

Conquering Through Prayer

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Conquering Through Prayer

Conquering in Service for God and His Kingdom

Seminar Program

Part 1: Understanding the role and centrality of prayer

Introduction

1. The Two Most Important Qualifications For Effective Prayer
 - Knowing and understanding the ultimate purpose of God in creation and plan and will of God for the believer
 - Understanding that prayer is the battleground of a spiritual war!
2. Knowing Your Enemy
 - Civil war
 - Conventional war
3. God's Ultimate Purpose in Creation and Plan of Redemption and Restoration
 - Understanding the larger Gospel picture
 - God's restoration plan for the Christian
 - The fact and truth of the redemption
 - The enforcement of the redemption
 - The scope of the Christian's authority
 - The vehicle of enforcing the redemption

Part 2: The Battle Field - Prayer

4. Preparing Myself for Battle
 - Reporting for duty—Confirming my relationship with Christ
 - Taking the oath of allegiance - Confirming my covenant
 - Taking up my rank—Taking up my position in Christ
 - Putting on the armour of God
5. Moving Into Battle
 - The power and value of Praise and worship
 - Proclaiming and enforcing the authority, victory, Lordship and reign of Jesus Christ in the spiritual realm.
6. Engaging In Battle - Prayer Session

All quotations from Scripture are taken from the
New King James Version of the Bible unless
otherwise stated

Part 1

Understanding the Role and Centrality of Payer

1. Introduction

While I was busy writing this manuscript, I received a sms stating: "Congratulations, your cell number has won \$3,400,000 (US Dollars) in FIFA Promotions. Contact so and so on such and such a number." (That is more than 25 million South African Rand.) A few months earlier I would have been tempted to check it out just to see if it was for real, but after the school God has put me through, I immediately recognised the hand of Satan trying to put a stop to my prayer ministry, and God gave me the grace to press the delete button. I would not exchange the fruit of this ministry for R25,000,000. I shudder when I think about the possible consequences had I not pressed the delete button! (And if you knew me well enough, you would understand why Satan chose this particular strategy to try and eliminate me!) This is an indication how much the enemy hates this prayer ministry! *"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat."* (Luk 22:31)

During the late 1990's God led me to publish a magazine called the Dissipelmaker, which was aimed mainly at Afrikaans-speaking Christians, in spite of the fact that my original calling was actually to the youth and educators of our country. The Lord blessed the Dissipelmaker and we managed to generate an army of prayer support for our ministry, the value of which I only really began to appreciate long afterwards.

After approximately 5 years I discontinued publishing the Dissipelmaker, as my original calling to reach the youth and educators for Christ weighed heavily on my heart. I then began publishing an English version of the Dissipelmaker, called the Christian Discipier, and then changed the title to the Christian Educator with the view to reach the educators of our country and the school going youth. However, not one of these publications survived financially and after boxes and boxes of Christian Educators were returned to us undelivered by the Post Office, we were forced to also discontinue the Christian Educator.

Little did I understand what was happening at the time. Although the Dissipelmaker did not reach our prime mission field, it was the vehicle through which God generated prayer support for our ministry. When the Dissipelmaker was discontinued, our prayer support base crumbled and as you have seen, failure was the result.

My greatest prayer supporter was my father, and I never fully realised the importance of his prayer life until after his death. Since his death we have experienced the one trial and failure upon the other in our ministry, our business and our finances - to the extent that it felt as if God had deserted us. I only understood why this happened many years later—we were trying to work for God without a solid prayer support base.

At times it was so depressing that I even began nurturing thoughts of suicide. It felt as if my life was passing away unproductively and I was achieving nothing for God. One day I decided to pack out the words, 'Oh, God!', with stones on one of the hills on our property and painted them white for God to read every day. These words are still there. But God remained silent. All He told us was, "endure in faith".

Then, one day during my prayer session while I was once again crying out to God, the Lord began revealing to me the truths I am going to share with you in this publication. These truths are not new at all. In fact I have read them many times in many books and I am not claiming ownership to these truths. In fact I echo the words of Paul E Billheimer in his book *Destined For The Throne*: "The writer feels that many of the insights were given him by the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Word. He, therefore relinquishes all claim to ownership. He wishes his ministerial brethren to feel perfectly free to use in their own ministry any material herein which the Spirit may quicken to them, subject only to the copyright. The truths were given by the Spirit. They belong to the Body."¹

The focus of God's revelation came to me through a verse that I (and I am convinced you to) know by heart, namely Eph 6:12: *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."* I have always known this, but for the very first time God began revealing these truths to my own heart like never before. I think Christians in general have an extremely poor understanding of the role that Satan and the demonic spirit world play in the life of Christians and the Church. My prayer is that God will reveal these truths to your own heart as you are reading this book.

During the preparation of this seminar I was at times under heavy attack of the devil. Believe me - Satan does not want the Church to have this knowledge! I cannot describe to you the severity of the demonic oppression and all the stumbling blocks I experienced during the writing of this manuscript.

One particular day I was ready to quit. I just could not endure the satanic oppression any more. I felt like Elijah who asked the Lord to take his life after the destruction of the Baal priests on Mount Carmel. Then the Lord directed my attention to Paul Billheimer's life story, and I want to share this with you as an introduction.

Paul Billheimer and his wife had a fruitful evangelistic ministry in Indiana USA, when during 1957 at the age of 60

his ministry came to an abrupt end when his energies collapsed. For the next 20 years the Billheimers experienced nothing but sorrow, disappointment and a shattered vision. During this time God taught them the same truths I am going to share with you in this book, and in 1975, when Paul Billheimer was 78 years old, his book, *Destined For The Throne*, came off the press. God restored both him and his wife's health and at the age of 80 God led them into the most fruitful season of their entire ministry with Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Since then Paul Billheimer has published many more books, some of which are of the most precious Christian classics available today. These include: *Overcomers Through The Cross*; *Destined To Overcome*; *Don't Waste Your Sorrows*; and *The Mystery Of His Providence*.

When I read this I took courage. I knew God wanted me to finish what I was doing. Please pray for me and my wife Nansie and our ministry.

What exactly is the objective of this book? The objective of this book is to mobilise you, the reader to prayer and to mobilise prayer. The objective of this book is to mobilise the Church of Jesus Christ to pray, and to equip Christians to pray effectively. This book is going to teach you how to conquer through prayer - how to conquer in your own spiritual life, how to conquer in your family-life, how to effectively pray for missions and mission fields, and how to conquer in your service for God.

I want to state this categorically, Jesus Christ died on the Cross of Calvary to give you and me and the Church of Jesus Christ a life of victory - victory over sin and the power of sin - victory over Satan and his kingdom - victory over the world - and victory over our circumstances and our trials - victory in our service and our work for the Lord! Are you experiencing and living in this victory?

Prayer is not a popular subject, and I can understand why. I can totally understand why most church prayer meetings are poorly attended. I can totally understand why it is so difficult to mobilise the church to pray! The reason is that very few Christians really know how to pray. Very few churches really teach their congregations how to pray effectively! The fact of the matter is that unless you understand prayer warfare, prayer is hard work for little reward! Why is this? Because Satan and his demons will ensure that your prayer-life remains ineffective and you remain in the dark with regard to your authority in Christ for as long as possible!

Prayer, as most Christians know prayer, really doesn't pay! Unless a prayer meeting results in visible or experiential answers to prayer, it is hard work for little reward! Christians don't pray because they don't experience answers to prayer! But why do we experience so few answers to our prayers?

Imagine a Police Officer arriving on a scene where a crime is being committed. On arrival the Police Officer immediately pulls out his mobile phone and connects to the State President's office; and this is a rendering of the conversation that follows:

"Hallo, hallo - is that the President's office? ... Thank you mam. May I speak to the President please! ... My name is officer Peter Brown Thank you, thank you mam. Good morning Mr President, thank you for being available to take my call ... Mr President I am an officer in the Police Force! ... The enemy is attacking one of our citizens ... Please come and overpower him—I am weak but you are strong! Please set this person free ... You are in full control ... I know that you are much stronger than any enemy ... You are the strongest President there is ... I know you will never disappoint the one who trusts in you ... Nothing is impossible for you and I believe in you. Thank you Mr President. ..."

This is how most Christians react when they encounter a satanic attack. We think we impress God with our misplaced humility. But in the same way the State President will not react to such a call, God does not react to such a prayer. Because in the same way the State President has delegated his power and authority to the Police Officer to apprehend the criminal on behalf of the state, God has delegated His power and authority to the Christian to overcome Satan and his kingdom.

When Christians learn how to pray effectively and begin to experience answers to prayer, prayer becomes an adventure, something exciting, something productive, something powerful - in fact much more than that - prayer becomes the centre of my spiritual life - and so it should be! Prayer is the very core of the Christian life, and a Christian who does not treat prayer as such, really has good reason to put a huge question mark over his Christianity!

Paul Billheimer says: "Prayer is not begging God to do something which He is loath to do. It is not overcoming reluctance in God. It is enforcing Christ's victory over Satan. It is implementing on earth Heaven's decisions concerning the affairs of men."² ... "Prayer is where the action is. Any church without a well-organized and systematic prayer program is simply operating a religious treadmill."³

May I warn you, this book is not going to be a Sunday School lesson - this is advanced Christianity - this is post graduate Christianity - this is not for the timid and the fearful. But don't be discouraged, the opposite is equally true - this is going to be glorious for everyone who means business with God! This is going to be enlightening, liberating, adventurous and powerful stuff for every Christian who is serious about seeing God manifested in this world, and will advance your Christian experience to a higher level.

May God bless you as you open yourself to learn deeper truths from His Word.

Notes:

1. Destined For The Throne by Paul E Billheimer, page 8
2. Destined For The Throne by Paul E Billheimer, page 17
3. Destined For The Throne by Paul E Billheimer, page 18

Chapter 1

The Two Most Important Qualifications For Effective Prayer

As a young Christian I thought I understood the mystery of prayer. During the years that followed my conversion I experienced a dynamic prayer-life and many answers to prayer. I thought I knew all the answers, but alas, I must admit that I have learned more about prayer during the last year or more than during the previous 20 years together.

There are many qualifications for effective prayer and we are going to discuss some of them during the course of this book. But if I have to reduce the qualifications for effective prayer to the two most pivotal, I would arrive at the following conclusion.

1. Knowing and Understanding the Ultimate Purpose of God in Creation and the Ultimate Plan and Will Of God for the Believer

The first qualification for effective prayer is that it must be about what God wants! I have to pray about things God wants done! If I can do it myself, then why pray? I am wasting my time and energy praying about things God does not want done! My problem, and quite possibly yours too, is that we don't always understand and know what God wants! This is possibly one of the reasons why many Christians pray so little, or don't pray at all. Or is it perhaps that we think we can do life, business and ministry on our own?

How Do I Know What God Wants?

I know what I want! I want success in my ministry, business, or work, a good income, health and prosperity for myself and my family. So, I pray, 'Lord please bless me and my family.' 'Lord, please supply our needs.' 'Lord, we need a new car.' 'Lord, please bless so and so.' 'Lord, please heal my daughter.' 'Lord, please bless my business, ministry and work.' The question is, am I in tune with God's purpose, plan and will for me and my family, and the world around me? Is my prayer-life effective? Many Christians, if they are honest, will have to answer no to this question.

Let's step back for a moment. What exactly is prayer and why pray? Prayer is interaction with and on behalf of God, who is the Creator and Maintainer of the world and the universe. God is the origin and the destiny of humanity and all things. Prayer is interaction with God, who holds your and my destiny, and the destiny of the whole world in His hands. If that is so, it follows that God has a plan and a purpose for this world, for you and me and every other human being.

Knowing God's Will For Your Life

We are going to expand on God's ultimate purpose in creation later on, but let's first ask the question, how do I get to know God's plan for my life?

The very first and basic step to know and understand God's plan for my life, is to stand in an intimate and personal relationship with Him! This can only happen through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary and begins with a spiritual experience called regeneration, or the second birth. Joh 3:3: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

The second step to knowing God's will for my life is to submit unconditionally to His authority! *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* (Rom 12:1,2)

If you believe that He is God and that He holds your destiny and the destiny of the world in His hands, why continue to want to do your own thing? Why continue struggling to live your own life? Why continue living under the burden and stress of this world? Why continue to try and live up to your own morality or the morality of your society? Why continue to struggle meeting the demands of success in your home, job, ministry, business, or career, while trying hard to cope with the failures of life?

God wants to lift the yoke of self-effort from your back! Jesus says: *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."* (Mat 11:29)

The secret of a lifted world-yoke is an absolute and unconditional surrender of your entire life to God through Jesus Christ! This is also the basic condition for understanding the purpose, plan and will of God for your life as we have read in Rom 12:1,2.

Now let's get the prayer connection.

Praying God's Purpose, Plan and Will for your life and the world

If I want to pray effectively I have to pray into action God's purpose, plan and will for my own life and the world. It is totally ineffective if I pray something against the will of God. The entire Christian life is about executing the purpose, plan and will of God in and through my life, and unless my prayer-life reflects that, I am wasting my time praying. Can this be one of the reasons why our prayers have so little effect?

2. Prayer is the Battleground of a Spiritual War!

The second qualification for effective prayer is the clear understanding that prayer is the primary battleground of a spiritual war. Satan and his kingdom opposes the purpose, plan and will of God for our lives and the world through people and circumstances, and if we are fighting our battles on a physical level, we will never win the war. Eph 6 states this categorically. Verse 12 quoted previously says: *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."*

Prayer is the only way one can effectively engage and overcome in battle with spiritual hosts of wickedness. This reminds me of the priest who had built himself into an enclosure without any windows or a door in order to escape from the devil, only to discover that he had shut in the devil in with him.

Prayer is the battle field for spiritual warfare! The reason why prayer is not part of the armour of God in Ephesians 6, is because it is the battle field. In Eph 6:13-17 where we read about the armour of God (which we are going to discuss at a later stage), verse 18 continues with the following words: *"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints;"* which by implication means that prayer is the primary area of application of God's armour.

Prayer is not simply communication between me and God. There are four major role players in prayer - No 1, the Tri-une God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, No 2, my soul (which is my self-consciousness and comprises of the faculties of my Will, Intellect and Emotion), No 3, my spirit (which is my spiritual consciousness and the faculty through which I commune with God and the spirit world), and No 4, the spirit world (which includes Satan and his demons). (The reason why I have listed my soul and spirit separately is because my soul and spirit are separately engaged in prayer. I sometimes think about something which is not what I want to pray about. My spirit may have one prayer burden, while my thoughts are going in another direction.)

In prayer these four role players will interact in different ways depending on the situation. However, this is a subject on its own. What is important to understand here is that there will always be a conflict of interest - at the most basic level between the demonic spirit world and my spirit.

For this reason one of Satan and his demonic hosts' primary objectives is to render my prayer-life ineffective. They do this in various ways, through manipulation of my thoughts and emotions, by averting my attention and making my thoughts wander, stealing my time, putting stumbling blocks in the way of prayer, keeping me too busy to pray, putting an emotional oppression on me when I pray, trying to push me into a trance during prayer or praise, trying to serve me with a counterfeit spiritual gift, and many, many more!

we said that the first qualification for effective prayer is that prayer must be about what God wants! I have to pray about things God wants done! However, this brought me to the question, if God wants to do it anyway, why do I have to pray before He does it? It is the answer to this question that revolutionised my prayer life! I discovered that prayer is not only talking to God, but it is much more than that - it is also talking on behalf of, and with the authority of God in the spiritual realm! I discovered that I have the authority to enforce God's will in my area of conflict through prayer.

This Is A Real War!

The truth is that every Christian is a soldier in a very real spiritual war that is waging in this world - whether we acknowledge this or not - and this war is won or lost (on individual level by the Christian and as a whole by the Church) in prayer! This is spiritual warfare! There is only one way a Christian can avoid this war, that is by not praying! But then you are already a victim of Satan - that's why you don't pray.

Many Christians don't want to know anything about spiritual warfare because they say, Jesus Christ has overcome Satan and his demons on the cross of Calvary, and I am already a victor in Christ! That is absolutely true! However, that's just part of the truth.

Enforcing The Victory of Calvary In This World Is The Task Of The Church!

Enforcing the victory of Calvary in this world is the task of the Church and it is done through prayer! God has already defeated Satan on the cross of Calvary. Jesus has ascended into heaven and is sitting at the right hand of the Father on the throne. Satan has been cast out of heaven and is the prince of this world. God is not at war with Satan - but we are - and He has given us the power and authority to overcome Satan in this world.

God will not override the Church and do the Church's work for them. If the Church and Body of Christ do not take up their authority and overcome Satan, God will not do it for us! The purpose of this book is to show Christians how to become effective in our prayer-lives and how to use the authority and armour of God effectively.

Once again imagine a Police Officer arriving on a scene where a crime is being committed. This time the Police Officer reacts differently. Dressed in his uniform with his rank clearly visible, he now confronts the enemy: "I am a Police Captain under command of the State President and I command you to drop your weapon and raise your hands!"

Just imagine what can happen in our world when Christians begin to understand and use their authority against Satan and his kingdom. Our country would have looked differently, our family-life would have looked differently and our mission fields would have looked differently. I think the world would have been reached for Christ a long time ago!

Chapter 2

Knowing Our Enemy

Who is the Enemy?

In order to be effective in spiritual warfare, I must know my enemy. There are several things I have to know about my enemy. I have to know who my enemy is, I have to know his tactics. Have you ever heard of a sports team who enters into a league game without any knowledge of their opponents? Or a country entering into a war without any knowledge of their enemy? Yet Christians believe they can win the Christian war without knowledge of their enemy!

Some say, I don't want to know more about Satan, I'd rather know more about God. It's like a soldier being willing to learn everything about his weapon and armour, but doesn't want to know anything about his enemy. How foolish!

The Christian has three enemies and it is of vital importance that I should be able to distinguish them if I want to be successful in my Christian life and service. My first enemy is sin. Jesus says in Mat 5:29: *"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."*

My second enemy is Satan and his kingdom. In Mat 13 we read the parable of the sower and in verse 39 Jesus said: *"The enemy who sowed them is the devil, ..."*

Satan and sin are not synonymous. Satan is the originator of sin, and where Satan is, there is sin; and where sin is, there is Satan. But Satan is not sin and sin is not Satan! Furthermore, Satan is not simply an evil force - Satan is a real person, served and supported by a host of real demonic personalities!

The Christian's third enemy is the world. In 1 Jn 2:15 we read: *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."* The world is the entire world system with its people that are tainted by sin.

Satan is the prince of this world and the world is in the power of Satan and sin. These three, Satan sin and the world are joined in an evil partnership. Where the one is, is the other, with one exception - Satan is also where sin and the world sometimes are not - with and around dedicated Christians and the body of Christ.

This brings us to the subject of war. There are two types of spiritual wars. The first is the war with sin and the sinful nature or the flesh. This is a civil war. Then there is the war with Satan and his kingdom - this is the conventional war.

The Civil War

In Romans chapter 7 we have a very accurate description of the civil war. The apostle Paul describes this war vividly where he says: *"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me."* (Verses 14-20)

Why do we call the war with sin, the sinful nature and the flesh, a civil war? Because this war is fought within the heart of man. It is a struggle for the dominion of your and my heart. This is largely the area within which all Gospel preaching fall. This book assumes that you are fully acquainted with the Gospel and we will therefore not dwell on this subject, except to say that if someone is still engaged in a civil war, he or she will never win the war against Satan and his kingdom.

There are especially two misunderstandings among Christians I want to address on this subject. The first misunderstanding is that if I cannot get victory over some or other sin in my life, whether it is an addiction, hatred, envy, a bad temper, a foul tongue, or whatever, Satan is automatically the culprit. No, no, no! It is a problem of the heart! My problem is an unclean heart. It is a matter of civil war. The problem lies within the area of my sinful nature or my flesh - the problems lies within my unsanctified heart. I am at war with my own sinful nature.

Let me once again say this unequivocally - there is full deliverance at the Cross and in the Blood of the Lamb for my unsanctified heart!

But having said this, the second misunderstanding among Christians is when a saint (I am talking about a sanctified Christian) falls into sin, we automatically apportion the blame to sin or a problem of the heart. This may not be so at all! This brother or sister may be under satanic attack, and no remorse or repentance will keep them from falling again and again unless they recognise the source of their conflict and are able to engage in conventional war with Satan and claim the victory in the spiritual realm!

No country that is involved in a civil war will survive a conventional war. So it is in the spiritual realm, as we have mentioned before. At the same time, all Christians are automatically involved in a war with Satan - whether they know or understand this or not. So the moral of the story is simply, if you are still involved in a civil war - go to the Cross of Calvary and get victory over your own sinful nature at the very first opportunity because Satan will ensure that you are completely ineffective in your witness and service for God, for as long as you are in this condition. He's got full power and authority to do that!

The Conventional War

We are now moving to the conventional war, so let's take a closer look at Satan, his kingdom and the spirit world.

The reality of Satan, his kingdom and the invisible spirit world

In God's creation there is a physical and a spirit world. We all understand what the physical world is. This is everything we can see, feel, hear and taste with our senses. However, the spirit world cannot be seen or heard and we cannot communicate with the spirit world through our senses, although the spirit world is as much a reality as the physical world.

We read in Joh 4:24: *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* However, God is not the only one in the spirit world. Angels, and Satan and his demons are also part of the spirit world. Occultism is the medium through which people communicate with the demonic spirit world. Although we cannot hear or see the spirit world with our senses, the spirit world can see and hear us in the physical realm.

It is important to emphasise the reality of Satan and his kingdom! Satan and his demons are real living spiritual personalities. This is no science fiction! Have you ever seen these digital games and science fiction movies of these monster type creatures created by Hollywood and others. People think these creatures are the creation of people's imagination. However, I think we will be surprised to find out one day how much of these so called science fiction programs are in fact simply impressions of what people perceive in the spirit world.

The fact of the matter is that Satan is a real person, heading a real kingdom - he is not science fiction, nor just a force as some believe. Many books have been written on this subject and I do not intend to cover all that ground again. If you want to read more on the character and work of Satan, I recommend for reading, *Winning The Invisible War* by E M Bounds, *War On The Saints* and *The Warfare With Satan* by Jesse Penn Lewis, *Destined To Overcome* by Paul Billheimer, *He Came To Set The Captives Free* and *Prepare For War* by Rebecca Brown.

E M Bounds writes in his book, *Winning The Invisible War*: "The Bible reveals the devil as a person—not a mere figure, not simply an influence. He is not only a personification, but a real person. ..."

"Many myths have gathered around the person of the devil throughout the ages. Much poetry, tradition, and even our fears have caricatured his person, exaggerated his character, and coloured his conduct. But there is truth in regard to him, naked and simple truth. ..."

"We need the knowledge about the enemy, his character, presence, and power in order to arouse men to action. This knowledge is vital to victory."

"When the devil fell, others fell with him. ... The Bible clearly states that the devil has a host of angelic followers who are ready and eager in their efforts to hurt man and defeat God's Kingdom on earth." ¹

I want us to focus on one extremely important fact about Satan and his kingdom.

It is important to know that all of us are surrounded by an audience of demonic spirits in the unseen spirit world around us day and night. They hear and see every audible word we utter and every movement we make. They have the freedom of the city, this world and every place on earth, even the church - they are even around us here right now and they hear every word you and I say.

Demons are eager church goers! Demons are everywhere where Christians are! I believe there are more demons where Christians are than in any other place because they have very little work to do elsewhere. Where sin reigns they have no work to do. Every empty seat in the church is filled by a demon - Bible-believing and evangelical churches are more well attended. Every prayer meeting is well attended by demons. Every Christian home is covered by demons - especially where there is a faithful and praying mother or father, husband or wife.

E M Bounds writes: "Satan is always at church before the preacher is in the pulpit or a member in the pew. He comes to hinder the sower, to impoverish the soil, or to corrupt the seed. He uses these tactics only when courage and faith are in the pulpit, and when zeal and prayer are in the pew. But if dead ritualism or live liberalism are in the pulpit, he does not attend because they are no danger to him." ²

What is their modus operandi and how do they operate?

E M Bounds writes the following about the devil's business:

"A spiritual character can work through other agencies or directly on the human spirit. Satan infuses thoughts, makes suggestions, and does it so deftly that we do not know their origin. He tempted Eve to take the forbidden fruit. He put it into David's mind to number Israel ... He influenced Ananias and Sapphira to lie to God."

"Peter's yielding to presumption was instigated by Satan. Judas' betrayal was from the same source. The temptation of Christ was a typical masterpiece of Satan's craft."³

1. Demons tempt

We all understand temptation. In 1 Th 3:5 Paul writes: *"For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain."*

Satan even tried to tempt Jesus in the wilderness. Let this be a warning to every Christian. No Christian is so advanced spiritually that he or she is beyond the danger of temptation.

2. Demons mislead or deceive

We read in Rev 20:8 *"Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations ..."*

And in 1 Ki 22:23 we read: *"Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours,"*

Demonic deception is rife in the Christian Church of our time. Deception is one of Satan's most successful strategies in rendering the Church powerless. Demons can counterfeit every single spiritual experience, from conversion to the infilling of the Holy Spirit. They can even counterfeit Jesus himself. There are demonic spirits who call themselves Jesus. There are religious demons who specialise just in counterfeiting every work of the Holy Spirit. For this reason we are warned in 1 Jn 4:1: *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."*

3. Demons attack

Demons strike people with various afflictions such as diseases, accidents, obstacles, destruction, death, torture, failure, poverty, financial ruin, crop failures, family disunity, marriage failures and divorce, rebellion in children and many more - you name it, demons do it! However, we must be careful to attribute every affliction to demonic activity. There can be many other reasons for the above phenomena. When we suspect demonic activity we should ask God to reveal the true source of affliction to us.

When we get to chapter 5, Moving Into Battle, you will see how we handle this aspect without having to know what the source of the affliction is.

4. Demons oppress

Demonic oppression is the chronic activity and pressuring of demons on a person from outside. Demonic oppression must not be confused with demonic possession. When demons cannot possess, they try to oppress. Oppression is often illegal, in other words, they often have no legitimate right to do what they are doing but they are doing it anyway for as long as they are not stopped.

We see an example of an oppressive spirit in the life of Saul in 1 Sa 16:14, although this spirit was sent by God and therefore legitimate: *"But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him."*

Paul also had an oppressing spirit. We read in 2 Co 12:7: *"And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure."* Ironically, this was also a legitimate demonic oppression.

Therefore we must never associate demon oppression with a lack of holiness, or God's judgement over sin. Demon oppression is in fact more common among holy and dedicated Christians than others, because they are a greater threat to Satan's kingdom. The fact of the matter is that the least a Christian is troubled by Satan and his demons, the least threat that Christian is to the kingdom of Satan.

5. Demons possess or control

Demon possession is when a demon takes up dwelling inside a person within his spirit. We find ample examples of demon possession in the Bible. One of the more well known is possibly the demoniac of Gadara. *"And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,..."* Mar 5:2.

On what basis do demons operate?

As you have already noticed, demonic activity can either be legal or illegal. How must we understand this, considering the fact that Satan and his demons have legally been conquered on Calvary?

Satan has been legally defeated and has no legitimate right to operate in any life or area where the Cross of Calvary and the Blood of the Lamb is applied by faith. In the following chapter we are going to expand on Satan's defeat by Jesus' redemption on Calvary. But the principle to understand here is that the victory of Calvary has to be applied by faith in our lives through a voluntary act of our will before it becomes effective in our lives.

God will never override the human race in enforcing the victory of Calvary. As you will see in the following chapter, God has created man in His own image as a sovereign entity with a Will of his own. Adam sinned by a choice of his own free will, so the restoration from the fall must also occur by a choice of man's own free will. God will never force Himself on anyone! On the contrary, that is exactly how Satan and his demons operate—they force themselves upon their victims. Salvation is a matter of free individual choice! You either have to accept it voluntarily, in the absence whereof you reject it.

So then, enforcing the victory of Calvary in this world is the task of the Church, as we have pointed out already! In failing to do so, Satan will continue to operate freely without any resistance in spite of Calvary's victory. But what is the difference between Satan's legal and illegal activity?

Satan can operate legally anywhere in a Christian or unbeliever's life where he has legal ground. What gives Satan legal ground to operate? The following is a list of the most common, although there may be more:

- Unrepentant sin,
- The flesh (meaning any area of a person or Christian's life that has not been surrendered to the control of the Holy Spirit),
- Anti-Biblical or unholy cultural and ancestral bondages,
- Anti-Biblical human philosophies such as the Evolution Theory,
- Unchristian and unholy symbols and dress,
- Occultic practises, objects and symbols,
- Unbroken curses,
- Hateful attitudes,
- Unbroken sins of the fathers

Where the victory of Calvary and the Blood of the Lamb has been proclaimed in the absence of the above, satanic and demonic activity do nevertheless occur, but they occur illegally. That means that Satan has no right to operate in that particular area and he can effectively be cast out. We will learn more about this in the chapters that follow.

Notes:

1. Winning The Invisible War by E M Bounds, page 11,12
2. Winning The Invisible War by E M Bounds, page 32
3. Winning The Invisible War by E M Bounds, page 31

Chapter 3

God's Ultimate Purpose in Creation and Plan of Redemption and Restoration

When we look at our own lives, our families and the world around us, we must be honest, it doesn't look like Satan is a defeated foe. There are some Christians who believe that we are currently living in the thousand years of peace the Book of Revelation is talking about and that Satan is currently bound. But one must have an extremely vivid imagination to really believe that!

Hal Lindsay many years ago wrote a book with the title, *Satan Is Well And Alive On Planet Earth*, and my spirit agrees with that! In fact I would put it in even stronger language: *Satan Is Well And Alive And In Full Control Of Planet Earth!* The question that immediately comes to mind is that if this is true, what is the significance of Jesus Christ's work of redemption on Calvary and the fact that He was raised from the dead? Was Satan really defeated, and if so, how come he is still in control of planet earth?

Understanding the larger Gospel picture

In order to understand this anomaly, it is vitally important for the Christian to fully see and understand the overall Bible and Gospel picture. All the misunderstandings, errors, false doctrines and fallacies preached in the Church of Jesus Christ over the ages can be traced back to a poor vision of the overall Bible and Gospel picture. It is possible to be able to recite the entire Bible by heart without a sound understanding of its overall message.

The message of the Bible is like a large jig-saw puzzle. It is one big picture consisting of a multitude of individual pieces - Bible books and verses. Whenever you use any one of these pieces or verses, it must be done in the context of its position in the complete picture. When you begin building a jig-saw puzzle, it is of paramount importance to have the picture you are building in front of you, otherwise you will not know where the individual pieces fit in. Have you ever tried to build a large jig-saw puzzle without its picture? It is almost impossible. Yet many Christians use individual Bible verses without knowing where they fit into the total Bible picture. It is possible to justify any doctrine or belief - right or wrong - by quoting a verse or verses from the Bible.

So then, here is the big picture in a nutshell:

1. Firstly, we must understand God's ultimate plan and purpose in creation.

God created the human race for a purpose. What purpose? The book of Genesis is absolutely critical for us in understanding God's plan for mankind and the world! We read in Gen 1:26-28: *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, ... Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the ... earth.'"*

Firstly, God created mankind in His own image, as a sovereign entity, with a SPIRIT, SOUL and BODY, and a WILL, INTELLECT and EMOTION, of his own. God created man as a trinity, like Himself.

God reveals Himself as a Trinity to man, SOUL - God the Father which is His character and personality; BODY - Jesus Christ, God revealed to man in a human body; and SPIRIT - the Holy Spirit. So He created man - spirit, soul and body - a spiritual being in a human body in the image of God.

Secondly, God wanted an offspring, a posterity, in His own image! In other words, God wanted a personal family! For this reason God commanded mankind to become fruitful and multiply.

In the New Testament this offspring is called the Church and Body of Christ, and at completion it will become the Bride of Christ. Paul Billheimer describes this uniquely when he writes: "The author's primary thesis is that the *one* purpose of the universe from all eternity is the production and preparation of an Eternal Companion for the Son, called the Bride, the Lamb's Wife."¹

Thirdly, God appointed His family, the human race, with the authority to represent Him and to rule over the earth! Let me repeat this statement, as this is fundamental to an effective prayer-life! The human race was created to be God's representative and to exercise His authority on earth. There is a deep seated truth revealed here. God's purpose is that His family as a group should reign over His creation. That's why God's primary concern is with His Church or Body, rather than with the individual, as we will understand later.

2. Secondly, we must understand why the human race missed out on God's plan of creation.

In Genesis 3 we read about the fall. Sin entered the world and mankind became subject to Satan, his demons and sin. Mankind inherited a tarnished and fallen image of God; and Satan obtained legal authority on earth through the fall to rule the world instead of mankind, which he passionately executes to this day!

The fall had several implications for mankind. Firstly, man's **body** became mortal and subject to decay, although he still had an immortal soul. Secondly, all humans inherited a sinful and fallen nature or **soul** from our father, Adam. Thirdly, man inherited a fallen **spirit** which died spiritually from communing with God.

The rest of the entire Scripture is devoted to God's story of the restoration of creation from the fall.

3. Thirdly, we must understand the message and significance of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is a prophetic message pointing towards, and which would be fulfilled in the New Testament. The Old Testament is the story of how God prepared a people in His own image through a man called Abraham, in order to pave the way for ultimate fulfilment of God's purpose in creation.

The Old Testament is the story of how God produced and prepared a Messianic race that would in the maturity of time, give birth to the Messiah in perfect fulfilment of the law.

4. Fourthly, we must understand the message and significance of the New Testament.

The New Testament and the Gospel tells us the story of man's redemption from the fall, from sin and Satan's rule. It tells us the story of how God, in the maturity of time, overturned Satan's legal authority over this world, and reclaimed the world and all the nations of the world for God and His Kingdom through the victory of the Cross of Calvary, the Blood of the Lamb, and Jesus' resurrection from the grave over sin, Satan and the world!

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Divine history of God's restoration plan of creation. The Gospel of Jesus Christ restored humanity's purpose and God's plan in creation. Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ the human race can once again take in his position and purpose for which God created him, namely:

1. To become part of the family of God through regeneration. Joh 1:12: *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."* Ultimately, to become part of the Bride of Christ and to reign with Him in eternity. Rom 8:16,17: *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, .."* Rev 21:9: *"Then one of the seven angels ... came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.""*
2. To partake of the image of God, and to become more and more like Jesus through the crisis and process of heart purification and sanctification. Rom 8:29: *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."*
3. To reach and win the world for Christ, and to establish and expand the Kingdom of God on earth through the Church. Act 1:8 *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*
4. To represent God in this world through our lives and our witness, through the indwelling and the control of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

I want to expand slightly on this point. In 1 Co 6:19 we read: *"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"* Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, do we as Christians really understand what God is telling us here?! Do we really understand what it means that the Holy Spirit lives within us?

My observation is that many, if not most Christians are completely indifferent to this fact. It does not make any difference to them whether the Holy Spirit lives within them or not! How sad! The result is that they are not only completely oblivious to their position in Christ, but they have no power in their Christian lives and they make no impact on this world!

Dear friend in Christ, the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Tri-une God lives within you! He is not there far away in heaven! He is within you! God is representing Himself to the world through you! You have God's heavenly power at your disposal here on earth! The authority of God over Satan, sin, and the world, have been delegated to you through the indwelling Holy Spirit here on earth!

When Christians begin to understand and appreciate something about representing God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in their lives, many things in this world will change. Firstly, Christians themselves will change - their conduct will change, their conversations will change, their perspectives will change, their priorities will change, even their dress, appearances, and lifestyles will change. In short, the

entire way they represent themselves to this world will change, for they will be representing God. Secondly, people's lives will change because the authority of God will be going out from them.

5. The fifth position and purpose for which God created humans that we can once again take in through the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to rule and have dominion over sin, the world, and Satan and his kingdom. In Rom 8:2 we read: *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."* And Rom 8:31: *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"* And Rom 8:37: *"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."*

Paul Billheimer describes it like this: "The universe, including this planet, was created for one purpose: to provide a suitable habitation for the human race. The human race was created in the image and likeness of God for one purpose: to provide an eternal companion for the Son. After the fall and promise of redemption through the coming Messiah, the Messianic race was born and nurtured to bring in the Messiah. And the Messiah came for one intent and only one: to give birth to His Church, thus obtaining His Bride. The Church, then - the called out body of redeemed mankind - turns out to be the central object, the goal, not only of mundane history but of all that God has been doing in all realms, from all eternity."²

"The center of history is not its great empires like Egypt, Babylon, Greece, or Rome, nor their modern counterparts such as Russia, China, the United States of America, or any other which may yet appear. To locate the centre of history one must bypass all these vast empires and the glittering names associated with them and find his way to a tiny land called the navel of the earth, the geographical center of the world. And in that tiny land is a tiny hill called Calvary, where two thousand years ago a Man named Jesus was lifted up to die. And this writer submits that that tiny hill in that tiny land is the center of all history, not only of this world, but of all the countless galaxies and island universes of outer space from eternity to eternity."³

Let us now briefly look at the big picture of God's restoration plan for the individual. As much as God has a plan for the restoration of the world from the fall, God has a restoration plan for the individual Christian. It is important that the Christian should see and understand this big picture.

God's restoration plan for the Christian

One of the greatest misunderstandings among Christians is the belief that apart from eternal life, which is only a distant and long term advantage, the main purpose and advantage of being a Christian is to improve my quality of life and personal circumstances here on earth. The Corinthian church was the first church to believe this error. For we read in 1 Co 4:8 that Paul admonishes the Corinthians: *"You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us; and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!"* However, in contrast, the apostles had a different experience of Christianity here on earth: *"For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men."* 1 Co 4:9.

Although it is true that being a Christian brings great rewards here on earth, this should never be the Christian's focus. The fact of the matter is that our real reward will only be revealed in heaven, and the main purpose of our earthly life is preparation for Eternity! Every Christian is in God's Eternity University, and here on earth we are being shaped and equipped for Heaven! We are being trained and prepared to become the Bride of Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Furthermore, there are seven major campuses of God's Eternity University here on earth. Although all these campuses teach the same subjects, they specialise in one of the following teaching methods: Suffering, Tribulation, Trials, Adversity, Failure, Temptation and Persecution! During your earthly Christian life you will be studying on one or more of these campuses if you want to qualify for a management position in heaven.

On one occasion I heard a speaker say: "A Christian learns nothing from tribulation." Strangely, when I opened my Bible I found an entire book on the subject of tribulation—the book of Job—the only subject in the Bible on which an entire Bible book of 42 chapters was written! Rom 5:3,4 says: *"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."*

The fact of the matter is that a Christian learns little on a spiritual level except through tribulation. I have identified seven exams that God wants every Christian to pass in order to be fully equipped for heaven—and every one of these exams are to be passed on one of the campuses of God's Eternity University as previously mentioned. These are Exam 1: Regeneration; Exam 2: Deliverance, Heart Purification and the Fullness of the Holy Spirit; Exam 3: The Process of Sanctification; Exam 4: Calling into Service; Exam 5: Fruitfulness in Service; Exam 6: Overcoming and Conquering in service; Exam 7: Eternal and Heavenly Management.

However, let us move our focus back to the centre of history, namely Calvary.

The fact and truth of the redemption

The fact of the matter is simply that on the Cross of Calvary Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, died a substitutory death in your and my place, and in place of the entire world, through which God legally redeemed

mankind from the penalty as well as the power of Satan, sin and the world. Through the shedding of His Blood there is now forgiveness, cleansing from, and victory over sin, Satan, and the world; and through His resurrection from the grave He destroyed the sting of death, securing the victory over Satan who held the power of death, providing eternal life for every person in the whole world, who is willing to accept it by faith.

This is a simple fact that I'm not even going to try and prove to anyone. There is an overwhelming resource of evidence to this fact as well as millions of people all over the past 2000 years, and millions all over the world living today who will experientially testify to this truth.

The fact of the matter is that Satan is a legally defeated foe! The fact of the matter is that Satan has been legally stripped of his power. The fact of the matter is that Satan has legally no power over a child of God!

How then is it possible that a child of God can be under Satanic attack and oppression?

The enforcement of the redemption

This is the area where we as Christians often fail. We fail to understand our role in the spiritual realm with regard to the enforcement of God's Kingdom on earth. Remember the Kingdom of God on earth is not a physical Kingdom - it is a spiritual Kingdom. Jesus said to Pilate: *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."* (Joh 18:36) In other words, this battle will never be won in the physical realm - it will only be won in the spiritual realm.

We witness, we preach, we plant churches, we hold gospel rallies, we spread the Gospel - and all these things are vitally important - but all these activities are done in the physical realm. The most important of all - enforcing the victory of the Cross in the spiritual realm, we neglect or omit all together. This can be done only through prayer. The redemption victory of the Cross is implemented and enforced in prayer. The victory on the mission field is won or lost in prayer.

I know this sounds very simplistic. Theoretically, or shall I say, theologically, we all know this, and we do pray! We believe that all results in our mission fields are the consequence of prayer, and I am not belittling our current prayer efforts. In evangelical circles one often hears the plea, we must pray more, we must pray more. But the secret is not to pray more - the secret is to pray more effectively! The secret is to pray in such a way that I know when I have prayed, that something has happened in the spiritual realm and my prayers are being answered.

I am asking again, why do Christians pray so little? Well, let me speak for myself. For the last couple of years until God intervened in my prayer life, prayer was hard work to me! Let me be honest with you, I didn't really look forward to my prayer time because I experienced it as a spiritual exercise draining my energy, with very little or no visible results. Prayer was a laborious effort to me, trying to persuade God to do things I believed was His will to do. I knew prayer was important, and reminded myself continually of the parable of the persistent widow Jesus told that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. So I persisted in prayer - but I must be honest, it was not a pleasure - until now.

So, I really fully understand why Christians pray so little. I fully understand why church prayer meetings are empty! I myself withdrew from many a prayer gathering because I experienced it as a boring and laborious religious exercise with little or no visible results.

Dear friends in Christ, when we pray as God intended prayer to be, it should be a spiritual event characterised by power, exhilaration, joy, adventure, fulfilment, victory - and results! Every time we pray - something should happen as a result somewhere - even though we may not know about it - we should be experiencing it in our spirits! It is an event that we should be looking forward to every day. It is an event that we should be looking forward to in great anticipation. We should be experiencing something happening in the spiritual realm every time we pray. We should experience being effective in the spiritual realm.

We may not always see the immediate results in the physical realm - in fact sometimes the satanic attacks in the physical realm may intensify around us because Satan is not going to accept defeat without a fight! But we should always experience the immediate results in the spiritual realm! We should experience victory over Satan and his kingdom in the spiritual realm over our families and ministries, over the people we pray for, over the mission fields we pray for - and we should expect to see spiritual breakthroughs!

So, what is the secret? The secret is knowing how to enforce the redemption and victory of the Cross of Calvary in our own lives, that of our families, our fields of service, and the world around us through prayer!

God will never violate the sovereignty of mankind, because He created us in His own image, in other words, like God - with a sovereign WILL, INTELLECT, and EMOTION of our own! Adam and Eve sinned by an act of their own Will, Intellect and Emotion! Furthermore, He appointed man to rule the earth, and He has never retracted that command! In the same way we have to engage our own Will, Intellect and Emotion to implement and enforce this legal victory over Satan and sin in our own lives and the world around us!

The scope of the Christian's authority

You will remember that in the previous chapter we said that Satan and his demons are active on legal as well as illegal territory. By now we all understand that Satan can be overcome when he operates illegally. But what about legal territory? Can I overcome and stop him on his own legal ground?

This is a very interesting question, because although we have said that Satan has a legal right to operate where elements of sin, the flesh, and the occult are present, he always only has a limited legal right. Satan will always occupy an illegal area pretending that he has a full legal right to be there. However, there are areas where I only have to defend, while in other where I have to attack.

Here is an example of defence. If one of my children becomes involved in drugs or alcohol and is living a licentious lifestyle, Satan has a legal right in his or her life, but only a limited right. His right is limited by the fact that as my child's father, I possess God's authority over my child. Satan has no right in my child's life on the basis that I have dedicated my child to God at birth and my child is under my priestly authority. Therefore, Satan only has a limited right in my child's life in so far as he or she has yielded to his pressure. But I can negate that right on the basis of my authority in Christ, and my authority over my child.

Here is an example of attack. On what basis can I challenge Satan's right in an area or mission field where Satan and sin reigns supreme? For example, the lawlessness and licentiousness in the my child's school, or the location God sent me to preach the Gospel? On the ground of Calvary I can challenge and oppose Satan's right in any place on earth - on the strength of my faith! Joh 3:16 says *"For God so loved **the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* The victory on Calvary was won for the whole world and every person on this earth has the right to hear and respond to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, this where faith comes into the picture.

The scope of the Christian's authority over Satan is limited only by our faith. The fact of the matter is that Satan and his kingdom was legally defeated at the Cross of Calvary through the precious Blood of the Lamb and this victory is a reality and absolute fact that cannot be disputed or undone by all the forces of hell!

The Vehicle of Enforcing the Redemption

This finally brings us to the vehicle through which the redemption is enforced, namely faith. How can I implement the victory of redemption in my life and in the world? By faith! The Bible says that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb 11:1) Faith is something dynamic; faith is much more dynamic than positive thinking! Positive thinking tries to think something unreal into reality through the power of my own brain on the basis of nothing. Faith is transforming an unseen fact into reality through the power of the Living God on the basis of His infallible Word! Yet, people still choose to exercise positive thinking rather than faith. How foolish!

Faith in God and His Word changes what previously appeared fiction to me into reality. Faith changes the unreal into reality! *"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible."* (Heb 11:3) *"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days."* (Heb 11:30) And so we can continue quoting examples all day!

Without faith I will accomplish nothing in prayer - in fact prayer without faith is like religion without God. It has no substance - it is void of its primary ingredient - it is purely a religious ritual. In fact, thinking about it carefully, one can actually conclude that prayer without faith is idolatry! It is better not to pray at all than to pray without faith.

Prayer is faith in action - and faith is prayer in action! That's why a soul is saved and born again in prayer. That's why a Christian is filled by the Holy Spirit in prayer. That's why a person is Divinely healed in prayer. That's why spiritual victories are occurring in prayer. That's why spiritual warfare is won or lost in prayer. That's why the world is changed through prayer! In fact, only now do I really understand that nothing changes in the Christian's spiritual world outside of prayer!

Faith and prayer are inseparably connected to each other - they cannot be separated. If you want to know how strong your faith is - measure it by your prayer life. And if you want to know how effective your prayer life is - measure it by your faith.

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Heb 11:6)

In summary then, on the Cross of Calvary Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, redeemed the human race from the penalty as well as the power of Satan, sin and the world. Through the shedding of His precious Blood and His resurrection from the grave He secured the victory over Satan, sin and the world - and I believe this with my entire heart!

I have surrendered my entire life to this fact - and if this fact fails, I fail with it! If the Word of God falls, I fall with it! With Esther I proclaim - I shall enter into the presence of the King to intercede for a lost world - and if I perish, I perish! What about you?

Notes:

1. Destined For The Throne by Paul E Billheimer, page 15
2. Destined For The Throne by Paul E Billheimer, page 22
3. Destined For The Throne by Paul E Billheimer, page 21

Part 2

The Battlefield of Prayer

Chapter 4

Preparing Myself for Battle

Now we are moving into the preparation phase for battle. Remember this book is about prayer warfare. We have acknowledged that we are engaged in a war, and we have also said that every Christian is involved in this war - whether he likes it or not, whether he acknowledges it or not! The Christian life in this world is a war against Satan and sin and it will be so until Jesus comes.

The very first thing a soldier must do before he leaves for the battle field is to prepare for war, and so must the Christian. There are four preparations a Christian must do to prepare for war, the first is to report for duty, the second is to confirm my allegiance, the third is to take up my rank in God's army, and the fourth is to put on my armour.

1. Reporting for duty - Confirming my relationship with Christ

1 Jn 1:7 says: *"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."*

Before I can engage in prayer warfare I must be sure about my relationship with Christ. The first and most basic thing I have to be sure about, is my salvation; secondly I must have a pure heart. There must be no unconfessed sin in my life, otherwise Satan will take me out straight away. Therefore, before I engage in prayer warfare I must take time to humble myself before God and confess and repent from any known or conscious sin in my life.

Maybe I should share a word of warning on this subject. Remember that Satan is a sly foe. If he cannot keep you from reaching the top of the spiritual victory mountain, he will try and push you across the other side. He knows your and my weak spots better than we often know ourselves. There are especially two ways he seeks to render a Christian powerless in prayer. The first is to blind a person to his own sin. He will try to rationalise your sin away through righteous reasoning, making you believe that it was not actually your fault, it was actually the other person or party's fault. If there is unconfessed and unrepentant sin in your life, your prayer-life will be ineffective.

But secondly, and this is quite common among well meaning dedicated and sensitive Christians. If he cannot keep you from confessing and repenting from your sin, he will try and bring you under a false conviction of sin. He will try and make you introspective - that means looking inwards towards yourself - and all you see is your own (and others') fallibility, your own (and others') failures, your own (and others') inability to please God, while he pours over you either a false sense of guilt or a false sense of humility before God.

Remember, forgiveness and cleansing, and a right standing before God is obtained by focussing on Jesus and the Cross through (repentant) faith - with the emphasis on faith - not by looking inwards, not by the amount and intensity of my tears and repentance! This is a tactic of Satan to keep you occupied with yourself all the time, while diverting your focus away from Jesus Christ and the victory of the Cross of Calvary. So, when you need to, and have confessed your sin, don't dwell on your sin - move quickly to the power of the Blood and the Empty Grave - otherwise Satan will keep you ineffective in prayer-warfare!

What would you say is the greatest sin? Murder, idolatry? The Lord recently showed sin to me through a different lens. I have always thought I was relatively holy because I do not swear, I do not smoke and I do not drink; I do not watch TV soaps and I teach my children to switch off the television when unholy programs and content are screened. However, God lately revealed sin to me in a new light. God showed me that every symptom and nursing of inflexibility, insensitiveness, impatience, in my life, were manifestations of the sin of self-love. Every symptom and nursing of resistance, insubmissiveness, discontentment or rebelliousness, were manifestations of the sin of rebellion. Every symptom and nursing of a feeling of hurt, defensiveness or touchiness, were manifestations of the sin of pride. And every symptom and nursing of negativism, dejection and depression, were manifestations of the sin of unbelief.

All sins are equally abominable in God's sight, but I believe these four sins are at the root of the lack of power in the Church of Jesus Christ: self-love or self-interest, pride, rebellion and unbelief!

I want to share just a few thoughts about some of these sins with you.

In Heb 11:6 we read: *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."* And in Rom 14:23 we read: *"for whatever is not from faith is sin."* Most Christians are quite content when they have sufficient faith for their own salvation, but few Christians have sufficient faith to claim their families and the world around them for Christ!

We tend to treat our lack of faith as human weakness, and sometimes we even boast about our lack of faith when we utter doubtful and negative words about other people or the world around us! We don't see unbelief for what it is - namely sin! Unbelief, or let me rather use the term 'lack of faith' - is sin - and I am of the opinion that lack of faith is the mother sin and greatest sin of all sins!

Unbelief is the sin I have to confess to God more frequently than any other sin. Unbelief, or lack of faith, limits the power of God in and through our lives. Until we begin to treat lack of faith as sin, the power of God will be limited in and through our lives, including our prayer lives. When we confess our unbelief as sin, we will find God at work in our lives.

But another great (Christian) sin is the sin of rebelliousness. In 1 Sa 15:22,23 we read what Samuel said to Saul when he disobeyed the command of God: *"Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. ..."*

I want to give you a short testimony. For a long time we were plagued by a shortage of income and a demonic financial oppression to the extent that it literally almost brought my work to a standstill. I didn't have transport; ESKOM had cut our electricity because of unpaid bills; my computer needed repairs I could not afford; my service provider issued me with a defective cell phone when I renewed my contract and refused to replace it; my internet reception was too poor to get my work done, with the result that I was paying for a data contract I could not use; we could not mail out our newsletter because of a lack of funds; my wife Nansie's employer was to my mind abusing her by making her work long hours for inadequate remuneration; Nansie's number of children attending her after-school had dropped by more than 50% from the previous year resulting into an even greater financial crisis for us; we simply didn't have enough income to cover our monthly expenses and many a bill went unpaid.

One morning during my prayer time, my spirit was once again very heavy as a result of our financial situation. The Lord revealed to me that there was rebellion in my heart and that this was limiting God's power in my life. There was rebellion in my heart towards my wife's employer and the institutions that contributed to our financial suffering, but most of all, there was rebellion in my heart towards God because He had not yet come through for us financially.

I broke before God and confessed my rebelliousness, and I forgave everyone that contributed to our financial suffering. I forgave my wife's employer. I forgave ABSA bank. I forgave Nokeng Municipality. I forgave Vodacom. But most important, with all respect, I forgave God! This was difficult, because I knew God was not at fault - but I nevertheless had to forgive Him to set myself free!

King David understood what it meant to submit unconditionally to the authority of God. We read in 2 Sa 16:9-11: *"Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, 'Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!' But the king said, 'What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'" And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him."*

Who do you have to forgive today? To whom are you still pointing a finger? Perhaps you also have to forgive God. Maybe you have to forgive a criminal or someone who has harmed you. Maybe you have to forgive your husband or wife, or ex-husband or ex-wife, or perhaps your children, or maybe you have to forgive the government, or a political party or leader, or the system, or maybe you have to forgive apartheid.

Who do you have to forgive? Until you have allowed God to cleanse you from every shade of insubmissiveness or rebelliousness in your heart, the power of God will be limited in your prayer-life.

The third sin I want to lift out is the sin of pride. I never realised that pride was a factor in my life until God sent me through His school of humility. One trial and failure upon the other struck me to the extent that I felt God had forsaken me. At the time I found it difficult to understand what God was doing in my life, until I realised that the thing that hurt most, was my ego! If God is dealing with your ego, don't resist His dealings in your life—He is preparing you for higher service!

It is time that we confess our negativism, depressiveness and depression as the sin of unbelief. It is time that we confess our resentment, self-pity and touchiness as the sin of pride. It is time that we confess our insubmissiveness and rebelliousness towards the wrongs in the world around us as the sin of rebellion. For as long as we do not allow God to deal with these sins in our lives, the power of God will be limited in and through our lives and prayer-lives. When we are honest with God and confess our weaknesses as sins to God, we will experience the power of the Holy Spirit in and through our prayer-lives.

2. Taking the oath of allegiance - Confirming my covenant with Christ

The second preparation a Christian must do before he enters into prayer warfare is to confirm his allegiance to Christ.

God is a covenantal God! This means that God has chosen to arrange His relationship with mankind in terms of a covenant. Another word for a covenant is a contract. The Bible is divided into two covenants or contracts, the Old and the New. We read about God's covenant with Noah. Then we read about God's covenant with Abraham and his offspring, Israel. We read about the new covenant especially in the book of Hebrews. For example in Heb 10:16: *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"* and in Heb 9:15: *"And for this reason (Jesus) is the Mediator of*

the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."

The important thing about the new covenant we have to understand is that it has two sides like every other contract! God's side and man's side! God's side of the covenant was fulfilled on Calvary and sealed in His own blood. However, before this covenant comes fully into force in a person's life, he not only has to accept it - but he has to be fully committed thereto! I have to make a covenant with God! God wants me to stand in a covenantal relationship with Him!

What does that mean? That simply means that I have to commit my entire life unconditionally to Him! God expects of me a complete, total and unconditional surrender of my entire life! God expects of me an oath of allegiance!

Where do I read that in the Bible? Well, apart from the fact that this truth runs like a golden thread right through the Bible, one of the most explicit verses in the Bible we find in Rom 12:1: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."* We also find this truth in the first commandment: *"You must love the Lord your God with ALL your heart."*

God hates a half hearted religion. This is the reason why he vomited the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:16 out of His mouth. My covenant with God prevents me from falling away when temptation, persecution, trouble and hard times come. My covenant with God prevents me from putting my hand against the plough and looking back. My covenant with God prevents me from doubting the love and grace of God when His face is hidden from me for a time. My covenant with God prevents me from shying away when He sends me into the lion's den or the fiery furnace. My covenant with God makes me faithful unto death! My covenant with God qualifies me for study and training on one of the campuses of God's Eternal University. My covenant with God qualifies me for war against Satan and his kingdom!

Have you entered into a covenant with God? Is your covenant with God intact? You have to confirm your covenant with God in preparation for war with Satan before you go into battle, or you may be tempted to yield to surrender! War with Satan is no Sunday School picnic!

3. Taking up my rank - Taking up my position in Christ

There are two positions a Christian must take up in Christ Jesus. Your position with God determines your rank in the spiritual realm. It determines your spiritual authority! The higher the rank of a police officer, the greater his authority to uphold the law. It's the same in the spiritual world. The higher a believer's rank with God, the greater his authority over Satan, sin, and the world.

My first position

The first position I have to take up is my position as crucified with Christ.

You will remember that we said earlier there are two wars, civil and conventional war. To ensure you are not involved in a civil war, you have to take up your position in Christ as crucified with Him. Let me emphasise, to be born again and to be crucified with Christ are two different things! It is possible to be a born again child of God without having the testimony of being crucified with Christ, and I will dare to say that in my opinion the majority of Christians fall into this category. It is sad to observe that many Christians have no idea what it means to be crucified with Christ.

Before you are able to take in a position of conventional war, you must have the testimony in your heart that you are indeed crucified with Christ!

Paul testifies in Gal 2:20: *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."* What is Paul saying here? Paul says that his old sinful nature, the nature with which he was born, that nature that continually wants to satisfy his sinful desires - has been crucified with Christ. Paul says he is dead to sin and the world of sin, because his sinful nature is no longer in control of his life. He now lives in victory over temptation, the world, and sin because Jesus Christ is in control of his life. He is in fact free to say no to Satan and sin!

Are you really free? Are you free to say NO to Satan and sin? If not, you are not ready for prayer warfare - you are still engaged in civil war. You are ineffective in prayer.

If you cannot testify that you are crucified with Christ, I briefly want to explain to you how you can receive this testimony. There are basically three conditions a Christian has to comply with in order to receive this testimony. The first is a radical and complete turning away from sin. (We have covered this with preparation 1.) You will never receive this testimony unless you are prepared to break with every known and conscious sin in your life!

The second is a total and unconditional surrender of every area of your life to God for His glory, purpose, and use. (We have covered this with preparation 2.) Many people pray, Lord, give me the Holy Spirit in all His fullness, but God says, my child, you already have the Holy Spirit in all His fullness. Now give yourself to the Holy Spirit in all your fullness! That's the simple secret of a Spirit-filled life and obtaining the testimony of being crucified with Christ.

But there is a third condition I have to comply with in order to receive the testimony of being crucified with Christ - and this is faith. This testimony is received by a simple act of faith in prayer. Faith is the catalyst. Faith changes the theology into reality. How do I know I have been crucified with Christ? By faith! Simply and purely by faith on the basis of the Word of God!

If you need to, settle this issue with God straight away. Maybe you have never understood this message as clearly before and this is your first time. Or maybe you want to settle this issue with God by renewal. Do it now in silent prayer. I repeat, you've got to confess and break with every conscious sin in your life. Secondly, you have to make a full and unconditional surrender of your entire life to God and enter into a covenant of faithfulness with Him. Thirdly, you have to take the promises of God in His Word with regard to the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the crucified life - by faith. (For example in Rom 8:1,2, Ef 5:18, Gal 5:16, Gal 2:17).

If you can testify with Paul that you are crucified with Christ, then fasten that position with God in prayer by renewal right now.

My second position

I said earlier that there are two positions a Christian has to take up in Christ Jesus. The first was my position as crucified with Christ, and the second is my position as raised and conquered with Christ. Although it is true that you and I will only be bodily raised at the second coming of Christ, we have already been spiritually raised. Dear Christian brother and sister, as surely as you have been crucified with Christ, you have also been raised with Christ! Let's examine the Scriptures on this issue:

Rom 6:4 *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Rom 7:4 *Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another; to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.*

Col 2:11,12 *In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

Col 3:1 *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.*

But do you know what? You were not only raised with Christ, you are also seated with Christ in heaven!

Eph 2:4-6 *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, **and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus ...***

How do I take up my position as raised and conquered with Christ? Once again, by faith! Simply by faith!

What is the implication of this fact? The implication is that as a Christian crucified and raised with Christ, I have authority over Satan and his demons in the all-victorious Name of Jesus Christ!

4. Putting on the armour of God

Now my armour is ready to put on. In fact my armour has already been put on, it is simply a matter of checking everything before I move into battle.

Let's briefly go through the checklist of Eph 6:13-18:

1. The Belt of Truth (verse 14).

The waist girded with truth means that I am fully committed to the truth of God's Word. I fully accept the whole Bible as the infallible Word of God and every promise of God, and I reject everything that is in conflict with the Word. Is your belt fitted? If not, Satan will knock you out of battle quickly!

2. The Breastplate of Righteousness (verse 14).

The breastplate of righteousness means that my standing before God is based on the righteousness of Jesus Christ through the Cross of Calvary and the Blood of the Lamb. I don't come before God on the basis of my own righteousness, therefore Satan has no basis upon which to accuse me before God of any unrighteousness. My sins are forgiven and my heart washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Have you put on your breastplate? If not, the darts of Satan will penetrate your heart and destroy your standing before God!

3. The Boots of the Gospel of Peace (verse 15).

My feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace means that I am ready and available to be God's messenger and witness, and to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ into all the world. Are your boots on? If not, don't worry, you'll probably not come into conflict with Satan! But you will also have missed God's plan for your life, and if you make it to heaven (which is questionable anyhow - because this reflects on the genuineness of your conversion), there will be no reward and no crown for you.

4. The Shield of Faith (verse 16).

In the battlefield you will surely come under Satan's attack and he will fire his darts of doubt, temptation, fear, intimidation, oppression, depression, anger, failure, and disease at you. Faith is your shield. Without the shield of faith, his darts will certainly wound or fell you down. Is your shield in hand?

5. The Helmet of Salvation (verse 17).

The helmet of salvation protects my thoughts and my emotions. Where the breastplate of righteousness protects my standing before God, the helmet of salvation protects my status before God. The helmet of salvation involves my position as crucified and raised with Christ as discussed in the previous section. Is your helmet fitted?

6. The Sword of the Spirit (verse 17).

The Sword of the Spirit is defined for us by Scripture itself, which is the Word of God. The Sword of the Spirit is the only part of my armour that is a weapon of attack! The only effective weapon of attack against Satan is the Word of God! Forget about complaining, forget about arguing, forget about shouting, forget about striking, forget about toy-toying, forget about dancing, petitioning, marching or demonstrating! When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, he defended himself with the Word of God! Only the Word of God! Do you know your Bible; can you use your Sword? May God help you to use your Sword effectively.

Now we are ready to move into battle.

Chapter 5

Moving Into Battle

Moving into battle against Satan and his demons is no light thing. As we have seen in Chapter 2, Knowing Your Enemy, we must not take up Satan and his demons lightly. The fact that they have been conquered on Calvary does not render them powerless, and until God finally judges Satan as we read in Revelation 20, he will be a strong foe to reckon with and we will need wisdom, knowledge and power to overcome him in our lives and the world.

I have tried different tactics in my battle against Satan with varying results. However, one of the greatest challenges in our warfare against Satan is to remain focussed on Jesus Christ, our Victor and Lord. One of the most successful strategies of Satan in spiritual warfare is to get Christians so occupied with himself that they lose their focus on Jesus and become demon-focussed. That's the reason why some people say, 'don't look for a demon under every bush.'

The fact of the matter is that there IS a demon under every bush - we just don't know about them - but believe me, they are there! However, our challenge is to be successful in spiritual warfare without becoming devil-conscious. The moment that happens to you, you will be unable to keep it up in spiritual warfare because your focus is in the wrong place. It is like balancing a walking stick on the point of your finger. When you put your focus on the bottom of the stick where the contact with your finger is, the stick will never balance. You have to focus on the top of the stick to be able to balance it.

I prayed much about this and I asked God to reveal to me how to be successful in spiritual and prayer warfare without becoming devil-conscious and having to challenge Satan and his demons face to face. God, in His grace then revealed the strategies to me I am going to share with you today.

I don't often address Satan directly, I seldom talk to him directly. Although I believe there is a place and a time to do this, I don't recommend anyone do this lightly unless you have experience in spiritual warfare. Neither should anybody ever belittle or slander Satan. We read in Jud 1:9: *"Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'"* You must treat Satan with respect, even though he is your enemy.

There are two strategies I use very effectively in battle against Satan and his kingdom, and I believe that if the Church of Jesus Christ only use these strategies, huge breakthroughs will occur in families, mission fields, and this world.

The first strategy I use very effectively in battle against Satan and his kingdom is praise and worship.

The power and value of Praise and Worship

Paul Billheimer makes the following statement in his book, *Destined For The Throne*:

"A program of prayer without faith is powerless. The missing element that is necessary to energize prevailing prayer that binds and casts out Satan is triumphant faith. And the missing element that is necessary to energize triumphant faith is praise - perpetual, purposeful, aggressive praise. Praise is the highest form of prayer because it combines petition with faith. Praise is the spark plug of faith. It is the one thing needed to get faith airborne, enabling it to soar above the deadly miasma of doubt. Praise is the detergent which purifies faith and purges doubt from the heart. The secret of answered prayer is faith without doubt (Mark 11:23). And the secret of faith without doubt is praise, triumphant praise, continuous praise, praise that is a way of life. This is the solution to the problem of a living faith and successful prayer."

"The secret of success in overcoming Satan and qualifying for the throne is a massive program of effective prayer. The secret of effective prayer is a massive program of praise."¹

Paul Billheimer further states: "To be most effective, then, praise must be massive, continuous, a fixed habit, a full time occupation, a diligently pursued vocation, a total way of life."²

I must be honest with you, I still have a far way to go in God's school of praise and worship. I have previously thought that the purpose of praise was to make me feel good when I worship. I then thought, no, surely that can't be—it must be to make God feel good. However, it is neither of the two. True praise is a manifestation of faith!

God has been dealing with me on the subject of praise lately, and I must admit, I have not yet passed this subject in God's Eternity University.

A while ago I had to take my daughter to the bank to open a bank account and then to the university campus to arrange for the payment of her study bursary. When we arrived at the bank they informed us that there was a

corruption warning against her name and that they could not open an account for her. Apparently there was an attempt of identity theft against her ID number. We were living some 30 km out of town and I didn't have a car so I had to borrow someone else's vehicle every time I wanted to go to town. The bank promised to phone us as soon as the case had been clarified.

They phoned the next day to say that we could come in and open the account, but when we arrived and after waiting a long time, the system wouldn't allow the administrator access to her name and we once again had to return home purpose unaccomplished. I felt disgusted that we once again had to travel all this distance and waste precious time for nothing, and I jumped up and walked out of the office with an attitude just short of being rude.

The following day the bank phoned us again to say that the problem had been solved and we could come in to sign. From the bank we drove to the university campus some 20 km further to find out that the admin office closed early due to the 2010 soccer match at Loftus, and once again we had to return home purpose unaccomplished. By this time my blood wanted to boil but I knew it was going to be an exercise in futility to yield thereto.

On our way home we collected our post and this was just the cherry on the frustration cookie. Three of the newsletters with invitations to my seminar was mailed to our post box in stead of to the addressee. My subconscious kicked into overdrive and I remembered the boxes and boxes full of undelivered Christian Educator magazines that were returned to us undelivered, some as much as two and more years after we posted them. At that time my sanctification hydraulic breaks failed and I let out my frustration steam against the lack of efficiency and service delivery in our country.

At the time I thought my reaction was quite justified, but soon afterwards the Lord began talking to me in spirit, and I realised that I have just failed the praise test for the umptieth time!

A friend of mine once told me about a friend of his who is a perfect example of continuous praise as a way of live. He told me that this brother continually and constantly praised God in his conversation. This is an example of how he speaks (the example is my own): He said: "I had to go to town today to take my car in for a service—praise the Lord! When I received the bill I nearly fell on my back—it was R10,000—praise the Lord! On my way back home I had a puncture—praise the Lord! When I got back home at 10 that night I discovered that my wife was sick in bed with flue—praise the Lord!"

When I thought about this brother's example in relation to my own experience I felt guilty and wished I could rather tell you my story as follows: "When we arrived at the bank again the next day, they again could not help us and we had to come back once again the following day –praise the Lord! When we arrived at the campus on our third trip in to town the admin office was closed due to the soccer and we had to return 50km back home purpose unaccomplished—praise the Lord! When I collected my mail three letters were posted to myself in stead of to the addressee—praise the Lord!"

Some say we must not praise the Lord for adversity as this amounts to giving praise to the work of the devil. However, it is important that we understand that we do not praise God **FOR** the adversity (although there is a time to do this), but we praise God **IN** (or in spite of) adversity. I should praise God, not primarily for **what** He is doing, but for **Who** He is! I should praise God in success as well as in failure—in health as well as in sickness—in prosperity as well in adversity!

Why is praise so effective?

Let's just briefly look at the reasons behind the effectiveness of praise in prayer and spiritual warfare. Have you ever wondered why praise and worship is such an important element of the Sunday service? Have you thought about the reason why praise and worship changes the atmosphere in a church gathering or Christian meeting? Well, let me try and explain.

Firstly, praise and worship is an expression and proclamation of the Lordship and reign of Jesus Christ in the spiritual realm. As we have seen in Chapter 2, Knowing Your Enemy, demons are eager church goers! Demons are everywhere where Christians are! In fact there are more demons where Christians are than in any other place because they have very little work to do elsewhere. Where sin reigns they have no work to do. Every empty seat in the church is filled by a demon - Bible-believing and evangelical churches are more well attended. Every prayer meeting is well attended by demons. Every Christian home is covered by demons - especially where there is a faithful and praying mother or father, husband or wife.

What do they do there? They try to interfere, block, blind, divert, dampen, mislead, and tempt in any possible way in order to obstruct the truth of God's Word and render prayer powerless. Demons steal Christian's faith by creating a deadly atmosphere in worship, prayer, and in my quite time.

What does praise and worship do? Firstly, praise and worship generates faith, as we have seen in the quotation from Paul Billheimer. But secondly, as we will learn about in more detail in the following strategy, the proclamation of the authority, Lordship, reign and victory of Jesus Christ through the Cross of Calvary and the

Blood of the Lamb is something demons can't endure! Where the Lordship of Jesus Christ is proclaimed in the spiritual realm they are rendered powerless! Where the Lordship of Jesus Christ is proclaimed demons flee - they cannot stand the atmosphere! That is why the atmosphere changes where Jesus Christ is praised and worshipped.

I want to share an example with you. If anyone of you attended or saw the DVD of the funeral service of previous State President P W Botha, this was a classic example. The funeral service was attended by previous State President Thabo Mbeki, government dignitaries and officials from various walks of life and opposing political views. The first part of the service was solemn, stiff and sombre. Then Dr Bahjat Batarseh, who was a guest speaker, began his address. The very first thing he did before he began speaking was to lead the audience in an evangelical worship song, "OH, the Blood of Jesus ..." - without any music! I think it was the very first time many of the audience even heard the song and obviously most of them did not even know what they were singing. But a miracle happened. The atmosphere changed immediately as hordes of demons fled the church building. The atmosphere melted and Dr Batarseh delivered a powerful Gospel message and even lead the audience in a sinners prayer to the glory of God!

Praise and worship is a most effective strategy in prayer- and spiritual warfare. When you read through the Psalms next time, watch out how often and effectively the Psalmists use praise and worship. Therefore, collect for yourself hymns of praise and worship to sing and pray during your prayer times.

However, I want to warn against a number of deceptions of the devil regarding praise and worship. One thing we must understand is that praise, worship and prayer are the three elements of Christianity that Satan fears and hates most, because there is no other element of Christianity that does more damage and is more dangerous to his kingdom than praise, worship and prayer. The reason for this is because where praise, worship and prayer are practised correctly, God is at work - the mighty right hand of God comes into action! For this reason there are no Christian activity that Satan opposes more than praise, worship and prayer. You will find that the areas of Christianity where the greatest satanic opposition, deception and demonic activity occur, are in the areas of praise, worship and prayer. It is in these three areas where all kinds of strange phenomena, such as falling, laughing, demonic speaking in tongues, and other strange things "in the Spirit" often occur. Satan is a master of deception and counterfeit - watch out and be warned! ³

In summary, if you are not sure how to act or react in a situation of demonic conflict, simply start praising the Lord. Right now, sing with me: "He is Lord, He is Lord, He has risen from the grave and He is Lord. Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord!"

Proclaiming the authority, victory, Lordship and reign of Jesus Christ in the spiritual realm.

The second strategy I use very effectively in prayer-warfare is audible proclamation of Biblical truth.

In Chapter 2, Knowing Your Enemy, we have learned that Satan and his demons dwell in the air around us and we cannot escape their presence while we are still here on earth. We have also learned that they can hear every word we say audibly. Our audible words therefore, play an important part in spiritual warfare. Our words can either open doors for Satan and his demons to use against us, or our words can block their activities and make them flee.

Like we have said before, every proclamation of the Lordship and authority of Jesus Christ in a particular area of conflict, will make demons flee. The proclamation of the authority, Lordship, reign and victory of Jesus Christ through the Cross of Calvary and the Blood of the Lamb is something demons cannot endure! Where the Lordship of Jesus Christ is proclaimed in the spiritual realm they are rendered powerless! Where the Lordship of Jesus Christ is proclaimed demons have to flee!

We can see the power of audible proclamation in various Biblical and practical situations. For example, in the Psalms we often read that the Psalmist proclaims the Name of God in public. Ps 22:22 for example says: "**I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.**" And in Ps 40:10: "**I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly.**" And in Rom 10:9 we read: "**if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**" And in Rev 12:11 we read: "**And they have overcome (conquered) him by means of the blood of the Lamb and by the utterance of their testimony, ..**" (Amplified)

There is power in the audible confession and proclamation of the Word and truth of God! From personal experience I can confirm to you that there is great power in audible proclamation of the Lordship and authority of Jesus Christ!

A classic example to me in the Word of God is contained in the story of Gideon in the book of Judges. I have just recently for the first time realised that Gideon and his 300 men did not have any weapons in their possession when they routed the Midianites. All they had in their hands were a trumpet, a pitcher and a torch. We read in Jdg

7:20-22: *"Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers; they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing; and they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled ..."*

Let us now answer a few further questions in this regard.

What is a proclamation?

The word proclaim means to cry aloud, to publish abroad, or to announce officially. A proclamation is an official notice given to the public. When a law comes into force, it becomes legal through proclamation in the Government Gazette. To proclaim a law means to bring it into enforcement. A new law is enforced through proclamation.

So when I proclaim the Lordship and reign of Jesus Christ, I enforce His Lordship and reign in the area of proclamation.

To whom do I have to proclaim?

Let's first say to whom I do not have to proclaim. I do not proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ to God. It is totally unnecessary to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ to Himself - He knows that - in fact He Himself is the Lord. I worship Him as Lord, yes, but I do not proclaim His Lordship unto Him. I proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the spiritual realm where Satan and his demons are the prime listeners. Although I do not address Satan and his demons by name, they are my main audience by simple virtue of their presence!

Where can I make such a proclamation?

In every area or person's life where Satan and his demons are operating illegally, or where the Lord has given me faith to take a satanic stronghold or demonic ground for Christ.

You will remember that we have previously said that Satan has been legally defeated. The fact of the matter is that he still has legal right to operate under certain circumstances. You will remember we have also said that the following give Satan legal right to operate in an area or a person's life:

- Sin, sinful practises, and sinful objects
- Occultic practises and objects

All satanic and demonic activity in the absence of the above are illegal activities. I may therefore proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every area or person where Satan and his demons are operating illegally. In addition I may proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every area or person where God has given me faith to take possession of for His Kingdom!

What authority do I have to make such a proclamation?

We have partially covered this aspect in Chapter 4 where we discussed taking up my position in Christ. You will remember that we said that my position in Christ determines my authority. The Christian has authority over Satan and his demons by virtue of his position in Christ. The Bible is crystal clear about this. Let's look at a few examples:

In Mar 6:7 we read: *"And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits."*

In Luk 10:17 we read: *"The seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name!"*

And in verse 19 Jesus says: *"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."*

In Eph 1:16-21 Paul prays for the Ephesian Christians as follows: *"I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. [For I always pray to] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that He may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation [of insight into mysteries and secrets] in the [deep and intimate] knowledge of Him, By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you **can know and understand** the hope to which He has called you, and how rich is His glorious inheritance in the saints (His set-apart ones), And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His **power in and for us** who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength, Which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His [own] right hand in the heavenly [places], **Far***

above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named [above every title that can be conferred], not only in this age and in this world, but also in the age and the world which are to come. (Amplified)

And in Rev 12:11 we read: *"And they have overcome (conquered) him by means of the blood of the Lamb and by the utterance of their testimony, ..."* (Amplified)

So then, when I proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ in a person's life or an area for which God has given me faith, I do so on the authority of my position in Christ Jesus!

What do I have to proclaim?

1. Firstly, I proclaim the basis of my authority. I call on the Blood of Jesus Christ - the Lamb of God. There are a lot of misgivings among Christians about pleading the Blood of Christ. Pleading the Blood of Jesus Christ is no magic phrase for protection.

When I call on the Blood of the Lamb, I proclaim that my relationship with, and as such my authority, is based on the Blood of Jesus Christ through whom I have been reconciled to God, saved, cleansed from my sins, and sanctified. I therefore do not confront Satan in my own strength or on the basis of my own righteousness or merits, but in the power of the living God and on the basis of Christ's righteousness through the Cross of Calvary! (You can of course only make this proclamation if it is both experientially and legally true in your life, otherwise you will have no authority over Satan.)

2. Secondly, I plead the Blood of the Lamb over the person or area of conflict. This person or area of conflict may not qualify for the protection of the Blood, as Satan may have a legal right to operate there or in his or her life, as explained earlier. However, I plead the Blood over that person or area on the basis of my own standing with Christ and on the principle of intercession. In other words I claim this person or area for Christ on the basis of my faith and authority in Christ.

What does it mean when I plead the Blood of the Lamb over someone else or an area? It means that I am making this proclamation on the basis of the Blood of Jesus Christ that flowed at Calvary for the sin of the whole world, and not on the basis of that person or area's own merits.

Envisage the subject of your intercession standing trial in a court of law. God is the judge. Satan is the prosecutor for the state (in his capacity as prince of this world) and you (as the intercessor on the authority of Christ) are the prosecutor for the accused. Satan wants this person found guilty and imprisoned for life, while you, as the intercessor, plead for this person's salvation, freedom and deliverance on the basis of the fact that Jesus Christ has paid his penalty with His own Blood.

3. Thirdly, I then proclaim and enforce:
 - The all victorious Name and the Lordship of Jesus Christ the Lord,
 - The victory of the Cross of Calvary,
 - The Blood of the Lamb, and
 - The empty grave

over the person, persons, area, or areas of conflict - in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

I do this proclamation loudly, aggressively, decisively, and purposefully, (as Gideon and his 300 men did when they routed the Midianites) and I use my hands and point them in the direction of the subject of my intercession, leaving no doubt to my audience that I literally mean every word I say and that I am enforcing this proclamation by faith in Jesus' Name! We read in the Gospels that when Jesus drove out demons from the demon possessed, He rebuked them. He addressed them aggressively and decisively.

What does it mean when I proclaim and enforce the all victorious Name and the Lordship of Jesus Christ the Lord over the person or area of conflict? Firstly, it means that on the basis of my authority in Christ, I refuse and bind any satanic and demonic activity in and over this person or area. I prohibit any demonic activity that can or will prevent or obstruct Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of God to have free access and reign in the person's life or area of conflict - without using these words. I am removing any demonic obstacle to, and releasing the perfect will of God over this person's life or area of conflict.

When I proclaim and enforce the victory of Calvary and the resurrection of Jesus from the grave, I am simply calling into action everything the Cross of Jesus Christ and the resurrection stand for in and over the person's life or area of conflict, prohibiting Satan and his demons to continue with any obstruction to the work and perfect will of God in the area of conflict. Even when I don't know what God's will for the person or object of my intercession is, the proclamation of the victory of Jesus Christ on Calvary removes any demonic hindrance and releases the perfect will of God over that person or area of conflict.

I can assure you, when you do this in faith, you will experience the power of God in your prayer! You will experience a release of any demonic oppression over you! You will experience that something is breaking in the spiritual realm! You will experience your spirit being lifted up with Christ and you will experience the victory of the

Cross in your own prayer-life! Prayer will become an uplifting and glorious experience and you can't wait for the next session of prayer to begin!

How often do I have to proclaim?

Firstly, let me ask the question, how many times do I have to pray about, or ask God for an answer on a subject? The answer is, until He has answered you, or you know what God's will in the matter is. So then, if you have prayed about a matter once and you know that it is God's will to grant your request, there is no need to continue asking God to answer your prayer. But that does not mean that God will immediately execute your request. Why is it that we often times do not receive an answer to our prayer immediately in spite of the fact that we know it is in God's will to grant our request?

In Dan 10:12,13 we read: *"Then (the angel) said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia."*

Here we can see that God heard Daniel's prayer immediately, but He could not immediately execute it because there was a spiritual war in progress. You see, more than often our prayers are not answered immediately although we know the will of God in the matter, because the battle first has to be won in the spiritual realm. There is a war in progress!

This then brings us to the question, how often do I have to proclaim the victory of Christ over a person or situation? The answer is continually - at least until the particular issue is resolved and then I move on to the next area of conflict. If I am praying for a spiritual leader or a loved one that is vulnerable to demonic attack, I must continue to proclaim the victory of Christ without ceasing. Remember this is a war. I must initially "take" the ground, but then I must continue to "occupy" the ground! Don't think that once you have taken the ground, Satan will sit back without a fight! He will come back as soon as you relinquish the battle!

Can I effectively pray alone?

Yes, you can effectively pray alone! But the battle will be more intense, more gruesome and could be much longer than when you pray together with other believers or as a group. Remember this a war! One soldier going to battle will hardly win the war - although this is not impossible! Remember the promise of Mat 18:20?: *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."* There is power in effective prayer and intercession of a group of believers. If you have a special prayer need in your home, find a prayer friend.

What we have to remember is the fact that although God is concerned with the individual and every person needs to enter into and maintain a personal relationship with Christ in prayer, God's primary concern is with the Church and Body of Christ. So, when the Church and Body of Christ in a particular area or congregation unites in effective prayer, there is an awesome gathering of power! That's why revival begins with prayer groups and prayer gatherings of believers!

Your focus should therefore be to begin a prayer group in your home, mission, area, or church. That's where the action will begin! Begin right in your home together with your spouse or another prayer friend, and extend into a group until you have ignited your area and your church for Jesus Christ!

In Closing

In closing then, there are two magic words in spiritual and prayer warfare, they are faith and perseverance! In Rev 2:2 Jesus says to the church of Ephesus: *"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have **persevered** and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary."*

When your faith falters, switch to perseverance. And when your perseverance falters, switch to faith. With every one of the seven churches in the book of Revelation, Jesus ended with a promise *"To him who overcomes .."*

I want to close with a story that has made a life changing impression on me and I was confronted with during the heat of satanic attack. If you have seen the movie, Fighting The Giants, you will know what I am talking about. The story of this movie is about the football coach of a Christian school who just couldn't achieve success with his team. For a number of years he failed to lead his team to victory until he was under pressure to resign as coach. However, he refused to surrender. God met with this man and showed him that their priorities were all wrong. Football and winning had become their focus instead of focussing on Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

The coach then began teaching his team Biblical principles in football and especially the principles of faith and perseverance. He managed to re-engage the captain who was on the point of resigning from the team. He began

with fitness exercises and they had to piggy back each other across the sports field. The coach began pushing them beyond the limits of their own perceived limitations, and this was no joke. The captain had to take the lead.

As the captain was crawling across the sports field with someone else on his back, he came to the point where his previous limit was, but the coach spurred him on to go further. As he reached what he thought to be his ultimate limitation, the coach spurred him on even further. The coach actually got onto his knees himself and crawled alongside him to encourage him, stretching his perseverance to the limit, while spurring him on with the words: "Please don't quit on me now! Please don't quit on me now!"

When I saw this, I saw myself on the training ground of spiritual and prayer warfare on the Adversity and Failure campuses of God's Eternity University. It had felt to me as if I had reached my limitation - I just could not endure anymore. I was ready to quit! Then Jesus came crawling with me on the ground, slapping his hand on the ground every time I take one more step, saying: "My child, please don't quit on me now! Please, don't quit on me now!"

Maybe you are feeling the pressure of satanic and demonic oppression in your life or your family, service or ministry. I want to tell you, Jesus is crawling alongside you on the training ground, saying: "My child, please don't quit on me now! My child, please don't quit on me now!"

"To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Rev 2:7)

Amen

Notes:

1. Destined For The Throne by Paul E Billheimer, page 18
2. Destined For The Throne by Paul E Billheimer, page 121

3. Notes on Praise and Worship

- Firstly, praise and worship must be conscious and rational. Praise and worship must never lead you into a subconscious or unconscious state of mind. The subtle slow down in volume and tempo of a hymn together with the constant repetition of a certain word or phrase, is a spiritistic method that leads to the creation of a mantra that will result in some people falling into a trance.
- Secondly, the words we sing must be Biblical and theologically correct and true. There are many songs that are sung by churches all over with words that are superficial or not Biblically sound. Satan knows the truth of the Bible and Gospel better than any theologian in this world! He is not deterred by words that are not absolute truth!
- Thirdly, effective praise and worship must be spiritual as opposed to emotional! It is vitally important that Christians should be able to distinguish between emotional (which is carnal), and spiritual Gospel music. My view is that 90% or more of the so-called "Gospel" music out there, is not Gospel at all. It is simply religious words cloaked in worldly and carnal music.

True praise and worship does not need a band! Where praise and worship is dominated by loud music it becomes emotional and carnal. During praise and worship the instruments should never overpower the congregation's voices. The power of praise and worship does not lie in the music or the emotion, but in the words uttered by those who sing. The instruments should simply lead the congregation into harmonious melody - nothing more! That is why in times of revival congregations break out in spontaneous worship and praise - without any instruments!

Why exactly is there so much power in joint praise and worship? The answer lies in the unity of believers. An important Biblical promise is fulfilled when believers unite in praise and worship. Jesus says where two or three are gathered in My Name, or where two or three unite in prayer - I am there with them! Joint praise and worship unites believers' words in a harmonious sacrifice of praise which is well pleasing to God. The only function of the instruments are to facilitate the harmony and the unity! Where the instruments purpose to generate or whip up emotional feelings, it becomes a facility for demonic deception.

That does not mean that praise and worship is without emotion - but there is a vast difference between carnal emotion and spiritual emotion. Sadly, many Christians apparently can't differentiate between the two. Demons love carnal emotion and counterfeits spirituality with emotional experiences supported by carnal music. True praise and worship that focuses on Jesus Christ as Lord and leads them to the Throne of Grace, does result in holy emotion - and that makes demons flee. But carnal and false praise and worship works up carnal emotion that demons love!

Watch out for so-called Christian rock music! There is no such thing as Christian rock music. It is either Christian music, or it is rock music - whether the words are Christian or not! Christian words alone don't make a song Christian! Demons love any music that diverts the believers attention to his emotion, rather than his spirit. If so-called Christian music drives you to dance rather than true spiritual worship, beware, the demons are dancing with you!

- Fourthly, praise and worship must uplift Jesus Christ as Lord, and must focus on the victory of the Cross of Calvary, the Blood of the Lamb, and Jesus' resurrection from the grave. Satan is not at all offended by hymns where only the Name of God is used with no reference to Jesus Christ, the Lamb, the Cross, Calvary, the Blood, or the resurrection. Satan does not care if God is praised all day long - as long as Jesus is not the Lord. Satan himself views himself as god, and even carries the title, god of this world. So any worship song that omits the name or any reference to Jesus Christ the Lord, he simply applies to himself, and accepts the worship for himself even though it is not aimed at him.

