

**PASSING THE BATON NUMBER 14**  
**SPIRITUAL WARFARE PART 1**  
**21<sup>st</sup> May 2008**

**Mobilising the Army of God**

**Introduction:**

This is the first of probably at least three teachings on the subject; you could call this one foundational. Things that absolutely have to be in place in our lives before we can engage in the real battle. It's kindergarten stuff, but we're all in this together, so don't be dismayed.

We have been building up to this from the beginning of the year. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit a structure has been built on which this teaching can be placed.

We have studied the role of women, and their place in society, the home, and the church. We have looked at the true definition of Biblical submission and we have learnt about a new way of living and a new way of loving. We have also looked at living on the other side of the cross. If the Lord will, we will build systematically upon all of this in the coming months and maybe even years.

The teachings which went before will make sense of what you are about to learn today. To some of you, this may be familiar if it is, please forgive me.

If it is not, please open your hearts to see the battle that rages for your life and the lives of your loved ones in the unseen realm and ask the Lord to open your spiritual eyes so that you may see, and co-operate fully with all He wants to do in this hour. So, be blessed.

I am going to get you working again this morning, so I hope you have pencils and paper, because I am going to be asking you questions, and you will need to write down your answers and go back to God with them later on.

There are four reasons so far as I can see that you could be oppressed by the kingdom of darkness rather than living in the kingdom of light.

- Disobedience or delayed obedience
- previous involvement with the occult that is still not repented of
- sinful attitudes – offences, unforgiveness - big one
- living in the flesh, not the spirit.

There's probably more, but that is what I see from where I am right now. Next week may be different - might have added to it by then.

Seriously, wrong attitudes if undealt with can open you up to quite severe oppression and affliction by the enemy physically, emotionally, and mentally. You may think you are perfectly justified in thinking and feeling as you do because of what 'they' did to you, but in actual fact,

every time you have a bad attitude, or a bad thought life, it's an opportunity for invasion of the enemy, into your space, *given* by you.

You know what Jesus says, you didn't ask Me into your head when you got saved, because I don't like what goes on in there, you asked Me into your heart.

We are always in alignment with something, either God or the enemy, there is no in between, and the Bible speaks a lot about **putting off** the old man and **putting on** the new man, so what we are welcoming into our lives is really important in terms of maintaining the spiritual integrity that enables us to go up against the enemy when we need to.

The last however many years of cross-less Christianity have brought us to the place where we are self-absorbed; always seeking what is best for us, we are at the centre. We largely have bought into a man-centred Christianity, and we rarely actually put into practice what the word of God says.

Beloved, we are living in the wrong place.

We are living in the first heaven when God wants us to be having a third heaven experience.

Living in the flesh when He wants us living in the Spirit.

This has made us largely unprepared for the battle that lies ahead, and it is a satanically inspired strategy.

If Satan can keep us in a baby state, fighting each other, falling in and out of relationships with one another, we will never pose a threat to him.

In these days this is being put right by God. He is bringing His us up to standard, He wants us ready and up for the fight, having more than a third heaven experience - **living** from there.

When I talk about the three heavens I mean what you are picking up in your head and your ears – in other words your thought life, that is the first heaven, that is where most of the warfare is, right here, basic stuff, that is where the enemy infiltrates and subverts – or sabotages - God's purposes for your life.

He gets you in your thinking.

The second heaven is the atmosphere, the stars we can see, that is where the principalities and powers operate; then there is the third heaven which is God's throne room, outside the universe.

**Isaiah 40:22** tells us that

*"He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth."*

That is where **we** are meant to be living; that is where God placed us; in Jesus, in heavenly places in Christ, it's time we made it a reality in our everyday lives.

So, what we are about to look at in this teaching session, is as serious, as Graham Cooke would say, as a heart attack. The battle is real and every one of us is involved whether we are aware of it or not.

What I am going to try to do today is to show you what warfare *looks like* in your everyday lives and circumstances, so that you can recognise the battle, and the strategy of the enemy and make choices.

Everything we do is offensive to the kingdom of darkness.

That is our job as Christians, to be an offence to the world.

Not an offence to **people**, but to the powers of darkness.

What I aim to do today is to earth your warfare so that you see that every act of kindness is warfare; every time you do not retaliate when someone upsets you it's warfare; every time you show your love to your husband/wife/kids, its warfare. Every time you get to work on time and put in a good day's work without grumbling and complaining – that's warfare.

### **The call to battle:**

There is a call to fight on every single one of us. We are called to be soldiers. We are called to be an army.

Every Christian is called to be soldier in the army of God. Soldiers are called to counter evil with the overwhelming good that flows from the heart of God.

We absolutely have to win the internal battle. At the very least each of us need to be a foot soldier, able to resist the enemy, and stand against him on a personal level.

Graham Cooke has an excellent book on this subject entitled 'Towards a powerful inner life' which highlights the whole issue of walking in the spirit or the soul. Brilliant stuff, recommend it.

### **2 Timothy 2:3**

*"You must endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ".*

### **1 Timothy 1:18**

*"These charges I commit to you, Timothy, that by the prophecies given you, you may fight a good fight"*

Or war a good warfare.

Hardness is a part of our life; we're not a bunch of wimps, we are not chocolate soldiers who melt at the first sign of the heat of the battle, we are not the kind of people who just want everything easy – are we?

Or are we?

What we are aiming at, is to bring ourselves to the place where whether life is easy or whether it is difficult, it makes no difference to us because it is **that** kind of attitude that the enemy hates.

What we are aiming at is coming to a place of peace and rest that is a weapon against the enemy and what life throws at us, because we are secure in the heart of the One who loves us to distraction.

That when circumstances hit us, panic is not the first button we push.

Satan is always trying to get us to look at the easy way or the quick way or the short cut.

When we are building the Kingdom of heaven; when we are establishing the kingdom here on earth; there is no easy, no quick way, and no short cuts – it's hard, it's dangerous, it's sweaty, it's a fight. We absolutely must apply what we learn – our lives depend on it.

What today will do is to show you how important it is that you nurture that divine seed within you.

How imperative it is that you come out of agreement with your old Adamic nature and put on Christ.

Later on, I will be outlining the demonic strategy for your life. When I do that, you will see why our choices, to walk in the love, the grace, the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ and pass that on to others, is so important, because if we don't, we are going to be lunch for the enemy.

*"On your belly you shall go and dust will be your food"* beloved, **we** are the dust and I don't intend to fill his belly.

Beryl is definitely **off** the menu.

### **The first principle of spiritual warfare:**

The first principle of spiritual warfare is that it is primarily concerned with God, not with the enemy.

It is primarily concerned with discovering the Majesty, the Sovereignty, and the Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, not about taking authority over the enemy.

So, the whole issue is about **focus**.

My question to you this morning is - **what** is your focus?

Intimacy with the Almighty is going to be the key in this next phase.

Your level of intimacy with God will determine your placement and effectiveness on the battlefield. If you desire to be a warrior, your life will be marked by the intimacy you have with the Almighty.

Spiritual warriors have made life choices about where their attention is focussed. Spiritual warriors live from the inside to the outside, not the other way round.

Your intimacy with Him is determined by how close you want to be to Him. We are all as close to Him as we desire to be. You can have as much of Him as **you** want. You determine the level by your choices.

Let's look at a familiar story, two women, one of whom knew how much she wanted from Jesus and positioned herself to get it.

I'm talking, of course, about Mary and Martha.

**Luke 10: 38-42** Beloved do not be distracted from your journey into the heart of God. Martha was distracted, cumbered about with cares, Mary, Jesus said, chose the better part.

This session will enable you to do an honest self-examination. Where you are right now, where you are going, where you are headed. It will give you the steps to bring you into a different place in God if you decide to come into agreement with them. His expectation is that you will grow – an honest appraisal of where you are right now is part of that growth process.

Focus.

Martha's was obvious.

Mary's was obvious.

What is yours?

To establish yours, just think about what consumes your thinking. When your mind goes to the default position – where does it settle? Could be yourself, your needs, your wants, your desires, your ambitions, I want, I think, I feel. Could be family, work, relationships, new house, garden, next holiday, jobs to do, what is it?

To help you -

Next door but one to us, their focus is animals, and particularly horses. Every waking moment is spent looking after them, feeding, grooming, training, transporting, showing...fine, they don't know any better they are totally consumed.

So, what is your life's goal if you like. What are you aiming at? Or aren't you aiming at anything. You know what they say, if you aren't aiming at anything, you are sure to hit it!

Focus is anything that consumes your time, your energy, your money, your attention. Have a little think about that for a moment. Write down your conclusion. Be honest with yourself. Don't go all super spiritual. Even while I have been speaking the Holy Spirit has been showing you things, write them down.

You know what's coming - your primary focus - should be on God. If the enemy can blur that, make you lose your vision, become distracted, he can master you. Beloved we are in times when we absolutely have to be focussed, single eyed, on Jesus if we are going to be a part of the end-time army that is being raised up.

To properly represent the Kingdom of God we must fear God more than we fear men.

For the church to accomplish her mandate for this hour she will need the kind of authority that Elijah walked in and more. Before we can be trusted with this we must be delivered from the fear of man and live only in the pure and holy fear of God. In **Galatians 1:10** Paul says, *“If I were still trying to please men I would not be a bondservant of Christ”*.

When anything grows larger internally than your relationship with God, you have lost your focus. If you are in ministry, if that becomes *more important* than your relationship with God, you have lost your focus.

When your ministry to others is outgrowing your time of fellowship with God - you are in for a season of fractured focus.

**Luke 10** – Mary and Martha. Martha would have been right in any other situation, but Jesus was there, and Mary had it right.

This whole passage is about focus and alignment.

Your focus will determine your level of power and influence.

Whatever has the capacity to keep your attention has power and influence over you, and your focus determines your energy. The enemy will happily distract you from God’s purposes for your life by any means, including ‘good’ things – how many of you know that the good is the enemy of the best?

Focus and alignment. Alignment with the Holy Spirit and His desires for your life is absolutely crucial.

**Some signs of non-alignment:**

Physically you will feel tense, there will be stress in and around your life versus the rest and peace of God.

Emotionally you will feel upset – fear, worry and doubt will come in.

Mentally you will feel resistance, as if you are fighting something.

Spiritually, non-alignment makes you feel you are under attack, and you will mistake this for spiritual warfare.

Other signs: loss of appetite, or reverse, over eating to comfort, loss of sleep, tension, stress, headaches, even ‘flu like symptoms, tired, listless, nervous, maybe just wanting to hide, wanting to get away from everything, doing something physical rather than spiritual, can’t be bothered to meet with God or pray, so you clean the house, or the car, or you go to the gym, watch TV at 10 o’clock in the morning.

Emotionally, when you are non-aligned, you can be reactive against people and situations, you see the worst, you speak without thinking, you are anxious, full of worry, fear, anger, rejection, you are irritable, take everything as an offence, feel rejected at the slightest thing. You are sad, moody, you have a roller coaster of emotions, sometimes you are just cynical, mistrustful, mentally you question everything, become super analytical. You speculate, you pick holes in things, or you replay events negatively and guess what, every time you replay it,

it gets more negative, and the enemy adds more. You are suspicious about people and their motives, and so on. You take snapshots which aren't true and come to conclusions that only reinforce your opinion.

You are unable to be objective, everything is subjective and based on your feelings.

When you are non-aligned, barriers are raised, against God, against people, resistance forms and we man the barricades then to repel truth from other people. We just won't receive it; we are defensive and selectively deaf. We resist the Holy Spirit and the truth He wants to bring and when people try to bring it, we think they have some kind of wrong motive.

When you are non-aligned your natural mind has to have the upper hand. Poor alignment brings us into negativity, unbelief, woundedness, poor relationships, and condemnation.

There is no recognisable pattern to your thoughts because the enemy is not daft, he just takes you into areas of the flesh and right away from the Spirit.

If you do not practice agreement between yourself and the Holy Spirit, you will be soulish, led mostly by your feelings and your emotions and heavily influenced by rational thinking.

Those are some symptoms of non-alignment.

### **So, what does alignment look like?**

Physically, you are ready for the fight, resting, internally you are at peace, you may feel apprehensive, but you are willing to be involved with God, you are alert, in fellowship with Him, and full of mercy, kindness and good fruit.

You are walking in the Spirit.

The starting point for spiritual breakthrough lies in the will. The truth doesn't set you free until you experience it. A head full of knowledge is useless. A sustained breakthrough is when faith and focus come together, and stay together, we don't want a breakthrough that is lost before you get down the path. The road to hell, it is said, is paved with good intentions. What we don't want is a few good intentions, we want **intentional** will choices, combined with faith and focus.

A sustained breakthrough depends on the will and the spirit combining. If you have a flabby will, it isn't making choices – it hasn't been exercised and like faith, it is a muscle that needs exercise to keep it fit.

It is much more important to exercise your will and faith muscles than to spend time at the gym!

Satan attacks your mind and emotions to subvert your will. When he has done that successfully, he *has* you.

The will is the primary vehicle for the presence and power of God. Your will is the vehicle for faith. Your will must be put in God's hands. Victory comes from a submissive will. From a will that is submitted to the greatness and goodness of God.

You cannot manifest anything in the Spirit if your will is working against you. **Submission** to God comes first. If He is our focus, we will magnify Him, everything else will shrink.

So, what are you magnifying right now?

I will magnify.  
I will magnify that quarrel with my friend  
Every rolled eye and exasperated groan, I will dwell upon until I can no longer stand to look  
upon her.  
I will hold her errors ever before me, and will view her henceforth with suspicion and  
mistrust.

I will magnify  
I will magnify  
I will magnify my worries and my cares.  
As a dog gnaws upon a bone, so I will gnaw upon my anxieties.  
So will my forehead crease with a multitude of lines as a ploughed field and thus, the  
molehills will be transformed into mountains!  
So shall I be cast into the uttermost depths of despair.

I will magnify  
I will magnify  
I will magnify  
I will magnify the things that cause me to fear; shudders will fill my inward parts as I cringe  
along life's paths.  
Surely my limbs shall turn to water as I meditate upon them.  
I shall imagine calamity and disaster at every turn and my dwelling place shall be...under the  
blanket for evermore.

I will magnify  
I will magnify  
I will magnify my failures as a Christian, shame shall fill me in the watches of the night  
And guilt shall come in the morning.  
Every trivial loss of call will seem enormous in my sight,  
Surely disgust and remorse shall follow me all the days of my life.  
I will magnify.

We will always magnify something.

Is what you are currently magnifying good or bad for you?

Is it empowering you, or is it reducing you?

Is it introducing doubt and unbelief?

You get to choose what you think.

So, stop, take stock. What am I magnifying right now? Is it doing me good?



Instead, use your will to Magnify Him and give thanks to Him; this aligns you with the Holy Spirit. Can two walk together except they be agreed? (**Amos 3:3**).

Take your emotions and put them firmly at the feet of your will – that is a good exercise. So right now, we will take a break and take stock, be honest with ourselves, what have we been magnifying. Is it good or bad for you? Is it empowering you, or is it reducing you? Is it introducing doubt and unbelief?

Right, now you are beginning to see something about where you are.

We shall take some time later to break you into groups to pray for each other in the areas that have been revealed. It would be good if those of you who move in the prophetic will begin to sharpen their hearing so they can bring prophetic insight into their group.

Now let's have a look at the origin of the conflict.

### **The origin of the conflict:**

Satan was created before God created the world. He came into the garden already fallen. When created, he was absolutely perfect. Originally, his name was Lucifer, literally 'shining one'. He was most brilliant and most beautiful. Ezekiel 28:11-13 describes him. 'You **were** the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty' - this is the start of his funeral dirge. He was the most magnificent and the most beautiful creature that God had ever created, he headed up the angelic realm, he was the highest of the created angels.

Like all angelic creatures and mankind itself, God gave him free will. As to job function, there is some evidence to suggest he was rather like Jesus' right hand man in that he personally waited on Jesus in the throne room of God.

All was well until he began to consider his own beauty and magnificence **above** the beauty and magnificence of the Lord Himself. He became like Narcissus – remember him? He began to draw away, his focus changed from Jesus, to himself and he quickly became consumed by himself. One of the results of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which was in the centre of the garden is that we become self-absorbed, just like our adversary.

There is a lesson in this for us all; Jesus must be kept as our first love. Remember that the criticism in Revelation 2:5 was that the church had 'left' not lost, her first love and Jesus tells them 'Repent!' Change your mind, because so soon as you lose focus, lose Him as the object of your affection we find that we don't love Him as much as we should, and we find self rearing its ugly head, then the cares of the world take over and get out of proportion in our lives and the result – we begin to turn away from God and consequently lose our focus, our purpose and our destiny.

This is exactly what happened to Lucifer. Pride started rising in his heart, as though he were responsible for his own beauty, and he began a revolt against God, taking one third of the angels with him. (Revelation 12:4) He probably went on something like a canvassing campaign – door knocking to see who he could get on his side, before he actually moved out against God. We see this in Isaiah 14:13 the classic passage of the 5 'I will' statements. Can you imagine the shock waves that must have gone through heaven when he rose up to try to

establish his own claim to supremacy against the Creator of the Universe! Everyone must have held their breath, waiting to see what Almighty God was going to do about this upstart.

This substitution of God's will for his own, is the origin of our legacy in the fall and the resultant conflict between the will of God for us, and our will. When Satan substituted his own will for God's will he started something that will continue until Jesus comes and the final judgement. Our inherent inability to submit to a greater authority than ourselves. 'Did God really say?'

### **A Satanic Strategy:**

I want to speak just a little bit here about Satan's attempt to stop the line through which Jesus came. Knowing from the beginning that "*He will bruise your head*" **Genesis 3:15** and that sentence had been passed on him, he still attempted to thwart God's eternal purposes and destroy the line through which the Saviour of the world would come.

There has always been an attack on the Jewish people from the beginning. The reason for this is that if Satan can destroy the Jews, he can make God out to be a liar, because there are numerous promises regarding the Jewish people yet to be fulfilled. If he can stop their fulfilment, he's made God a liar.

When we look at the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which we will do, God willing in June, we will clearly see the demonic strategy to wipe the nation of Israel from off the map. I have news for the enemy – it will never happen. They are God's people, He is still for them in spite of their apostasy, and current revolt against their Messiah, they will be His people. It is written.

As Christians we are the only ones who can see the true spiritual conflict that is being worked out on the earth. The picture in **Revelation 12** is of the battle against the Jewish nation, what we call anti-Semitism.

The feeling against this people group is not natural, there has never been a time since there has been a nation of Israel that someone somewhere has not been against them. It is just not natural. **Revelation 12:1-4** shows us what is behind this attack. The devil is waiting to devour the man child – Jesus is that man child – he failed.

Going back to **Genesis 37: 9-10** you have a picture of the Jewish nation – the Bible is its own commentary. You can see how easy all this is to unpick.

In Revelation we see the Jewish nation pregnant. It is always seen as pregnant because it was from that nation that the Messiah was to come. This is a spiritual picture of what is behind all the attacks on the Jewish people for 4,000 years before the birth of Jesus. The nation of Israel was waiting for birth of the Messiah, but so was Satan. And that is why before the time of Jesus the attacks made against the Jews and specifically the line of the tribe of Judah, were to stop Jesus from coming.

At the incarnation in **Matthew 2:13-18** we see the other side of the Nativity story. This is the attack Satan used to try to kill the young child Jesus. Using as a willing tool, King Herod, he incites the king to kill all the male children under two. Don't hear too much about this at

Christmas. Yet another failed attempt to destroy the Messiah and of course, the final one was when he managed to have Jesus murdered – but all unknowing that he was just fulfilling God’s eternal plan. He must have been one unhappy demon when he found out what had actually happened! So why does he still keep attacking the Jews today? Because he knows there are still prophecies to be fulfilled and if he can wipe them out these won’t happen – some people never learn.

Make no mistake, God uses Satan for His divine purposes, Satan can do *nothing* except God allows. If you want proof of that go to **Job chapter 1** and see who is doing what to whom! This does not mean that the battle for us is not very real; we are up against a malevolent enemy who hates us with a passion, it behoves us therefore to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

### **The four faces of a Christian:**

**Ezekiel 1:5,6 and 10** shows us the throne room of God. Ezekiel sees things he cannot describe as he is caught up into the third heaven.

*“And in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, but each of them had four faces and four wings...their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle”.*

I want to look briefly at these angels with the four faces, because every one of us should be like this, we should have:

The face of a man

The face of a lion

The face of an ox

The face of an eagle.

The problem is many of us only have one face, the face of a man. The face of a man is the practical face, but it isn’t a *spiritual* face. This is a person who is always ready to help in any situation – brilliant, but there’s more.

The face of a lion is the Christian who knows about spiritual warfare, but sometimes sees the devil at work in every situation, so they are unbalanced. Everything is “the devil did this and the devil did that”. I’ve heard Bob Mumford say of a lady in his congregation who was speaking like this *“Honey, there’s not enough light in you to attract a used demon!”* In other words, you must be good enough, walking in the light enough, for him to even be bothered with you – usually our own fallen nature is quite enough.

The face of an ox is the Christian who gets on with the job without making any fuss, they are always steadfast in the body, but again, there is no spiritual understanding.

The face of an eagle are the ones who speak about faith all the time, everything has to be ‘faith’, ‘I’m believing’ ‘I’m in faith for this or that’. They are likely to be triumphalist, they never

have any problems – or much reality – because these are what I would call the “*name it, claim it*” brigade, or as I have heard it said the “*blab it and grab it*” brigade.

So there are the four faces of Christians.

We should actually be a mixture of all four. We should be heavenly minded enough to be some earthly good, placing our feet both in the heavenly realms and on the earth, bringing the blessings down but to do that effectively, we first have to regain our own inner territory.

### **Regaining your inner territory:**

One of the first laws of spiritual warfare is that you cannot take ground from the enemy if he has got ground in you.

So, what does the ground he has in us look like?

**Romans 8:5** and following speaks of the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit.

The mind of the flesh is at war with the Spirit of God. It cannot be compatible with the Spirit of God because it is hostile and will not subject itself to God. This is the ground that we have to take back from the enemy. The mind of the flesh. We have to transport that thinking into the realm of the Spirit and live from there.

**Galatians 5:16** following lists the fruit of the Spirit –

*“Walk by the Spirit and you will not fulfil the desire of the flesh.”*

There’s the message in those two scriptures, living in the Spirit, not in the flesh.

### **James 4:7**

*“Submit to God, therefore, resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*

It seems that most Christians are schizophrenic.

They have two things living on the inside of them, the old and the new nature. Anyone who is in the counselling/pastoral ministry will tell you that they spend most of their time dealing with people who don’t know who they really are in Christ, and they certainly don’t know where to live.

So, we are caught up in this internal battle between the flesh and the spirit. This is where the conflict is, and this is where we need to learn how to regain our own inner territory. To learn to live from the inside out. To live from our spirit man, not our emotions.

Never, ever, ever engage the enemy before you have engaged with God. If you attack first without battle orders you are going to lose. Guaranteed. First, submit to God. He wants to give you revelation about how to stand, what to do, what to say, how to say it, so that you enjoy the warfare that is around you, not just endure it and you get to **see** the power and the majesty of God.

It is necessary that we understand our situations from God’s perspective, understand His ways, how He thinks, know that He allows in His wisdom what He could easily prevent by His

power. Understand that *nothing* can come against us except He allows it and if He allows it, we can use it to our profit. Things happen in warfare situations that don't happen at any other time.

In warfare we get a fresh understanding of how God thinks, His perspective on the situation. It is knowing that perspective that leads to a **repositioning** which affects everything we do.

Perspective affects position and position affects petition. How we position ourselves before God will affect what we petition Him for, what we pray. We need His perspective in order to hear from Him what we should be asking in any given situation.

Things are never, ever, the way they look to our natural eye, we must have God's wisdom and perspective on everything.

Don't move in the other 'p' word, panic – bring yourself to peace, push fear away. Then use another 'p' word – pray.

It is imperative that we learn to hear the voice of God for ourselves -

### **1 John 5:14**

*“Now this is the confidence we have, if we ask anything according to His will we know that we have what we ask”.*

So, it is imperative that we find out the mind of the Lord, and then pray accordingly.

Therein lies our confidence beloved. We are not fighting, as Paul says, as 'one beating the air' God has given us everything we need for this battle, and He has given us His Holy Spirit who is our personal trainer available 24/7 just a prayer away. It's just a discipline like anything else.

The purpose of demonic opposition is to teach us **power**. The purpose of human opposition is to teach us **grace**. Don't let's confuse the two.

The purpose of tension and difficulty is to teach you how to rest.

Submit to God, find out His agenda for the circumstances you are in and what He wants to be for you in it.

There is a heavenly perspective on this and when you find that out your head comes up and worship fills your heart.

Train yourself not to push the panic button, train yourself to turn to Him first, always, and thank Him, worship Him, bless Him, because He is with you. It's just a discipline and it is a different place to live – it is life in the spirit.

Having said that, there are questions you need to ask when you come into circumstances and situations or when you come under attack. We need to learn to ask questions, and if we don't know what to ask, ask the Holy Spirit to show you – *“I don't know what to pray, please help me.”* He will. He loves it.

So here are a few pre-packed questions -

**Question Number 1** – am I reaping what I have already sown somewhere? Don't be too quick to blame the enemy, quite often it is this. The Spirit against you may be God Himself. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Check it out.

Whatever you are going through right now, may have a history in something you have done.

For example, are you being criticised right now? If you are, the question you need to ask yourself is *"have I been critical in the past, and not repented and made restoration or reparation?"* If the answer to this is 'yes', then it is likely that you are reaping what you have sown, and you are not actually under attack at all.

That's not a nice thing to have to hear and but if you just carry on you are being silly not to own up and sort the issue. If this is not your problem, but there is something else you are reaping right now, just ask the Lord to show you what it is and take steps to put it right before you leave here today.

If you get through that one, 😊

**Question Number 2** – Is this the cross at work? Are You nailing something in my life? Are you killing my carnality? God and the devil both have the same agenda, they both want to kill you ☹️.

The devil wants to kill steal and destroy. God wants to kill your flesh and He's not apologising.

You can't crucify the devil and bind the cross, you can only embrace the cross.

Is God using the enemy to crucify something in my life that shouldn't be there? Is God developing the fruit of the Spirit in my life through the situation, circumstances, and people, I'm going through?

Tension doesn't always mean there's something wrong. It can mean there is something happening. Bad situations are opportunities to be gracious. I don't have to be gracious when I get on well with someone. It's when there is tension in the relationship, I need to be gracious and grow fruit.

God allows tensions and difficulties around our lives because He wants to teach us to live in the fruit of the Spirit, not in our carnal nature. That's why the difficulties are there. Responding in the same spirit to that which is coming against you, is why there are wars and fighting's among us, James says.

Sometimes we have to realise what this is all about and start making mid-course corrections to our **own** behaviour and thinking patterns.

For example, someone says something really unkind to you, and you want to say, *"I know something about you too darlin'!"* but you have the opportunity to respond in the opposite way to that which is coming at you.

You *can* choose to respond with the fruit of kindness, instead of retaliation. You can go flesh to flesh, you can give people back what they give you, but you're only stunting your own

growth, destroying relationships, and making it easy for the enemy to have yet another victory over you. Lunch is served and you are on the menu – again.

It's a hollow victory to retaliate and feel pleased with your use of the English language. All you've done is emphasised your own carnality. And as far as God is concerned, you will have to go round that one again until you learn it is you, He wants to deal with, not the other fellow.

The fruit of the Spirit only grows in bad soil. It grows in bad situations where you have the **choice** to be gracious or ungracious; it is entirely up to you, and it can go on as long as you like. You are the one who determines how quickly you grow, not God.

Your intransigence will mean it takes longer. You get to choose. You **can** be kind and merciful to them. Good fruit, bad fruit, you get to choose every single time. And God will make sure you have plenty of opportunities to practice.

God tests us on everything – did you know that?

Good news is you can't fail any of the tests. Just as you think "*I've got that one licked*", He tests you and you find out whether you do have the victory in that area or not.

He does a work in you and then, He tests it.

But if you don't realise what is happening and He has to engineer the same circumstances, you will get to take it again, and again, and again and again and again, (as Graham would say) until you pass. That's kind. He won't let you go up a level until you are ready. That is the kindness of God.

God is always developing something in us, He's always wanting to teach us about grace, and He does that through the people round about us. Stop trying to escape from them, they are there to grow a particular fruit of the spirit in you.

Have a look at your relationships, which ones are the people you could cheerfully garrotte?

They will be your grace growers -

So I want you to make list now, three columns.

- First column name your grace grower.
- Second column what is it about them that gets right up your nose?
- Third column what is it God's trying to teach you? What fruit of the Spirit is He wanting to establish in your life?

So that was interesting I'm sure. Now you know the reason for your grace growers and their identities and bless them they have a purpose in your life. Do bear in mind that you will be on somebody else's list. Don't try to bind what you need to embrace.

At the start of every year, good question is, Lord what fruit do you want to grow in my life this year? Pretty well all of your tests will come around that one. It just helps you to be able to co-

operate with what God wants to do. If you get through those two questions, then the next one is:

**Question No. 3: Is this training for reigning?** *“Lord, are you using this to toughen me up in some way?”* Most often we are not on the battlefield, we are in boot camp, square bashing, going through manoeuvres. You will know when you enter real warfare. Sometimes difficult situations are there because the enemy is involved, but it is still just a training ground. It is so important that we find out who is doing what to whom. It’s not full-blown warfare, though it feels like it sometimes, it is training for reigning – reigning in this life as well as the next.

Sometimes we are crying out for deliverance and the Lord is saying *“No, sweetheart. I have spent a lot of time, money and effort getting you into this situation and I am keeping you in it, let’s go through it.”* He is well able to deliver us, but He wants us to learn something different this time.

So, is it a keeper or a deliverer?

We must learn that no matter what is going on, **He is for us**. In deliverance He demonstrates His Majesty, in a keeping situation you will know His Presence and His peace.

If you want to live in the Presence of God, you have to be present with God and live in all the ways God ‘Presences’ Himself. That will mean sometimes He is present in silence, and you just have to get used to sitting still, being quiet, waiting patiently. Sometimes His silence is just silence. He’s waiting for you to settle down, sit, stay – like the dog. If He doesn’t answer initially, He will eventually. Guaranteed.

Sometimes He delivers you from, and sometimes He keeps you in, you just have to go with His agenda.

There is a power in weakness.

God doesn’t need our strength.

He doesn’t actually need anything we have; He is all sufficient.

If God calls you to a place of servanthood and anointing, He will make sure that all the bad things in your life come to the surface so that He can deal with them. He is **always** redemptive. Samson’s hair grew back, Nebuchadnezzar came back into his right mind, David became a man after God’s own heart, and the prodigal came home.

In the battle we are in God wants soldiers on the battlefield who are travelling with a level of purity and righteousness in their lives.

You will want to be sure that the people you are lined up with are not going to run when the heat is on because, their flesh is going to get the better of them. It’s a good idea to humble yourself before God and give yourself a holiness check. Don’t go shining a spotlight, let the



Holy Spirit do it. Let Him highlight what needs to be highlighted. Jesus said, *“the prince of this world comes, but he has nothing in Me”*. **John 14:30**.

First rule of spiritual warfare, you can't take ground from the devil if he's got ground in you.

Let's just take a holiness check for a moment -

*“Father, would you take this opportunity whilst we are still before You to show us any areas you want to highlight right now please?”*

O.K. Whatever you do, don't despise the training ground. Speak to any athlete and they will tell you that the medal isn't won on the track it's won on the training ground. If you haven't put the work in – forget the medal.

It is the one who has put in the hours of training *before* the race that will win that medal, whoever hasn't will trail in last. Paul said to Timothy *“Endure hardness as a good soldier”*, and sometimes we just have to do that, it's just that nobody ever told us that when we signed up.

So, there it is. For some of you what I have said so far, may be coming as a bit of a shock – but as understanding comes, you will love warfare; you will love the battle; you will love payback; you will love walking in the opposite spirit; because it is what you have been called to and your spirit man is just waiting to get on that battlefield and do some damage to the enemy. It's a place of peace, it's a place of rest, it's a place of joy and it's a place of victory.

**Questions 4 and 5:** Are both linked – question 4 Is this You? Question 5 is this the devil? It is worth asking all five of these questions because sometimes it is a little bit of each.

So, the next time you run into a circumstance, run those five questions before the Lord before you do anything else.

### **The gift of discerning of spirits:**

Discerning of spirits is a vital gift in terms of raising our spiritual awareness about the opposition around us in life. And the gift of discerning of spirits is not primarily so that we can detect the enemy, because every gift that God gives us is always focussed on Him. So, the gift of discerning of spirits prime focus is to tell you what is God and what is not. Is this God? We are not discerning demons. For goodness sake, let's have a better focus than that! The gift of discerning of spirits is that that we know this is God and we focus on Him.

There's a lot of discerning going on in the body at the moment, and usually it concludes that the spirit at work is Jezebel, because we have misunderstood completely what the gift of discernment is all about – yes, Jezzie's in there, but **primarily**, this is God!

What is happening all over in churches right now **is of God**. *“Coming, ready or not!”* Yes, the enemy is active too, but this is God sorting His church out.

Let's get these things the right way up and discern who is doing what to whom. The way to do that is to ask Him – *“Father, what is happening here please, it would be very helpful to know right now”*, rather than go round diagnosing evil spirits at work. Just a thought.

When we discern that a situation is of the enemy or Jezebel, invariably we involve the people concerned, turn against them, and speak against them – doing the enemy's work for him. We need to grow up in this whole thing about who is doing what to whom. It is vital in the context of true spiritual warfare that we don't shoot each other, doing the enemy's work for him.

People are **not** your enemy, no matter what they have done to you.

The enemy is your enemy.

You have no enemies but Satan – the rest you are commanded to forgive, love, and do good to. Call **him** to account for what he has done in peoples' lives. *“An enemy has done this”*. God is redemptive always, particularly in His discipline of us and we must be the same with others around us.

So, doing it the proper way, if, in this context you can't discern God, the next thing the gift will do is tell you, if this is human opposition or demonic.

The last thing we are left with **by a process of elimination** is - this is the enemy. So slow, down, ask God, who is doing what to whom here Father? And wait for the answer.

We all make mistakes, I'm not excusing anyone, but in leadership we do **not** set out to lead people astray or hurt them. Please try to extend the same grace and mercy towards those who have hurt you in the church, as God is right now extending to you in your bad attitude. A lightning bolt hasn't struck you yet has it? Why are you thinking it should strike them? Grace and mercy. OK?

Sometimes things happen and everyone is so quick to blame it on a demon or people. Sometimes you just have to know what the hand of God is; what is the hand of people and what is the enemy. So, we need to know three things -

if it is God - to submit,

if it is people - to be gracious,

and if it is the enemy - to fight.

If you need to do business with God about what I have just said, then just get on and do it. It's called repentance. Because your bad attitude is giving place to the enemy right now.

When we point a finger at someone else there are always three pointing back at us, please remember that. Don't forget the story of the mote and the beam – watch out for that plank.

### **What's a faith?**

It is so important in our own life that every one of us has a testimony about the nature of God **living** in us – that which comes out of our own experience.

The loving kindness of God is from everlasting to everlasting. We learn to have faith not in the power of God, but in God Himself, in His goodness, kindness, faithfulness and love.

When we come into a situation our cry must be "*I know You*".

It is the nature of God to deliver people; it is the nature of God to help people; it is the nature of God to save people. It is the nature of God to be redemptive. He is lovely. It is the *nature* of God to show Himself mighty on our behalf.

You have to know what He is like, and you have to separate out what God is in Himself, from what He is doing. He is consistent, but He is unpredictable. You always know where you are with God, but you don't often know what He is doing. "*I am the Lord, I change not*".

We never know what He is going to be doing that is why we need to be led by the Spirit. When we are led by the Spirit, we are resting in the nature of God Himself, not what is happening around us.

If you aspire to being a warrior in the Lord, you have to learn stillness and you have to learn how to be at peace. Rest is a weapon against the enemy. If you are restful and peaceful in the heat of the battle you are not going to be moved because you are not disturbed by activity. We learn not to be intimidated by the enemy, but to be fascinated with God. Focus. All depends on what you are looking at. Father, what are You doing behind all this?

Warfare doesn't go away if you're not ready for it. God and the enemy do not take holidays. You are in this 24/7 whether you like it or not, better start liking it. Every situation is either a real fight or a battle simulation. It's all training. Training exercises are where you gain the skill and the knowledge about fighting. You can't do that if you are crying out for deliverance all the time.

Warfare circumstances give you access to the enemy or God depending on your **focus**. You will hear me constantly using the same words, focus and alignment. These are absolutely key.

***If you don't get anything else out of today, get those words in your thinking.***

Dictionary definition of **focus**: centre, heart, focal point, hub, meeting point, spotlight, centre of attention. Leading to concentrate: direct, converge, meet, come together, bring together. Concentration: motivation, single-mindedness, application. Worth looking these things up.

**Alignment**: the arrangement of something in a straight line or in an orderly position in relation to something else - like you to God. The correct position or positioning of different components with respect to each other or something else so that they perform properly.

For everything that comes **at** you from the enemy, the opposite is coming **to** you from God.

The enemy wants to discourage you – so where do you look? You look to God for **encouragement** because He’s going to move in the opposite spirit to the thing that is coming against you.

The real issue in warfare, or in any other situation in your life, is not what the enemy is doing; it is what the Lord Jesus is doing. What is He doing in you and what is He doing through you? What does He want to **be** for you in this situation? We need to learn to ask questions, expecting answers, because He is the God who sees and hears.

Those of you who came to the recent school will remember Hagar at the well “*Beer Lahai Roi*” the well of the God who sees me, and Ishmael, whose name means, God hears. You are never out of earshot of God, believe me. You are never where He cannot see you either. One with God is always a majority.

### **Perspective, Position, Petition:**

In warfare, the absolute first base is where you stand before God.

When you see something the way God sees it, your perspective is changed, and that affects your position and the way in which you petition or pray.

It is absolutely vital therefore, that we ask questions when we come into situations and circumstances. There are two principles God wants to set regarding spiritual warfare and winning the internal battle.

Principle number one is the principle of absolute or optimum power. **Optimum power** never leaves the hands of God. He is always in control – if you doubt that, look at Job. God gives the enemy permission, with limitation. Don’t touch his life. He couldn’t go beyond that. He comes back again, this time, God says OK but you can’t take his life. Who is in control here?

**Optimum**, absolute power never leaves the hands of God. It is otherwise known as His Sovereignty - dominion, control, rule, power. Never ever doubt that God is always, absolutely, in control, in command, of every situation in your life. Your job is to find out what He is looking at and align yourself with that and pray accordingly. Perspective, position, petition.

Principle number two is the principle of growth or multiplication that occurs when we are under attack from the enemy.

Warfare is there for you to take advantage and grow.

It is *not* the time to go under and moan about your lot. If you have prophecies over your life, now is the time to hold them out to God “*Lord, You said...*” The principle is that we stand in the problem, holding on to the promise, looking for the provision.

Whatever is stretching your faith right now is there to do just that, stretch it. Without it you will never grow. We don’t like it, but there it is. **Psalm 4** says “*Thou hast enlarged me when I*

*was in distress*". When do we get the enlargement? In distress. You don't get enlarged at any other time other than when you are clean up against it.

You can eyeball the circumstances and have a pity party, or you can realise that this is the greatest opportunity of your life to grow in God and you get something that you could not get at any other time.

God may be dealing with all the hidden things in your life, but it is the *greatest* time of your life because if you get through this, nothing will bother you ever again.

It starts when we are willing to face up to who we are and who we are not and we throw ourselves on the grace and mercy of God and say, "*Everything you need to do in me, please do it.*" Deal with me severely, correct me ruthlessly. This is the time of your development, this is training. This is God getting you ready for something that is to come and if you fail this, it probably means that you may not be able join the fight when it happens, or you may well find yourself a casualty.

When you give everything up, God puts everything in.

Warfare is a time to receive all that God has promised. J

Just understand that every problem comes complete with its provision.

You can't have a problem that doesn't have provision attached to it. You have to stand in the problem holding on to the promise to see that provision come to pass.

That is basic faith training. First base in the faith race if you like. God is for us, not against us, but He won't spare us, because He did not spare His own Son and He is conforming us to the image of Jesus.

So, multiplication, growth, comes in warfare circumstances.

For every attack of the enemy there is an equal and opposite revelation and experience of God's presence. I

If we can train ourselves to see the hand of God in **every** situation our peace and rest levels will rise - which in themselves are our weapons of warfare.

In all of this, God is using the enemy to do two things:

- pinpoint the next area in our life that needs His love and grace.

That's number one. It is the enemy's job, for goodness' sake, to expose sin and fear – that's why we never have to do it. The Spirit falls, the flesh rises and we see where we are. This is part of the Holy Spirit's job description.

The Bible says that *“each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lusts”* **James 1:14** – the purpose of temptation is to show us what’s already there so that we can receive the goodness, the kindness, the grace of God to get these things dealt with.

God is just taking out the hooks of the enemy that are in our life, and He’s using the enemy to do it. Brilliant.

So, ambition, idolatry and lust for power and control are being exposed – that’s OK, God is doing the exposing, and He will deal with it wherever it surfaces. He allows in His infinite wisdom what He could so easily prevent by His almighty power. Graham Cooke says that the enemy is God’s sheepdog, though he little understands it. Really cool that.

The second thing God is using the enemy for is -

- To demonstrate His power, His protection, His provision, and His presence.

Have a look at **Exodus 3** for an example of this. Here is Moses, ordinary day looking after the sheep when he sees the bush burning. Probably wished he had never let his curiosity get the better of him, but he goes over and has a look and his life is about to change forever.

Suddenly he finds himself commissioned to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. No mean task for an old man with a stick and a stutter. God outlines the plan and Moses finds himself caught up in the adventure of a lifetime. Just to make things really interesting, God tells him in advance that Pharaoh isn’t going to co-operate – thank you Father - because God is going to harden his heart. But He also says something very interesting. *“You will be as God to Pharaoh.”* He’s telling Mo that by the time He is finished with Pharaoh the only way he will be able to understand what is happening is by concluding that Moses is a ‘god’, because that is the level of power Moses is going to have over him. *“See I will make you as God to Pharaoh and your brother Aaron your prophet”*. He wants Moses to see this. To see himself as God sees him. God’s chosen leader and deliverer of Israel, a worker of signs and wonders to prove who is God around here.

For us to get on to the battlefield we have to come to the place where we see ourselves as God sees us. So, Moses goes to the elders of Israel and to Pharaoh and gets into all kinds of trouble – assisted by the Lord, who just to make it even more interesting, nips around the back of Pharaoh’s throne, whispers in his ear, and hardens his heart.

This is why the battle for the spirit versus the flesh just must be won. Unless you can see yourself as God sees you, you cannot go out there onto the battlefield. You have to **know** that the harder it gets the more you go to growth and multiplication. You have to know that God enjoys a fight – He is a Warrior King. In every situation, detach yourself, see it from God’s perspective, this is training – rejoice, worship. The issue is definitely **not** the issue. **The issue is what God is doing in and through the situation.**

God never calls us to do what we can do. He calls us to do the absolutely impossible, only He can do it. When you get a call from God, it will frighten you silly because you know you cannot

do this thing. He calls you to do what is impossible unrealistic and outrageous. If it is Him, you will always find it is a God-sized commission – only He can do it. The purpose for this is that you absolutely have to be totally dependent on Him. You cannot do it any other way. He calls you because He knows you cannot do this thing.

So, the critical thing in your life is not doing the ministry, it is living in the Presence of God.

Let's look at some of the enemy's strategies -

### **Demonic strategies - penetration, demoralisation and subversion:**

The enemy has three strategies against us.

The first one is **penetration**. The goal of the enemy is to ruin every single relationship that you have.

There is an implacable hatred in his heart for every relationship that you have and enjoy, he loathes it. He is totally and completely and utterly devoted to the destruction of every single relationship around your life. There are no exceptions.

If you are married, he hates your marriage with a perfect hatred. He has your marriage in utter and absolute contempt. Any ounce of destruction, any misunderstanding, any argument, any separation, anything he can do, it doesn't matter if it gets healed in a week, he will still want you to have a week of misery where things are tense, difficult, where you are fighting each other. Any single thing he can do to spoil something between you and your spouse, he is totally committed to.

Any ounce of selfishness in you he will use against your husband (or wife). Please do not underestimate the hatred that he has of family life. He is totally devoted to the ruination of the lives of your children, your family, and your friends. He hates friendships. Hates it when people love one another, any expression of love or gentleness, he is against it. He is the absolute antithesis – the direct opposite of *everything* God is.

Any expression of kindness and mercy, he is against. He is infiltrating your home, your relationships, your families, your place of work. Anything he can do to make your place of work horrible, untenable, for you, he will do it.

Anything he can do to make your life unhappy and miserable; he takes pleasure in that – those are the things that he loves.

He loves hatred, he loves bitterness, he loves, resentment, he loves unforgiveness, he loves offence, he loves mistrust, he loves misunderstanding, he loves rejection, he loves division, he loves strife, he loves hurts, he loves pain. All those things, and more, he loves with a passionate love.

Anything that is destructive anything that is ruinous; he revels in it; he laughs over it; he loves to see lives broken. His favourite place to hang out is the divorce court. He loves those places. Any place where man is ruined...

The poor places of town, he walks those streets, that's his cathedral, Graham says. That's where he feels at home. Any place where there is ruin and decay and the stench of death he adores.

Was any of that a surprise to you? Did you realise that that was his game plan? It is an implacable enemy that you and I are facing.

You are loved with a **perfect** love by the King of heaven you are **hated** with an utter and contemptible hatred by Satan.

Is it any wonder that God doesn't want us living in that place where we are more aligned with the enemy's agenda than His?

Can you see now why it is so important that we keep short accounts, and keep ourselves free from bitterness, hatred, unforgiveness and so on?

Beloved, these are not light things, they are life and death.

Why it is so important you understand every act of kindness is warfare, every time you don't retaliate, it's warfare, every time you love your wife/husband/kids, it's warfare, every time you get to work on time and do a good days work, without grumbling, it's warfare, every time you drive within the speed limit – it's warfare. (Oops! for those petrol heads among us)

Anything that he can do to penetrate your friendships, he will do; he loves you see you friendless and alone. He loves loneliness. Anything he can do to manipulate the weak areas in our relationships, exploit our friendships. Maybe there are points in hell for any demon who can separate best friends and split up marriages. Those who can split churches – that's a month in Vegas!

In church life the *favourite* target is always the **leadership**.

Simple strategy, get the head you get the body. So, anybody in the church who has got any kind of rebellion, or criticism, especially accusation - that's his favourite pastime - he will use to stir up division and split the church. Paul had the same problem with the Corinthian church. **1 Corinthians 3:1-4.**

**Second strategy is demoralisation.** There's a softening up process going on all the time. There's an attack on your morale - anything to produce disillusionment. That's why if he gets between relationships, we feel hurt, we feel wounded, we get offended, we are meat for him.

Sometimes getting healed is just a question of the will, not the emotions, sometimes we are looking to get healed and we are looking for some kind of emotional feeling. Sometimes healing is just an act of the will. It's you making a choice - you will forgive, and you will forget and you will move on. And sometimes it really is as simple as that.

Sometimes when we get hurt, we make unconscious vows – “*I'll never do that again*”, “*I'll never trust myself to anyone again*” defending ourselves against others.

That's a hiding place.

It's like having a closet in your house that has your own personal demon on the inside.



These things are hiding places for the enemy.

We need to get wise to his strategies.

It's like we let him win both ways, he wounds us in the first place, then he makes sure that that wound is open, it's sore and it's running - his aim is to cripple you, keep you out of the race.

We need to wise up as the American's have it.

We are being taken for a ride spiritually.

Don't let the enemy knock you out of the race - *'There was a young lady from Niger, who smiled as she rode on a tiger, they came back from the ride, the young lady inside and the smile on the face of the tiger!'*

How long are you planning to be lunch for him?

God wants us to walk before Him in faith and in power.

The enemy wants to prevent that by making you feel as feeble as possible: by subduing your prayer life; breaking your spiritual dependency on God; getting your focus on your performance not on your acceptance; and a hundred and one other things.

Truth is with God when you do well, He approves of you, when you do badly, He accepts you. God is **never** angry with you, He's always encouraging you, always loving you.

The enemy loves to get you concentrating on performance – I'm not praying enough – how much is enough? 25 hours a day, how much is enough? I'm not doing enough – how much is enough? Anything to bring depression and dejection. Anything to get you measuring yourself. Which incidentally you can't do.

He always makes you imagine the worst. Something happens and the first thing we do is imagine the worst scenario. Anything to convince you that things are too bad to change. That's one of his favourite ploys. *"This thing's too bad you'd better move on ditch this relationship, house group, church, go somewhere else."*

Then we start panicking, we're anxious, we're fearful and we've got to *reclaim* that ground in order to pray a prayer of faith. Meanwhile, he's delayed you, yet again. Not difficult to see the strategy, is it? Get them fearful, get them unbelieving, get them worried – and then leave them and go on to the next sucker – as Graham would say.

The definition of a 'sucker' incidentally is somebody who is easily fooled, somebody who has little resistance to, and is easily influenced by, something or someone. Fit anyone here?

The third strategy is **subversion**. In this area of being subverted we become almost like unconscious resisters. We're a drag on the work, we're a drain on other people's faith and resources, because when we could be fighting this thing ourselves, we are drawing other people into our life, which is OK if you are really in trouble, but sometimes this is just a pattern of behaviour. Dumping on someone which makes you feel better but demoralises them.

The whole point of church life is that we teach *each other* the discipline of how to stand before God. That is body ministry. The body is ministering to itself, being accountable to each other, pulling each other up, saying, in love, *“you have to stop that sweetheart and grow up.”*

Leadership and the fivefold gifting are **not** here to do the ministry, they’re here to help you find your way before God, so that you can hear God for yourself and teach others to do so. **Ephesians 4:11,12.**

Pastoral ministry always pushes people back onto God. When I’m talking in my discipleship group with people that I am mentoring, when they say I don’t know what God is saying about this, I say, OK let’s pray and God will speak to you. Sometimes they want to come and get a shortcut, they want me to hear and tell them. No way. I’m here to teach you to hear God for yourself. I’m not going to stand between you and God, that’s not my job - I’m going to push you back onto Him.

In pastoral ministry we *push* people back onto their relationship with God, what is God saying to you about this? Do you think God is happy with what you’re doing right now? I’ll pray for you, and you will hear from God and we’ll speak tomorrow and you can tell me what God has said. People start hearing God for themselves. If they hear from me, they can ignore it. If they hear from God, they may not be so silly.

It is so easy to become indifferent, to be unconcerned about where we are spiritually. You end up being aimless, impassive, unresponsive, sluggish, lukewarm, got no vision, listless, blaming everybody else for where you are, particularly your church fellowship. You look up it’s Saturday evening and you haven’t had a meaningful conversation with Jesus all week long.

Somewhere you have been subverted. You are not bothered about God, the enemy or the church.

It’s a small step from being an unconscious resister to being a conscious objector. Where you challenge negatively; where you are cynical about everything because of what you perceive are your own disappointments; there is a murmuring a complaining that rises up like Israel with Moses; then there’s negative fellowship. You find others you can join together with in criticism, grumbling and complaining.

Then we get to that place where we openly oppose things that God does want to do because we can’t be bothered to get involved, we think if we just pull that thing down and stop it we will preserve what we have.

Then you get into an Aaron and Miriam like situation with Moses *“well God doesn’t only speak through Moses you know”*, that cost her a week outside the camp. It’s that step, you’ve been penetrated, you’ve become demoralised, you are now subverted you’re a conscious objector and now a divisive spirit can actually get hold of you and work through your life.

Which is the real point the enemy loves to bring you to – to a point where he can bring some of his big guns and occupy all that space that’s unoccupied by the Holy Spirit.

Regaining and holding your inner territory.

Get the victory and occupy.

Disunity that attracts the demonic.

Unity that attracts the Holy Spirit.

If you are not actively contributing to the unity of the church you are contributing, even if it is by default, to the disunity. Because if you're not active, then you're passive, then the enemy can still work. Of course, you can be active in terms of working with the enemy. God forbid!

### **Mathematics:**

There are four types of people in the body:

Those who by their faith and their relationship with God, **add** something to you.

Those who **multiply** something to you, because of their relationship with God.

Those who are always **taking** something, and

Those who are **divisive**.

Simple mathematics.

Adding, multiplying, subtracting, or dividing. All different attitudes in the body. Where are you in the range?

I want to be a multiplier because I want to see everyone grow and I want to see you grow more than me. I care more about you than I care about me, and I love the Lord, and I want to see things happen and I am very happy to see you grow at my expense.

John the Baptist said, *"I must decrease He must increase."*

So, penetration, demoralisation and subversion, just three of the enemy's strategies against us.

A quick look to finish then, at the qualities of a spiritual warrior. A different breed indeed.

### **Qualities of a Spiritual Warrior:**

*"Every Christian is called to be a soldier in the army of God. Soldiers are called to counter evil with the overwhelming, overcoming good that flows from a heart in love with God. No matter what situation a Christian soldier is in, they must live from their spirit. Soldiers bless everyone around them, and contribute to a positive spiritual atmosphere."* I have just quoted Graham Cooke.

Spiritual warriors are a completely different breed. They have a different role; they are committed to God no matter what.

They settled the issue of Lordship a long time ago, they are on special assignment, charged with specific God-led initiatives against the enemy. They are the spiritual SAS, going out against the enemy in advance of the main body of the church.

Taking ground and holding it.

Warriors are marked by their renewed minds. They live in the Spirit, giving no place to the flesh. They are not reactors, they are responders. They do not react to their circumstances; they respond to God. For them, everything is an opportunity to learn, grow and increase.

They won the internal battle a long time ago. They are not looking for rescue. They do not love their lives unto the death. Their motto is *"God said it, I believe it, that settles it"* a phrase coined by Smith Wigglesworth, I believe.

Warriors cannot be intimidated by the enemy; they are too busy being fascinated by Jesus.

***Everything you say, everything you do everything you are, for God is an automatic act of aggression against the enemy. That, beloved, is spiritual warfare. Welcome to boot camp!***

Let's pray together:

*Father, I thank You, Lord, I pray, just in the ordinary stuff of everyday life as we live for You as we are conscious of You, let us know that in all those things, everything we do in Your direction is a slap in the face for the enemy.*

*Everything we do for You is an act of aggression against his kingdom. Father would you make us think about everything around our life, every person, every place where we go, every place we frequent. Would you help us to invade that space with a different morality, a different perspective, with praise in our hearts, with joy in our hearts with a word of appreciation on our lips, help us to notice people round and about us, help us to pray, help us to be full of integrity, help us to be honest, help us to be filled with the fruit of your Spirit, that what pours out of us everywhere we go is the life of Christ, emanating, and I pray that that will mean that people's lives are getting touched everywhere around us.*

*That we will live Father, doing spontaneous acts of aggression against the enemy, just by living, just by breathing, that he's going to be fearful of everywhere we go because we are going to breathe out Christ, we are going to breathe out the Kingdom, we are going to bless, we are going to anoint, we are going to live, we are going to speak, we are going to pray, we are going to be, we are going to do, all of those things done in your name is an act of war.*

*Would you raise the level of conscious warfare in our hearts, just in those simple things we will overcome the evil with the good of the kingdom of heaven. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

Thank you for listening. May God richly bless you and open your spiritual eyes to the battle.

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