cross, our flesh would rebel and join "Adversary". We administer God's grace out of personal weakness. However, as strange as it seems, that allows us to live in the strength of God. In humility we are His authentic priests. Through humility we receive and rejoice in God's gifts; in humility we express and share them with others.

In humility, and with dignity, we walk in the spiritual world. Through Christ, because of Christ, we have dignity, purpose, and identity that the gates of hell cannot resist. This is a walk for all seasons, good and bad.

Bibliography

Bubeck, Mark I., The Adversary. Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1975.