



MCCLAIN MINISTRIES



KINGDOM LAWS



STUDY MANUAL

KINGDOM LAWS



RECIPROCITY

USE

PERSEVERANCE

RESPONSIBILITY

GREATNESS

UNITY

MIRACLES

DOMINION

LAW OF RECIPROCITY

One simple declaration by Jesus revealed a law that will change the world: “Give and it will be given to you...”

Eight words. They form a spiritual principle that touches every relationship, every condition of man, whether spiritual or physical. They are pivotal in any hope we have of relieving the world’s worsening crises.

Jesus expanded this theme throughout His ministry, varying subject matter and application. His point was so encompassing that it demanded many illustrations. In Luke where we find the above eight word, He expands it thusly “...just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way.” And from that, of course, came what the world describes as the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. And do not judge and you will not be judged; and do not condemn and you will not be condemned; pardon and you will be pardoned. Give and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.” Luke 6:36-38.

By putting this together with the world’s greatest teaching on love, repeated from the Old Testament by Jesus as the heart of God’s will, we establish the perfect “law” for conduct: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

I want to look first at the personal level, for that is where our walk with God must begin. The Christian faith is personal, although it quickly spreads to the interpersonal, the national and international level. It is rarely private for long.

Nonetheless, individuals today are in crisis and the Law of Reciprocity is important to them whether they know it or not.

Jesus, as we stated earlier said, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom....” What words for those today who are suffering economically, threatened with unemployment or foreclosure! **They quite bluntly, need money.** The stories are much the same: “What do I do? I’m using everything I have, and still my bills aren’t paid. It seems I’ve been in debt forever.”

As simple as it might look, the Law of Reciprocity is the solution. The world sees such thinking as foolishness, but the Lord says it is wisdom-because it is founded on truth.

Giving is foundational. You have to give of yourself. You have to give of your money. You have to give of your time. And this foundational truth works in both the invisible and visible worlds.

It’s not complicated. If you want a higher salary in your job you have to give more. So many people in our age

go on the job with one thought in mind, “What will I get out of it.” Their only concern is the salary, fringe benefits and title. They are takers, not givers. And takers do not go to the head of the list.

The hard work and overtime must also be accompanied by a proper attitude, of course. Those who give meanness, anger or trouble will get it back.

Note the promise of abundance in Malachi. Some translators render the promised blessing as so great that “you don’t have enough room to take it in.”

In the world system we think ten percent is a good return. In the kingdom, we speak in terms of 3000, 6000, and 10,000 percent-thirty, sixty and a hundredfold return.

I am as certain of this as of anything in my life. If you are in financial trouble, the quickest way out-is start giving money away. Give tithes and offerings to the Lord. Give time. Give work. Give love. If you need money, then begin to give away some of what you have. Your return, poured out in your lap, will be great, pressed down and running over.

THE LAW OF USE

An exceptional urgency seemed to have gripped the Lord’s ministry by the time He reached the teaching we will examine today. He had so much to impart and seemingly so little time to do it. Everything was speeding up.

In the midst of rapid-fire teachings about the kingdom of heaven, He began this story:

“For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own servants, and entrusted his possessions to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another, two and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.” (Matthew 25:14).

Then unfolds the development of what I have come to call the Law of Use. Servant number one received five talents. The parable says he went out and “traded with them.” We can imagine what happened. Perhaps he brought some commodities, sold them at a profit, and reinvested the entire amount. Or perhaps he took a journey and returned with valuable goods, and he added to the value of those goods through work he or someone else did to them. Regardless, he worked with his master’s money and eventually doubled it.

The man with the two talents acted similarly. He may have bought wool, handed it over to a weaver and then sold the woven cloth at a profit, only to quickly reinvest it and keep all the money working. Eventually he had doubled the amount left with him.

The third servant acted differently. The parable says he took the single talent, dug a hole and buried it. He was afraid, Jesus said-afraid that if he went out brought wool or oil or some such item, a depression would come and he would lose the money. Or maybe robbers would steal it. Or maybe someone would outsmart him or cheat him. Perhaps he would make a wrong decision. So, impotent with fear, he preserved his lord’s investment by hiding it in a safe place.

After a long time, the lord returned and called the servants to him. “Tell me,” he said after a brief exchange, “how did you do with my money?”

The first servant quickly replied, “Master, I took the five talents and I traded with them. I bought and sold and even wheeled and dealt a little bit and I made five more talents. Here is the original and five additional.”

He had covered his overhead and still doubled the amount. The master was pleased: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”

The next servant stepped forward and reported: “Lord, I took your two talents and went out and bought and sold. I entered into some business transactions and I took some risks, but I made money. I’ve got two more talents. Here are the two you gave me and two additional.”

The lord replied in the same way he had to the man with five talents.

Then it was the third servant’s turn. “Tell me what you’ve done with my money while I’ve been gone,” the master said.

“Lord, I knew you were a hard man,” he began. “You reap where you don’t sow. You gather where you don’t even plant. So I was afraid. I figured the best thing to do was play it safe, so I wrapped the talent up nicely and hid it. Here it is; I didn’t lose anything.”

Most of us today can sympathize with this fellow. After all, if you're a trustee over somebody else's property, you have to be careful. You can't take risks. It's even worse in an economically volatile world like ours.

What did the master do in this illustration to prepare us for the kingdom?

"... 'You wicked, lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest...cast out the worthless servant into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

This servant was considered wicked-sinful, given to evil-because he refused to take what his lord had given him and put it to work, improving upon it.

Note that quantity wasn't the key. Their use of what they had been given was what mattered. Proper use gave them entry into the place of joy. Improper use barred the third servant.

However, the startling point of the parable is the following conclusion: "...to everyone who has shall more be given and he shall abound; but from the one that does not have, even what he does have will be taken away." During my extended time of seeking wisdom from God, the magnitude of that sentence crystallized for me. I perceived that it presented a principle, a law that was as important for day-to-day life as any there is.

“To everyone who has shall more be given.” It seems shocking. We have a poor man with only one talent and another who has improved his lot and we take the one away from the former and give it to the one who already has ten. It goes against the grain, simply because we have failed to see how important God views our use of what He has given us.

Despite our preconceived attitudes toward social justice, God’s Law of Use controls the ultimate distribution of wealth. We must be willing to apply the law as it is presented in order for us to live life to the fullest. For He says, in fact, that if we are willing to do that, if we are willing to use what He has given us—we will have more. But if we are not willing to use what He has given, we will lose it.

As we will see, this is not mean or unfair. It is the way God wants the world to operate. And as we begin to understand the Law of Use, we will soon realize that this is the only way it can operate fairly.

CARVER AND THE PEANUT

One of the geniuses of our country was a black man named George Washington Carver. He perfectly illustrates the Law of Use.

One day he went before the Lord in prayer and said, “Mr. Creator, show me the secrets of Your universe.” It was a big request, but he believed in asking boldly. He received a bold answer, although it might not have seemed so at first.

“Little man,” God said, “you’re not big enough to know the secrets of My universe.” However, God was not finished with His reply. But I’ll show you the secret of the peanut.”

From the universe to the peanut! “Take it apart,” God said. Undaunted and obedient, Carver did just that. He took the peanut apart and discovered several hundred elements in that little seed.

Still God wasn’t finished. “Start putting it back together again, in different forms,” the Lord instructed.

He did. And from that work came food of many kinds, plastics, paint, oil and seemingly endless products. He revolutionized Southern agriculture and industry all by using what God had given-boldly, creatively, and patiently.

THE EXPONENTIAL CURVE

Working hand and hand with the Law of Use is a mathematical phenomenon known as the exponential curve. Actually Jesus set forth the first step in such a curve when He told the parable of the talents. It fits perfectly into our principle.

The Lord told how two of the servants doubled what had been given to them. Had they done that at regular intervals, such as annually, then their increases, placed on a graph, would have established an exponential curve that would have proved astounding.

For example, if they began with \$100 and continued to double the amount each year, the graph would proceed along at a rather ho-hum level for a few years and then it

would skyrocket. At the end of twenty years, the \$100 would have grown to \$50 million. In just 5 more years, it would have soared to \$1.6 trillion, and at the end of fifty years, it would be \$12.8 quadrillion, which is more money that exists in the world.

This shows dramatically what can happen through a joining of the Law of Use with the exponential curve, simply accomplishing at a set rate what Jesus was teaching in the parable.

Of course, such 100 percent increases are not necessary for the exponential curve to be effective with this law. Take the \$100 without doubling it and compound it at six percent for 20 years and it transformed into \$28,000. Increase the percentage to 15 or 20 percent and you end up with several hundred thousand dollars. As you know we don't have such interest rates today. But the exponential curve works with any interest rate. The key is to double your savings each year, even every six months if possible. Start by putting \$ 100 in the bank every month for the first year. The second year double it to \$200 a month. The third year move up to \$400.

So phenomenal is this principle that Baron Rothschild, the financier, once described compound interest as "the eight wonder of the world." Bankers throughout history have enriched themselves enormously by way of this "wonder." The key is consistency and longevity, to the point where the exponential curve makes its sharp upward turn and the escalation defies the imagination.

Certainly, the Lord Jesus did not intend to lay down for us a principle whose purpose was to allow the rich to

get richer and the poor to get poorer. No, He was showing how the world works and how, through diligent, patient exercise of the gifts He is constantly bestowing (Law of Reciprocity); we can enter into the prosperity and abundance of the physical world.

We need to see that the truths He disclosed are available to everyone-now! The sad fact is that not everyone-not even those committed to Him-will enter in. The problem is that we want to go from obscurity and poverty to fame and riches in one quick jump. First we have to take what He has given and multiply it, steadily and patiently. Success will come.

God's way is the way of gradual, sure growth and maturity, moving toward perfection. It can be compared to an airplane during takeoff. If the trajectory is too low, then time will overtake it, the plane will run out of runway and crash, or it will get a few feet off the ground and not rise fast enough to avoid the trees or buildings.

People are the same. If our goals are too low, too stretched out and easy, we will never rise to any significant potential before time overtakes us.

On the other hand, if the pilot sets the exponent in his takeoff pattern too high and the plane rises too steeply, it is likely to stall and crash.

The same is true with people. Set your economic growth too high, and you will stall.

Thus, although there is nothing but abundance in the kingdom of heaven and nothing is impossible with God, the Lord's plan is for us to set realistic goals with what

He has given us. He wants us to have goals that are demanding enough to keep us occupied, but are not overtaxing, and to stick with them long enough for them to come to fruition.

We find clues to this in other parables of the Lord.

“...The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds; but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” (Matthew 13:31, 32)

The black mustard seed of the East starts with the tiniest seed imaginable, but from that tiny beginning comes a strong plant often running to heights as tall as a man on horseback. So it can be with the things given to us to use.

Similarly Jesus told of what might be called unconscious growth from small beginnings:

And He was saying, “The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts up and grows—how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.” (Mark 4:26-29)

We must never despise small beginnings. The increase will come, almost unconsciously, imperceptibly, in the early stages; but suddenly there will be a burst of

growth as the exponential rate take hold and reaches maturity. Before long, its harvest time. Remember, everyone has something to give.

THE WRONG SIDE OF THE CURVE

One of the tragedies of mankind is that we frequently find ourselves on the wrong side of the exponential curve; it can work against us as well as for us. This happens to individuals as well as nations.

The United States and many of its citizens are examples at this very time. Singlely and collectively we have allowed the exponential curve to plunge us into enormous debt. In most cases, the beginnings were innocent, but the exponential rate is merciless if it's working against you. It can destroy you if you are borrowing money and paying high interest rates.

This, of course, comes from lust and covetousness. The law of Satan's kingdom is: Have it now, with a splash. Quick money, quick things, quick success.

In God's kingdom, the Law of Use governs, providing genuine and lasting security, genuine and lasting prosperity.

Notwithstanding the sneers of many in the banking community, it may be that God's way will be the only one open to us-a year of jubilee to straighten out the mess.

We should also be fully aware of the fact that finance is no the only area in which the exponential curve can work against us. We need only look at the snowballing

evils of pornography, adultery, divorce, alcoholism and drug addition to grasp this. Such evil began small and steadily increased, almost unconsciously it seems, until the unprecedented surge of recent years and today's raging floodtide.

THE MOST POWERFUL PRINCIPLE

In the previous lesson, I said the Law of Reciprocity was probably the most encompassing of the kingdom principles, virtually undergirding every aspect of life and revealing a course of conduct that could change the world.

The Law of Use, meanwhile, coupled with the exponential curve is probably the most powerful of the principles in terms of everyday life. It is the fundamental law for the growth and development-or the decline-of all organizations and societies in both the spiritual and physical worlds. Beginning with the cradle, it touches everything-a child's intellectual, professional, physical, social and intellectual development.

I am convinced that this law-put to work with the commitment, the virtues, and the accompanying sub principles-can produce giant steps toward easing and ultimately removing the crises that grip the world. It will touch world hunger, the economic quagmire, energy depletion, educational and social injustice, and inadequate health care. God has given us the pattern. We merely need to follow it.

How to be a Millionaire

Year 2% Interest

<u>Month</u>	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
January	100	200	400	800	1600
February	100	200	400	800	1600
March	100	200	400	800	1600
April	100	200	400	800	1600
May	100	200	400	800	1600
June	100	200	400	800	1600
July	100	200	400	800	1600
August	100	200	400	800	1600
September	100	200	400	800	1600
October	100	200	400	800	1600
November	100	200	400	800	1600
December	100	200	400	800	1600
Total	1,213	3,664	8,590	18,468	38,250

Years
2% Interest

10 (Ten)	(\$1600) \$143,313	(\$3200) \$244,357
15 (Fifteen)	\$259,416	\$472,122
20 (Twenty)	\$382,719	\$723,820
25 (Twenty-five)	\$529,503	\$1,001,966
30 (Thirty)	\$686,187	\$1,309,339

Years
5% Interest

15 (Fifteen)	(\$1600) \$312,098	(\$3200) \$558,613
20 (Twenty)	\$506,826	\$929,952
25 (Twenty-five)	\$755,355	\$1,403,884
30 (Thirty)	\$1,072,549	\$2,008,756

HOW GOD'S KINGDOM WORKS

Before we discuss the next law, the Law of Perseverance, it is important that we have a full understanding of how the Kingdom of God works.

To understand how the kingdom of heaven works and how it holds sway over the physical world, we must review two very compelling facts:

First, there is absolute abundance in the kingdom of God.

Secondly, it is possible to have total favor with the ruler of that abundance.

On the first point, Jesus, telling His disciples that they were being permitted to know the secrets of the kingdom, set forth the truth of abundance with the parable of the sower. The seed that fell on good ground, He said, yielded crops of a hundredfold, sixtyfold and thirtyfold. And as you know that is abundance-returns of 10,000, 6,000 and 3,000 percent. You see, there is no economic recession, no shortage, in the kingdom of God.

Throughout our forests, we see this truth touching the physical world. Consider the profusion of seed that comes from a maple tree. Look at the multiplicity of colors in a sunset; there are more hues than we can name. Plant, marine, bird life-there is no end, almost as though God had sent abundance into the world as testimony of his infinity.

Because He is the only truly free being in the universe, His kingdom is a sphere of total possibility. Jesus emphasized this when He multiplied the loaves and fish, taking a little boy's lunch and feeding more than five thousand hungry people. God is never diminished by circumstances.

Neither is He limited by His own universe or the natural laws He Himself established. There are those who attempt to convince us that God is merely in nature. But were that true, He would be limited. No, He is above the laws of nature and any restrictions that those laws might try to impose. He can create from nothing, or He can take existing matter and transform it. His is a total world-total health, total life, total energy, total strength and total provision.

In the matter of favor, Jesus, of course, was our perfect illustration of God's bestowal: *"And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men."* (Luke 2:52)

Within a few short years, God presented the supreme token of His grace at the time of the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan: *"...and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, 'Thou are My beloved son, in Thee I am well-pleased.'"* (Luke 3:22)

This, God the Father was saying, was the One He had spoken of and promised for centuries. He was going to pour out His grace and blessing on His only begotten Son and on those who belong to Him.

First, we need to recognize that when the Bible speaks of God's "grace," it speaking of His "favor." In the New Testament, the Greek word for grace is *charis*, perhaps best defined as "the unmerited favor of God."

The favor, the apostle Paul said, allows us to stand before God Himself. It is our sole means of access to the throne of the kingdom. Think of it: If we have access to the Father, standing before Him in His favor, then we have the prospect of continuous blessing. Indeed, Paul wrote that the prospect was for increasing blessing:

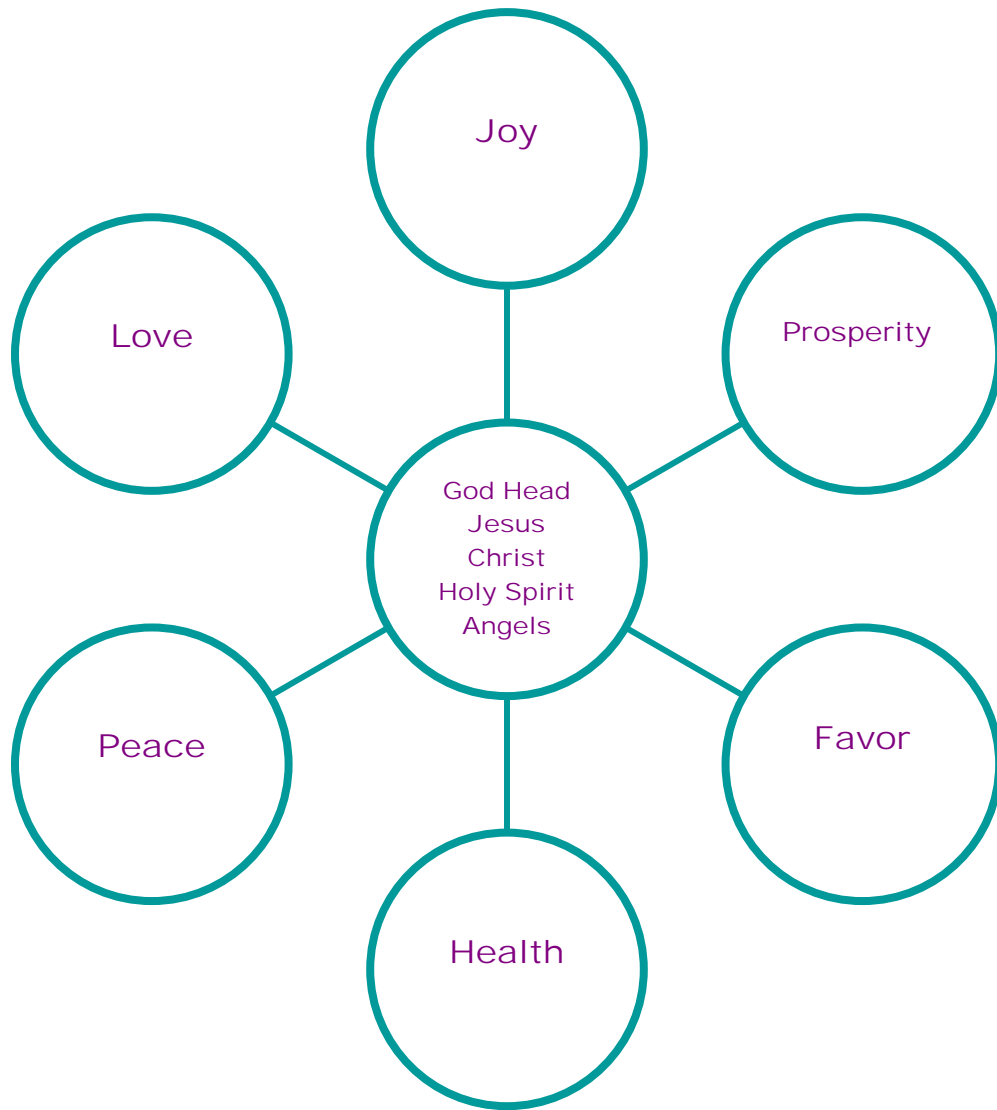
But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-7)

Now when God blesses us and keeps us, and lets His face shine upon us, and is gracious to us, then before men we appear in a light that transcends any of our natural abilities. He can cause our plans to succeed. He can cause people to like us. He can cause us to be preferred and chosen above others of equal talent. He can protect our children. He can guard our property. He can cause angels to aid us.

A PARTNERSHIP

With those two truths of abundance and favor established, we are ready for the fact that God has

entered into a partnership, a **covenant** with redeemed man. He has given us the potential of cooperating with His Spirit in the entire work of the kingdom.



Prayer is the link between finite man and the infinite purposes of God. In its ultimate sense, it consists of determining God's will and then doing it on earth. It does not consist constantly of merely asking for what we want. To pray in the truest sense means to put our lives into total conformity with what God desires.

We begin this process by dropping our own pre-conceived ideas and entering His presence by grace to wait upon Him. Our thought should be: “Lord, what do You want? What are You doing.” We should stand in the Spirit in the spiritual kingdom; there we will see and hear our role and then the partnership can become active.

If we fully believe God and have discerned His will, Christ said that we may translate that will from the spiritual world to the physical by the spoken word. In short, God uses the spoken word to translate spiritual energy-sheer power-into the material.

The most vivid illustration, of course, was the creation of the world. God spoke to the void and said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. The same with firmament and the waters and the dry land; the same with everything that was created. All things were made by the Spoken Word. And that which was spoken was energized by the Holy Spirit, moving upon the face of the waters, shaping matter, which is itself energy, into God’s predetermined pattern.

In like manner, our partnership covenant with God is fulfilled when we speak His word in the power of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus taught: “Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Thus He took us right back to where He began. Have faith in God, know who He is, know what He is doing, trust His favor upon us, and participate with Him. Then what we say in His name will come to pass.

THE MISSING LINK

For the vast majority of Christians throughout history, the “speaking” has been the missing link between what we believe and what we do. We gain the understanding of how God Almighty works, how His Son works, and how we are to work once we enter into the unobstructed view of God that Jesus provides in the kingdom.

The thing that clouds our view is sin. But once the sin is forgiven, we are to enter boldly into the throne room of grace and commune with God by the Spirit, who communicates with our spirit. It's bit like tuning into a radio or television station. You get on the right frequency and you pick up a program. So it is with listening to the Lord. He is constantly speaking, but we are often on the wrong frequency.

Once He has spoken to us, we are to speak after Him. If we do, miracles occur. If we don't, usually nothing will happen. For, in the physical/material world, God has chosen to enter into partnership covenant with us, his co laborers, whom He is grooming for the perfect, visible establishment of His kingdom on earth.

Right now, in this life, He would have us stop cajoling and begging. He would have us live in the kingdom, in harmony with Him, receiving His thoughts by the Spirit. As the apostle Paul said, “...We have the mind of Christ.” So speak that mind, Jesus was saying in the fig tree episode. Speak His thoughts, Don't be afraid! Don't doubt! “For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”

We must see that, by living in the kingdom now, we enter back into what man lost in the Garden of Eden. We return to the authority God gave us at the Creation. Like Adam, we hear the Lord's voice revealing the secrets of the world. And, as He speaks, we speak after Him in the manner of Ezekiel in his vision in the valley of dry bones.

Again He said to me, *“Prophecy over these bones and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.’”* (Ezekiel 37:4)

The prophet listened as the Lord said He intended to give the bones life, flesh, skin and breath. Then it was Ezekiel's turn.

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew, and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then He said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.”” So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life, and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. (Ezekiel 37:7-10)

In this Old Testament episode, Ezekiel learned what I call the Word of Faith, which didn't receive full development until the New Testament was written. The lesson was this: Through our words, we translate the will of God in the spiritual kingdom to the physical

situation that confronts us. We speak to money and it comes. We speak to storms and they cease. We speak to crops and they flourish.

Although I will discuss this miraculous phenomenon in more detail later, the simple truth is that God's Word, spoken into a situation, will perform His purpose: *“So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11)*

THE WAY IT WILL BE

Someday, when the kingdom is fully manifested, the speaking will not be necessary. The thought will become the deed, as it is in heaven today. On earth a translation is required, but not so in the ultimate kingdom. One day we will not need telephones, mass transit, or computers as the speed of thought eclipses the speed of light. But now we need the spoken word.

As we have emphasized several times, the covering statement for the entire matter of how the kingdom works is “Have faith in God.” Faith governs all. But there can be no equivocating, no going back and forth. So many of us hear something from the Lord, we believe it briefly, but the wind blows and the storms pounds and our faith in what God said vanishes like mist. **We need to counter by speaking the Word God has given and then simply accepting it.**

For the Lord, while structuring most of His dealings with man around the point of faith made plain that His insistence on faith was not quantitative, but qualitative. He said we would move mountains if we had faith the size of a mustard seed. We don't need a mountain of faith to move a mountain of dirt or even a mountain of problems.

The object and reality of faith are the issues. We don't need stubbornness, but confidence.

"...this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." (I John 5:14, 15)

THE IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT THINKING

Now we begin to see that in the kingdom:

**Spirit controls matter
Lesser authority yields to greater authority
The mind is the ultimate conduit of the spirit
Speech is the intermediate conduit between spirit and matter and between greater and lesser authority**

The above principles suggest more than just the "mind over matter" theory. The so called success books have gleaned only a few of the truths of the kingdom of God.

They try to gain the kingdom without submitting themselves to the King.

Some of the metaphysical principles of the kingdom, taken by themselves, can produce fantastic temporal benefits. But without the lordship of Jesus, these benefits are both transitory and harmful. In fact, many of the advocates of mind over matter ultimately end in hellish spiritism. *“What will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?...” (Matthew 16:26)*

Many sincere followers of Jesus Christ destroy their effectiveness in this world because they do not understand the laws of spiritual authority and the way this authority is transmitted. They especially are not aware of the power of what they say.

Solomon wrote: *“From the fruit of a man’s mouth he enjoys good...” (Proverbs 13:2)*. In other words, when you confess blessing, favor, victory success, those things will come to you.

But many Christians ignore this truth. “How do you feel?” we ask someone. “I don’t feel well at all,” they reply, not realizing they just commanded their body to be sick. “I can’t seem to get out of debt,” someone says. That individual just commanded their debt to continue.

We call such negative assertions “realistic appraisals” of the situation. But they aren’t realistic, for they ignore the power of God, the authority of the invisible world of the spirit, and the grant of power made by God to His children.

A much more realistic assertion was made by the apostle Paul when he boldly declared: *“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)*

Pettiness, overemphasis on the minutiae, fear of failure, constant murmuring and complaining-all inhibit the realization of kingdom conditions. *“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7)*

At the same time, the Lord has called for us to be honest and truthful in the innermost being, so we are not to delude ourselves and to say something is true when it is not. We are not to engage in superstition or silliness. We merely are to have confidence that with Him all things are possible.

A NECESSARY INGREDIENT

Perhaps history’s biggest roadblock to effective demonstration of the spiritual/invisible kingdom is found in negativism. For in the final analysis, it reveals the absence of unity, about which I will have more to say in conjunction with other principles. But at this point, we need to see that the kingdom of God works through the phenomenon of harmony.

To begin with, entrance into the kingdom, totally dependent upon grace and not upon any kind of status or merit, immediately establishes a basic equality among people. No one can say, “I’ve earned a better place than you.” Growing from that logically is a new relationship between individuals. It is one based on the will of the Father, surpassing existing national, racial,

familial, or church relationships. The Lord Jesus was precise on this point: *“...whosoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother, sister and mother.”* (Matthew 12:50)

That statement transcended the Lord's own family relationships, and should transcend ours. The kingdom thus is a family. Jesus is our elder brother; His Father is our father. That cuts across all lines. My mother can be a white woman who does the will of the Father. My brother can be a Chinese who does likewise, or a Jew, or an Arab.

How we need to see this! All strife and turmoil in the world can be eliminated simply by its fulfillment. The Middle East can be at peace. Latin America can be at peace. The aged and the young can be at peace.

This wholly unique concept of love and family relationships can produce that which has escaped man's grasp since the beginning of time. But peace will not be the only fruit of such transferral of kingdom life to this world. Paul the apostle wrote of the “fruit of the Spirit” that would grow in a climate of unity-*“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”* (Galatians 5:22, 23) Against such virtuous characteristics there is no law, Paul added. None is needed.

The Scripture's classic illustration of the transfer of kingdom power to the physical world when there is unity comes in a well known portion of Matthew's Gospel.

“Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for

them by Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.” (Matthew 18:19.20)

The full implication of the point is that when there is no unity of purpose, no crossover of barriers, then the power is not activated. THAT MEANS NO POWER!

PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT

I am confident that we will see the kingdom of God working more in the physical world as the Lord continues to bring people to Himself. Should the world experience the great revival of faith in Jesus that I am expecting, it would be reasonable to see an increase in the exercise of these truths of the kingdom. This, I am sure, will enable the world to transcend many of the limitations we are experiencing now.

For example, it is clear that we are going to run out of fossil fuels, even though at times we experience some relief in the oil and gas shortage. We can't keep burning limited resources forever. But we have some very big oceans, and they contain hydrogen. Sooner or later, God may give to one of His children a concept for running cars on such water. He will simply allow a peek into the spiritual world to see His purpose. Then a faithful believer will speak and act according to the revelation, and the concept will take life.

I believe we can also expect this in the area of building materials, we have already seen less expensive materials take the place of steel and other items in short supply. I am sure there will be food stuffs we haven't dreamed of, perhaps new living space to accommodate

vast populations. The limits are not found in what we see, feel and taste. They are in our hearts and our willingness to stand in that place where we have an unclouded view of what the Lord is doing.

Thoughts like these invariably cause concern about whether someone who is not prospering or indeed is suffering maybe violating the truths of the kingdom, the Kingdom Laws. Such questions must not be dismissed hastily. For there is suffering in the world and seemingly many Christians are living short of the ideals we are discussing.

What can we say? I am convinced that if a person is continuously in sickness, poverty, or other physical and mental straits, then they are missing the truths of the kingdom. They have either failed to grasp the points we have been making in previous teachings or not living according to the major principles of the kingdom of God.

True, there is suffering, even in God's will, but as with the cross of Christ, it doesn't last forever. I believe believers can escape any ghetto to which they have been confined, real or imagined. God will make a way. He will provide methods with which to reverse conditions and attitudes. Shortage will turn into abundance, hostility to favor.

As for tragedy and seemingly inevitable mishap, the Bible says: *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall down, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand."* (Psalm 37:23, 24)

Furthermore, it says the wicked will try to harm the righteous, but “the Lord will not leave him in his hands.” There may be difficult days and even stumbling, but God will be there to deliver the faithful.

As we have seen, the kingdom of God exists here and now. Although it is spiritual and invisible, it governs the physical and visible. It is inhabited by people who have been born again spiritually. It operates in a specified manner. In the coming weeks we will learn that it also has its own constitution, which has come to known as the Sermon on the Mount. It clearly sums up a new way of life. It demands an inner revolution of attitude and outlook. It turns ordinary ideas upside down. It sets the stage for a new world order.

One of the greatest concepts of the constitution of the kingdom of God, which so clearly reverses normal world thinking, is that virtue comes ahead of all others in the spiritual realm. It is humility that counts in God’s Kingdom.

During a certain point in my life, the following words sprang up in my spirit: “...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” The power of those words is devastating if you trace the logic. Not only does God help those with genuine humility, but also He actively opposes those who are proud.

Of course, the definition of humble that is easiest for most of us to grasp is that it is the opposite of proud. Most of us seem to know what pride is. God insists that we be the very opposite if we are to receive His favor and blessing; otherwise He is against us.

Thus it became clear to me that if we desire to live in the kingdom of God, to receive favor, we must make humility the number one virtue. It is foundational.

Jesus, the very Son of God, existing in the form of God, took on the likeness of man without diminishing His deity and *“humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”* And His Father favored that humility in this manner. *“Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name...”* (Philippians 2:8, 9)

The Old Testament prepares us for such a consequence with words like: *“The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord/are riches, honor and life.”* (Proverbs 22:4)

People worldwide want (1) enough to live on, (2) recognition for what they do and (3) good health and long life. To the humble and obedient, these blessings come automatically.

The path of the proud is perfectly clear from Scripture, for without question pride is the greatest sin there is in the eyes of God. It totally opposes His goodness toward mankind.

Where there is pride, there will always be a fall. It is inevitable. We see it all about us, on a large and small scale. Nations and individuals slip. They become arrogant; they cut off advice from old and respected friends; they go it alone and they ultimately fall.

As we strive to look into the spiritual/invisible world to see God, to hear what He is saying, it is essential that we always bear in mind that our knowledge of that world

comes primarily through His disclosure. He must reveal. It's called "Revelation Knowledge." Otherwise, we cannot see. Recollection of that fact should keep us humble, even though our confidence rests in the fact that He said He would be found by those who diligently seek Him. The proud, however, cannot bring themselves to seek, for that requires coming in from a lower position; and they have been conditioned otherwise.

As I stated earlier, humility is closely linked with wisdom, which was the object of my diligent search years ago. I had been impressed with Solomon's reply to the Lord's offer one night following King David's death, "Ask what I shall give you." (II Chronicles 1:7)

Can you imagine how most of us would have replied? But the Bible shows Solomon revealed great humility in even approaching God, describing himself as little child. *"...I do not know how to go out or come in. Give me now wisdom and knowledge...for who can rule this great people of Thine?" (II Chronicles 1:10)*

God's response laid bare the pattern prevailing in the kingdom of heaven.

"...Because you had this in mind, and did not ask for riches, wealth, or honor or the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge that you may rule My people, over whom I have made you king, wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you possessed, nor those who will come after you." (II Chronicles 1:2, 3)

Echoing throughout were the words of Christ centuries later. *“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)*

I have become convinced that wisdom is the key to the secrets of the kingdom of God. It leads to favor. But the starting point is humility, as Solomon knew. For humility reveals fear of, or reverence for, the Lord.

The Book of Proverbs reveals the next step: *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:10)*

Wisdom, or spiritual understanding, is knowledge of the Holy One. And that is what we are seeking—knowledge of God, Knowledge of His will and purpose, knowledge of the spiritual world and how it works, knowledge of how to reach into it and bring its blessing and prosperity in our physical world.

In its ultimate sense, wisdom is understanding that an action taken today will be proven in the future to have been a correct one. And God provides that understanding.

To the people of Israel, God presented a body of Law that was to be their wisdom, an external expression of His will. Unfortunately, they were inconsistent and often improperly motivated, so God’s wisdom was not fully realized in their lives.

But this wisdom from God is still available. Knowing that He governs all things, present and future, we can approach Him with pure hearts and say: “Show me how

to run my life. Show me how the world works. Show me Your ways, Your principles, for running this enormously complex universe. I want to conform to what You do, to Your will, Your purpose, Your plan.”

At that point we are seeking truth, and He will grant us wisdom for that. His entire purpose is to have us conform to truth. His wisdom will come; His principles will work. We will act, and the future will bear us out. People will say, “My, wasn’t that person wise? Where did they get such wisdom?” And all the while, it came from God.

God was, and still is looking for people who will do what He wants, people with wisdom, that He may enter into their lives, their physical world, and favor them. No problem, no shortage, no crisis is beyond His ability.

THREE CRUCIAL VIRTUES

The three cardinal virtues in the kingdom of God are faith, hope and love. We’ve already spoken of the importance of faith in seeing, entering and experiencing the kingdom; but it is also interwoven with the virtues of hope and love. Paul the apostle more than once put them together in describing the Christian life and ministry: *“But now abide faith, hope, love these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (I Corinthians 13:13)*

Faith is essential to the functioning of a civilization. We daily reveal faith in the laws of the creation. That the sun will rise each day, that farmers will produce crop for food consumption. How could we conduct business

with faith in the marketplace and rules of commerce? Nothing would work without some kind of faith.

Since we as spiritual beings are saved by the grace of God “through faith,” it is obvious that faith is indispensable in any relationship with the Lord. Without it, we don’t even know God exists. We are lost in our sins and are unable to see or to enter the spiritual world, let alone transfer its blessings into the physical one.

As for hope, we need to make a distinction between it and faith. Hope is the ability to transfer our reliance from ourselves to God. It is founded on the sovereignty of God, His total independence of circumstance, His limitlessness.

It does not develop in us until our faith is tried, until under pressure we realize there is a Creator who will work things out for those with whom He is pleased. The apostle Paul described the progression:

“Therefore have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and character, hope.” (Romans 5:1-4).

God’s purpose is that our faith be tested, expressly to refined and strengthen it. Our endurance purifies and toughens our character; resolute assurance (hope) in God and His plan results. Hope shaped on the anvil of perseverance and rests in the rightness of His ultimate

purpose-that the wicked will fall and the righteous will be rewarded. Any expectation of the transfer of the blessings of the kingdom into our lives depends on it.

Finally, there must be love, which Paul described as the greatest of the trinity of virtues. Interestingly, it grows out of the other two. Hope grows out of faith and love grows out of hope.

When a person has hope, when he knows that his future is assured, he stops struggling to maintain His own sphere of dominance; he stops fighting other people. That person is willing to let the law of God work to defend his place. Then they're free to have concern for the well-being of others. Yes, free to give themselves, their possessions, and their life to someone else.

The Lord's experience with the cross was the ultimate expression of faith, hope and love, of course. He had no visible assurance that He wouldn't be found absolutely foolish. He could have turned out to have been the most tragic figure in history, but He had unwavering faith, His hope was in the goodness of His father and that freed Him to love his people and to die for them.

Love is so overwhelming that it nullifies the physical principle under which ever action produces an opposite, equal reaction. If someone pushes someone else, the latter will push hard in return and escalation develops, usually to the point of violence. But Jesus said, *"Absorb the push. Break the cycle. Overcome evil with good."* (Romans 12:21)

We need to see that God wasn't advocating merely defense, but rather the perfect offense with the only

weapon capable of absorbing and defeating evil. If someone demands you to go one mile, you can fight him; you can go sullenly and curse him all the way, feeling beaten and rejected. Or you can go on the attack and follow the charter of the kingdom: *“And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two.”* (Matthew 5:41) Love will thus heap burning coals on his head, and the conviction of the Lord will work in His life for good. (Romans 12:20)

Yes, any of us who yearn to see our world changed and have been disappointed by the relative impotency of the people of God must examine ourselves regarding the virtue of love. For the picture painted by Paul in the most famous discourses has to convince us that, were love to underlie all of our thoughts, words and deeds—our use of the principles of God—then the world would be changed.

“Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous, love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...” (I Corinthians 13:4-8)

Eventually, Paul said, all else will pass away. The special gifts and talents; they will run their course, because at some point Christ will be formed in us. But love endures forever, it bridging eternity.

THE LAW OF USE CONTINUED

As we conclude our study of the Law of Use and prepare to write our 'Blood Covenants' it is vital that we establish the foundation of 'God's Covenants.' I have entitled this information "Covenant Practice."

Because God is in Covenant with us, He will keep His Word even if He has to swear to His own hurt. A blood covenant demands absolute, unwavering loyalty. Rediscovering the meaning of a covenant relationship will turn the tide of Western civilization.

To seize the real meaning of the word covenant, you need more than just a definition. You need a revelation from Almighty God! The definition will only tell you what a covenant is. A revelation of your covenant with God will cause you to stand steadfast against the devil when he comes and tries to destroy you. The mere definition does not have the power to uphold you against the storms of life, but the revelation of a covenant relationship will.

Webster's Dictionary defines the word covenant as "a usually formal solemn, and binding agreement; compact, a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action." These definitions could very well describe our modern use of the term contract.

Contracts are very familiar to us. However, we usually think nothing of trying to get released from the responsibility of contracts all of the time. The true covenant relationship is not so. Some man-made covenants are made to last up to eight generations.

God's covenant is designed to last to a thousand generations.

When man sinned in the Garden of Eden, God didn't replace him, He redeemed him. That commitment eventually restored the relationship between man and God through the plan of redemption. Becoming covenant-minded will raise the level of our commitment to God's level and erase the word failure from our vocabulary. When we start keeping our commitments, even if it means our own hurt, we securely close the door on the devil. We can then become totally committed to restoring broken relationships and refuse to allow Satan to steal, kill or destroy our precious families and loveones.

The devil was powerless to destroy God's relationship with man because His integrity left no room for evil to enter in and bring corruption. The devil's will is powerless in our life when our integrity matches God's integrity. And a revelation of the strength of a covenant relationship is the only thing that can lift us to level of God's integrity and commitment. That's what this study is all about.

The Bible is a book of covenants; therefore, covenant terminology is threaded all the way through it from Genesis to Revelation. Our study will begin with customary covenant practices so that you will be able to recognize these statements. Your ultimate goal through studying this material is to become covenant-minded. This will, in turn, strengthen your commitments to your family and business associates. But most importantly, it will strengthen your faith in God.

Blood covenants are recorded in all ancient civilizations. Covenant agreements were entered into to bind two tribes together. The grounds for this union were always based on their differences, not their similarities.

You will notice that this is exactly the opposite of man's natural tendency apart from covenant relationship. Racism and denominationalism, which are in direct opposition to the purpose of covenant agreements, are perfect examples. These beliefs cause a separation between those who are different either because of skin color or religious preferences. They separate those who are different and bind those together who are similar. The problem with this is that you not only have the same strengths, you have the same weaknesses. It therefore leaves nothing to protect you from your weaknesses.

Since the covenant agreement was entered based on differences and not similarities, their strengths and weaknesses balances each other out. This union made both tribes strong.

Lengthy discussions were made in order to produce agreement and harmony. During these negotiations, the two families agreed to each party's responsibilities in the union. They agreed upon a blessing for keeping the terms as well as a curse for breaking them. The fear of the curse and desire to benefit from the blessing kept the parties in line.

Then each family chose a representative. The representative was one who exemplified the very character of the family. If the family were strong warriors, the representative was the greatest and most highly skilled warrior of them all. If the family was

business-minded, the representative was the shrewdest businessperson in the family. The representative was always someone with whom the whole family could identify. He was also someone with whom outsiders identified the family. (In our covenant with God, Jesus is our representative. As a born-again believer, you have taken on His nature and character. Thus, you are identified as a Christian or "little Christ.")

Next, the tribes chose a covenant site. It was a place where all the family members could gather around to watch the covenant rites take place.

After the site was chosen, the sacrificial animals were selected. They were most often large animals who would shed a great deal of blood when they were slaughtered. The animals were cut from the back of the neck down the backbone. The two halves fell to the ground, laying opposite of each other. Their blood spilled on the ground between the two halves, and the alley between them was customarily called the walkway of blood.

As the covenant ceremony began, each representative removed his coat and exchanged it with the other representative. The coat represented the strength and authority of each family. By exchanging coats, they symbolically exchanged authority. Then, they exchanged their weapons belts, which meant that they would fight one another's battles for them.

After the exchange of coats and weapons belts, the representatives stated the terms of the covenant. Then comes the walk of blood. The representatives walked between the two animal halves and stood in the midst of

the blood and made irrevocable promises and stated the curse or penalty for breaking the promises.

This part of the covenant rite was very impressive. The sight and feel of blood is an awesome thing, not easily forgotten. Covenants were cut and blood was shed so that the promises would make a deep and lasting impression on the memories of each of the family members.

Also a very impressive procedure, the covenant representatives then cut themselves either on the wrist or the hand in order to mingle their own blood. They lifted their arms so that everyone could see the cuts. They swore oaths by their gods. Either gun-power or some other substance was rubbed into the cut to make the scar that much more outstanding. The purpose of this procedure was to affect the memories of the families. That awesome, ugly scar would forever remind them of the promises that they had made to each other.

Then the two families exchanged their names. Actually, they joined. For example, if the Williams and the Burgs made covenant together, from that moment on they were known as the Williamsburgs. In exchanging their names, they also exchanged their friendships.

Then came a covenant meal of bread and wine. This was the grand finale of the covenant rite. The bread represented the body, and the wine represented the blood. The meal of bread and wine symbolized each family giving themselves to the other family even to the point of dying for one another. They ate "in remembrance" of what they did they day in cutting a covenant together.

Does this remind you of Jesus? At the Last Supper, didn't He say, "Do this in remembrance of Me? Take this bread. It is My body, which shall be broken for you. Drink this wine. It is My blood which shall be shed for you." You see, the Bible is a book of covenants. And there is a reason behind every symbol and phrase in it. As we continue our study, your covenant with God will come more and more into focus, and therefore, your faith will become stronger.

Again one of the primary reasons for studying the covenant is the direct effect it has on our faith.

There are some in the Body of Christ that think that we are not meant to arbitrarily stand on the promises that apply to the situations in our lives. They believe if God doesn't automatically bless us-that faith alone cannot produce the end result. Those who believe this way do not understand the covenant process. They do not understand that God entered the covenant with us so that we would believe and trust the integrity of His promises. Understanding covenant relationships removes the doubt as to whether God wants us to take His promises seriously. The covenant positions us to boldly stand in faith against any obstacle hurled our way.

Those who do understand the covenant know that God is eager to keep His Word. The covenant is at the forefront of His thinking all of the time, so that the promises will mean as much to us as they do to Him. He has told us to keep His Word in the center of our hearts and ever before our eyes. He has told us to meditate on it day and night, talk about it and think on it continually.

Deuteronomy 30 was written to the heirs of the covenant God made with Abraham. It was made in an effort to give them an unchangeable written statement of God's 'Will' for them and His desire to bless them. He was telling His people that He didn't want them to live under a curse. He wanted them to be blessed, and through His covenant, He told them how they could be.

To be blessed, they had to come out from under the curse. When man fell, God cursed Satan (Genesis 3:14, 15), but because the 'Fall' separated the human race, man came under the curse of his new god-Satan. To enter into the covenant with God meant that they were brought out from under the curse. 'If they would walk in His ways, they could avoid the curse and be blessed.'

'Walking in His ways' has more than one meaning. It not only meant that God wanted them to keep His statutes and obey His commandments; it also meant walking in the 'way of blood' between the animal halves. The way of blood was the most impressive part of the covenant ritual and left an indelible mark in the minds of the covenant partners.

For us, as New Covenant believers, we have a new and living way of blood according to Hebrews 10:20. And we can not only walk in the ways of God; we walk in the way with God. We walk through the Passover portals of the blood of the Lamb that was shed for our sins. That blood is at the forefront of God's thinking. It represents His undying loyalty toward us. It is what Jesus meant when He said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." It is what God meant in Deuteronomy 31:6. "*Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*" We

have nothing to fear, because God's loyalty toward us will never waiver.

All through the Old Testament (Covenant), God was trying to convey to His people how much He loved them and how desperately He wanted to bless them. God's hesed drove Him to find a way to convey His intense desire for His people. The method He chose to convey this message was to cut a covenant with a man name Abram. Since covenants were customary in His day, cutting the covenant with Abram was something he could understand. He was very familiar with the mentality of a covenant agreement.

Abram worshiped the moon and the stars-gods which never reached out to do anything for him. And suddenly, Almighty God reached down from heaven and promised to bless and make him the father of many nations. At that time, Abram was aging and his wife Sarai was barren. It was very difficult for Abram to believe that God was able or willing to bless him so abundantly. Cutting a covenant was the most convincing way God could affect Abram's faith.

The entire covenant is recorded in Genesis 15, 16, 17 and 18. And while the covenant rite did not take place at one time in one place, it included all of the customs of the day. The sacrificial animals were a heifer, a she goat, a ram, a turtledove and a pigeon. The animals were split down the back. A 'way of blood' was paved between the halves. Abram and God exchanged names, promises were made and a blessing and a curse were pronounced. The scar of the covenant was the circumcision of every man-child. And through the covenant, God conveyed the message that He had

joined Himself in an irrevocable union with Abram and all of his descendants, for only one reason-to bless him. Abram's name was changed to Abraham and his wife Sarai's name was changed to Sara.

We have a New Covenant with better promises. When we study the covenant enough to get a revelation of it, we can become as fully persuaded of God's desire to fulfill His promises to us as Abraham was. This will, in turn, have a direct effect on our faith in God and the incredible promises He made to us.

In God's covenant, His motivation for keeping His Word is His love, not the fear of a curse. His integrity is completely dependent on His own character. God's love entails a loyalty that is true even toward those who are disloyal to Him. In other words, God is faithful to His Word even when we are unfaithful to Him.

The quality of God's love is difficult for human nature to understand. Human love without a covenant always has a self-preservation and self-protection quality about it. Human love is never totally unselfish apart from a covenant. It can never completely give of itself for fear of being hurt. But God's love gives and continues to give even when nothing is given in return.

The purpose of a covenant is to establish a relationship, which is impossible to break. The covenant has procedures and customs, which guarantee the relationship. It has both a curse to discourage breaking the relationship and a blessing to encourage loyalty. Establishing a covenant agreement is the closest man can come to attaining the God-kind of loyalty.

Covenant Wording

Exchange
(My Part)

Spiritual _____

Physical _____

Social _____

Giving _____

In the Name of Jesus

Your Name

Date

LAW OF PERSEVERANCE

We've caught glimpses of it in previous lessons, but we need to see clearly that the ways of the universe yield to perseverance.

We see it in the simple, homely story of the chick and the egg. The baby chick, approaching full life, finds himself in a nice, safe environment, dark and quiet. His home, the egg, keeps him warm and cuddly; he feels just perfect.

Soon, however, he becomes aware that the shell keeping him so comfortable and safe is also circumscribing his life. He begins to feel restricted.

You see, there is something in life that says, "I have to grow." Humans and animals have planted within them the need to be free and to grow.

So the little chick begins pecking at the shell. He doesn't understand it, but things have been set up so that he has to peck and peck and peck. He works very hard, gaining strength hour by hour from that God-ordained struggle. Before long, he has attained the strength and the endurance to cope with a new environment and he breaks through the shell. He continues to peck and soon he is free, ready for a new level of life.

People have tried to help little chicks speed up the process by cracking the shell and opening it for them. By short-circuiting God's process, they kill the chicks.

They are stillborn, unable to handle for even a moment the rigors of a new environment.

God's principle is what I call the Law of Perseverance. It is critical to success in life generally and to life in the kingdom especially.

Certain risks go with new life and growth-the risks of freedom, we might say-but God prepares us for those risks, through perseverance and struggle, building our faith muscles, as it were, for each new phase. To refuse to struggle is to stand still, to stagnate.

Jesus taught the Law of Perseverance in a passage well-known to most of us ..."the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and men take it by force." It does not come easily. The little chick we spoke of was violent; he had to be. Most of the secrets of God come forth with effort; the blessings of God are the same, we must fight the good fight of faith.

Jesus gave this illustration of perseverance:

"There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. And there was a widow in that city and she kept coming to him, saying, give me legal protection from my opponent. And for a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wear me out." And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them

speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:1-8)

Jesus knew men inside out. He knew our tendency to give up quickly, to become inconsistent and lackadaisical. Yet He pleaded with us to persist in all aspects of life:

“And He said to them, suppose one of you shall have a friend and shall go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey and I have nothing to set before him; and from inside he shall answer and say, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.” (Luke 11:5-8)

The Word of God indicates there will be conflict, using a word that most translators have rendered “tribulation” but which carries the idea of “pressure,” especially pressure on the spirit. This pressure or tribulation was understood in New Testament times to build stamina and staying power, leading to fullness of character.

We are to remember that there is an adversary. He is called Satan. One of his favorite techniques in the unrelenting effort to trip the people of God is to foster discouragement and depression. That is why the Bible says repeatedly that believers are to be patient, to hold on, to persist.

Satan is continuously pouring into our ears such negatives as these: “You’re not accomplishing anything...You’re on the wrong course...You don’t have the necessary skill and ability...Everyone else has failed so why do you think you’ll succeed...Those promises you thought were from God are nothing...You’re unworthy...” So we often grow discouraged and quit. Then the principles of the kingdom cease to function in our lives. And we fail.

Even the great prophet Elijah reached such despair. Having experienced one of his great triumphs, the defeat of the priests of Baal through a powerful miracle of God, He obviously was exhausted mentally, emotionally and physically. Jezebel was trying to kill him. He fell into gloom and doom. “It is enough...” he cried out. “O Lord, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers.”

But God would not let him give up. Neither does He want us to quit.

Instead, we are to be constantly alert against discouragement and depression. We are to be aware of what our enemy is trying to do. We are to reject him and he will flee. God will not let trial and temptation overcome us if we will stand, but rather will make a way of victory for us. He wants us to persevere and He will make the impossible-possible.

THE LAW OF RESPONSIBILITY

Flowing in the same stream with the Laws of Reciprocity, Use and Perseverance is the Law of Responsibility. Jesus summed it up succinctly: “...unto

whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” (Luke 12:48)

Using a parable on watchfulness and preparation, He made clear that rejection of this law leads to suffering. Those who are given understanding, ability, goods, money, authority, or fame have a responsibility that the less favored do not bear; failure to fulfill it produces fearful punishment.

Jesus was precise in showing that the parable was for the favored in every category, spiritual and physical, those living in the spiritual and those living in the physical world.

Whatever level of opportunity is given to us, both God and man expect us to give a certain standard of performance. Favor carries with it responsibility. As the favor increases, the responsibility increases.

If, for example, I am the steward of \$1000 for someone, that person will expect a profit of about \$100. But if I'm the steward of General Motors and report a profit of \$100, I will be forced to resign in disgrace.

Exercise of the Law of Use will bring success, especially if done in tandem with the Law of Perseverance, but the rewards of those two laws demand observance of the Law of Responsibility. We need to see this even before we expect God to fulfill His promises regarding the other principles. It is very wrong if we ask God for something and then don't accept the responsibility that goes with it.

Harry Truman said it well when remarking on the burden of the presidency: “The buck stops here.”

THE CHURCH SHOULD LISTEN

Leaders of the church should be especially careful to rise to the responsibility given to them, for the Scripture is so clear on this point as to be somewhat frightening to the newcomer. I am always stopped momentarily when I read the words of James regarding teachers: **“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.”** (James 3:1)

Those who have been shown enough to teach can be expected to practice what they teach, at the very least. The office carries a great responsibility. The office of bishop or overseer is laid out in I Timothy 3:1-7.

He goes on to point out that those seeking the lesser office of deacon, while not required to measure up to the full responsibility of overseer or bishop, first being “tested” and found beyond reproach.

Christ’s first disciples, especially the Twelve, carried extraordinary burdens and responsibilities, as the New Testament shows in detail. They had been “given the mystery of the kingdom of God” by the Lord Himself while others heard only in parables. This great gift, in a sense, carried with it the load of the world; and those apostles paid a great price—ridicule, ostracism, persecution, martyrdom - for the opportunity of spreading the gospel. Their sense of responsibility was always before them. In his letter to the Romans, Paul summed up that responsibility with these words: **“I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.”** (Romans 1:14)

Even the ordinary, little-known people who have received the inexpressibly rich gift of eternal life-by grace through faith-are called to a life far more responsible and demanding than they led before. Knowing the Lord, who is, “the way, the truth and the life” sets a standard for us in the sight of God and people that we should always keep in mind. Paul referred to it as knowing how to conduct yourself *“in the household of God, which is the body of Christ, the pillar and support of the truth.”* (1 Timothy 3:15) It is a significant responsibility each believer must meet. We need only look at the Great Commission given by Jesus to His people just before His ascension.

“...All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Even though He had said He Himself would build His church, the responsibility for carrying that plan forward for the entire world was put into the hands of His people. Now, that is real responsibility.

RANK AND RESPONSIBILITY

Early in the nineteenth century, a French duke, Gaston Pierre Marc, wrote in a collection of Maxims and Reflections a two-word statement that has become part of our language: “Noblesse oblige.” Despite historical abuses, it expresses the essence of the Law of Responsibility. “Nobility Obligates” states the obligation people of high rank, position, or favor to behave nobly, kindly and responsibly toward others.

Men and Women have known almost instinctively that as accomplishment and position rise, so do responsibility and burden. With each achievement, society raises its expectation a notch.

With the British of the nineteenth century, the concept of noblesse oblige reached its zenith, sometimes for good, sometimes for not-so-good. Regardless of mistakes, the British nobility perceived that if they were to have their country houses and servants, their privileges and honors, they in turn had to be responsible for the working people.

The British, accepting the responsibility accompanying their position as the world's greatest power in the nineteenth century, challenged the Russians and prevailed. To them, it was noblesse oblige, protecting the people from invaders, pirates and bandits. To others, it often was unadulterated colonialism. In which people were exploited, confined to subservience and poverty. Both views contained an element of truth. Humility and purity, among other virtues, were lacking. Nonetheless, Victorian Britain instinctively realized that the Law of Responsibility was a foundation element of her preeminent position in the nineteenth-century world.

THE U.S. FALTERED

Contrasted with the British leaning toward noblesse oblige were the frequent failures of responsibility by the government of the United States during the second half of this century. To begin with, Americans during most of our history worked hard under the Law of Use. We persevered and following World War II became the strongest power on earth. With that stature came responsibility, especially, in my judgment, the

responsibility to accomplish two goals: to order the world economy and to keep world peace.

On the first point, we began to fail rapidly in the sixties, refusing to measure up to the responsibility. We were flagrant in our spending, igniting the time bomb of inflation, which we exported overseas since every other currency was tied into the U.S. dollar. We printed money faster and faster, sending more abroad than we got back through sales of our own goods, eventually reaching a point where more than \$600 billion dollars of our money was held in foreign banks. This showed little sense of duty, strength, courage, or determination.

In 1971, shirking our responsibility even more, we went off the gold standard, having little choice in light of overseas claims against our currency. Thus inflation exploded across the world.

On the second point, as the leader of the free world, we faltered in our duty to lead in keeping the peace. It became especially critical after the Vietnam debacle, in which our course cost us severely in morale, determination, economic strength and the lives of thousands of valiant youths. From that point on, our neglect went on the downhill slalom. We neglected to keep the peace in Africa, allowing the Communist-led world to take several countries in an unprecedented display of international burglary. We allowed similar conduct in Latin America, where Communists took over Nicaragua and moved upon El Salvador and other countries.

All of this merely solidified a trend that had been building momentum since the end of World War II. For multifaceted reasons, we Americans seem to have no

stomach for the full burden of leadership and responsibility demanded of someone to whom much has been given. We apparently want the position of power but not all the sacrifices of duty that accompany it. Because of historical and cultural factors, we have not developed a national fiber of noblesse oblige.

Yet, God insists on it. The parable told by Jesus about the servant who was made steward over his master's possessions said this about failure to fulfill responsibility: *“And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes...”* (Luke 12:47)

In the eighties and nineties we experienced the pains of our neglect, beleaguered at every turn.

THE ISSUE OF CAPITALISM

Although I believe communism and capitalism in their most extreme, secular manifestations are equally doomed to failure, likely to result in tragic dictatorship, I at the same time believe free enterprise is the economic system most nearly meeting humanity's God-given need for freedom in existence. When greed and materialism displace all spiritual and moral values, capitalism breaks down into ugliness.

In George Gilder's instructive and provocative book, *Wealth and Poverty* written in 1982, he makes a convincing argument that capitalism at least sets out to fulfill generally what I am calling the Laws of Reciprocity and Use.

Giving, according to Gilder, is the vital impulse and moral center of capitalism-adding:

Capitalists are motivated not chiefly by the desire to consume wealth or indulge their appetites, but by the freedom and power to consummate their entrepreneurial ideas. Whether piling up coconuts or designing new computers, they are movers and shakers, doers and givers, obsessed with positive visions of change and opportunity. They are men and women with an urge to understand and act, to master something and transform it, to work out a puzzle and profit from it, to figure out a part of nature and society and turn it to the common good. They are inventors and explorers, boosters and problem solvers; they take infinite pains to strike fast.

Then he drives to the heart of the criticism leveled at the capitalists-their preoccupation with money. But his answers are logical and need to be heard:

Are they greedier than doctors or writers or professors or sociologists? Yes, their goals seem more mercenary. But this is only because money is their very means of production. Just as the sociologist requires books and free time and the bureaucrat needs arbitrary power, the capitalist needs capital...Capitalists need capital to fulfill their role in launching and financing enterprise. Are they self-interested? Presumably. But the crucial fact about them is their deep interest and engagement in the world beyond themselves, impelled by their imagination, optimism and faith.

His assessment is on target, I believe. Capitalism satisfies the freedom-loving side of humanity. It has an inherent quality of giving, of breaking through into new levels of experience. It uses that which it has and fully exploits the exponential curve, and perseverance is one of its tested virtues.

But what about responsibility? As success grows, the responsibility grows. Has the level of fulfillment of that responsibility kept pace? Absolutely not! And that is the problem.

Faith in God presumably will produce an acknowledgement of responsibility toward God and an ongoing and rising responsibility toward mankind. This is where the capitalists most frequently stumble.

And they are not alone. Other conservatives have fallen short, too. This exemplified by the evangelical Christians, who so often find themselves in league with economic and political conservatives. They have been given great understanding and often given much in return. However, they have concentrated almost exclusively on personal salvation, neglecting responsibility for intelligent public policy, international affairs, the poor and oppressed. To whom much enlightenment has been given, much will be required.

We in the developed world-capitalists, evangelicals, everyone-will be held accountable for all that has been given. The people in Africa and South America will not be held to the same level of accountability simply because they have not received as much.

Just think of the Western world! Think of the revelations in law, justice, science medicine and technology. Think of the rewards that have come through capitalism and Christianity, as merely two examples. Those revelations, those rewards, govern what is demanded of us-by God and by man.

The responsibility is great. And this may not be comprehended to the fullest by Gilder and his fellow

conservatives and capitalists. We all need to hear Isaiah, who in his great prophecy spelled out this responsibility, mincing no words in reporting God's instructions. We will look at only one section of them, for they alone are enough to set us in motion with the Law of Responsibility.

“Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast, tell my people of their sins! Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and are so delighted to hear the reading of my laws-just as though they would obey them-just as though they don't despise the commandments of their God! How anxious they are to worship correctly; oh, how they love the Temple service!”

The words echo throughout the New Testament. How God deplores those who hear His Word and do not do it. They wonder why they don't see power in their lives. Isaiah looks at the kinds of questions they throw at God.

“We have fasted before you, they say. Why aren't you impressed? Why don't you see our sacrifices? Why don't you hear our prayers? We have done much penance and you don't even notice it! I'll tell you why! Because you are living in evil pleasure even while you are fasting, and you keep right on oppressing your workers. Look, what good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me...”

No, the Lord says, your revelation carries a responsibility, to Him and to people. He hits the point on workers hard.

No, the kind of fast I want is that you stop oppressing those who work for you and treat them fairly and pay them what they earn.

Then he broadens it.

“I want you to share your food with the hungry and bring right into your own homes those who are helpless, poor and destitute. Clothe those who are cold and don’t hide from relatives who need your help.”

Fulfill your responsibility at the level to which He has raised you, God says, and He will raise you even higher.

If you do these things, God will shed His own glorious light upon you. He will heal you; your godliness will lead you forward and goodness will be a shield before you, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. Then, when you call, the Lord will answer. Yes, I am here, he will quickly reply. All you need to do is to stop oppressing the weak and stop making false accusations and spreading vicious rumors.

From the beginning of the Scriptures to the end, a theme flows relentlessly: God is the enemy of oppression. So must His people be. On His behalf, Isaiah pounds at the issues even more boldly.

Feed the hungry! Help those in trouble!...And the Lord will... satisfy you with all good things...and you will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring.”
(Isaiah 58:1-11)

Give, and it will be given to you. Fulfill your responsibility at your current level if you would rise to a higher one. Blessing carries responsibility.

Unending commitment to that truth would advance the cause of capitalism and free enterprise immensely, carrying it perhaps past the dangers of anarchy and dictatorship. It would also advance the cause of Christianity, perhaps to the point of winning the world, a feat that has thus far eluded us.

THE LAW OF GREATNESS

Most people desire to be great. Because of human frailty, however, this can turn out badly, especially if we think in terms of comparison with others, for that usually spells pride.

But to think more deeply than that is possible. Pride is still a hazard, but one can set goals of accomplishing tasks rather than of performing better than someone else. It's a fine line, but it exists.

Jesus, pointing to that line, spoke of the possibilities of greatness—a purity of greatness, we might say. Indeed, He set forth a two-part principle that I have labeled the Law of Greatness. The world needs it desperately at this hour.

It is easy to forget that the people surrounding Jesus during His earthly ministry were just that—people. Plain, simple, ordinary people. They exhibited the frailties of all of us. For example, at one point, acting a bit like twenty first-century kids quarreling over who's the greatest shortstop in the American League, the disciples came to the Lord and asked, "Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

The answer was remarkable-flying in the face of everything we expect in our day.

And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, *“Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, He is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matthew 18:2-4)

At another time, they fell into a dispute over which of them was regarded as the greatest. They, like us, were very concerned about their status from time to time. But the Lord showed great patience with them.

And He said to them, *“The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’ But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”* (Luke 22:25-27)

Every time the question arose, the answer was the same two-pronged directive: If you want to be great, become like a child and become a servant. And that answer reverberates down through human experience to our day, yet so few of us grasp it.

“Oh, that was OK for what He was doing then,” we say, “but He didn’t understand what it was going to be like in the modern world.”

Or we mumble something like, “That may be all right for church, but you’ll get killed in the real world.”

If you're honest, you have to admit those remarks seem true in the twenty-first century. Knowledge has exploded over the planet and even onto other planets. Man is doing things never dreamed possible. Furthermore, we are in a life and death struggle for minds and bodies. Greatness will be measured by success in that explosion and struggle. And you would think a little child wouldn't have a chance.

We all rationalize that way. Instead we should look at what Jesus was showing us.

What is there about a little child that He wants us to copy? He spoke of three qualities that under normal circumstances predominate in little children: They are trusting. They are teachable. They are humble.

To begin with, little children trust their mothers and fathers. They have to. A baby relies upon his mother to feed him, trusting that she is not going to put poison in his mouth. As he grows, he believes in his parents, usually certain that his daddy is absolutely the greatest man in the world. We all know that many things can work to warp that trust, but basically all children, if treated the way God would have parents treat their offsprings, will have incredible faith in their mothers and fathers. They won't worry about being fed, clothed, or housed. They will simply trust that their parents will meet their needs.

Such total trust in the provision and protection of God is the first giant step toward greatness.

As for being teachable, children, most significantly, will listen.

They have voracious appetites for learning, and since they're starting from zero on planet earth, they know the best way to feed those appetites is to listen. They may ask a lot of questions, but they listen to the answers. "Mama, why is the grass green? Daddy, why are birds flying?"

It never stops. Their minds are set in the inquiry mode.

Too often parents become annoyed, but they need to understand that this is a mark of intelligence. It is desirable and pleasing to the Creator. A child between the ages of four and five will learn more in that one year than a student will in four years of college.

This teachableness has an interesting side effect that I'm sure Jesus had in mind. Children, hungry to learn, will experiment. They are quick to master new ideas, new languages, and new techniques. Their minds are open. If we think of this in the context of God's instructions to Adam and Eve to master and subdue the earth, we see the importance of such inquiry and openness.

They are steps toward greatness.

Then, little children are humble—at least until someone spoils them. You seldom see a young child vaulting himself like something special. This virtue is eventually corrupted by a society that has become increasingly warped through the centuries, but in his very early years a child doesn't care if his dad is a prince or a pauper, highly educated or lacking in training. All he cares is that that man is daddy and he loves him. Usually this carries over to attitudes toward others; he loves people as people, regardless of social status.

Quite, simply, children love life, until we train this quality out of them. When you watch them play, they are free; they throw themselves into situations with abandon, even getting a little reckless. And they'll throw themselves into your arms with absolute delight. While fully content in the fact that their parents are sovereign-it's so good and natural that they never even think to challenge it-they are free to be free. They wear no masks. They're innocent, transparent and genuine. Become like them and you're on the road to greatness.

The New Testament is jammed with urgings toward humility, and we have noted the importance this virtue in simply moving toward the kingdom of God. But we should observe that Jesus, in a parallel passage on greatness, reemphasized that insistence on humility. It is a virtue with more than passing importance. After having said that, *“the greatest among you shall be your servant.”* He continued: *“And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”* (Matthew 23:12)

With that principle, Christ was pointing to a truth that Solomon had unfolded in a different way: *“The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord-are riches, honor and life.”* (Proverbs 22:4) Greatness, summed up as *“riches, honor and life,”* is the reward of those who are humble.

So, in short, Jesus said greatness begins with being trusting, being teachable and being humble. The trusting person puts away cynicism and skepticism, and becomes open. He or she doesn't have to be right all the time. Then they are able to learn-from God, from people, and from circumstances. And that is the definition of a humble person.

A CHALLENGING CONCEPT

In the second episode we examined at the beginning this lesson, Jesus added another criterion for greatness. Quite paradoxically, He said the secret of greatness is service. If you reflect on it, you see that it fits well with being childlike, but then it begins to rub. It goes against the grain of society.

That is why we should be very serious on this subject. We are dealing with a law that turns everything upside down. Little children soon yearn to grow up so they can “be somebody.” Servants, meanwhile, usually hate their position, yearning to earn enough to have their own servants. But Jesus says, “No become a servant if you wish to be truly great.”

This pushes us into a corner where we say, “Do I really want this greatness thing.”

If you’re an average working person, you may have been striving all of your life to escape any image of servant hood, trying to rise to the point, perhaps, where you work for yourself and not for someone else.

As Afro-Americans we’ve known the effects of the struggle against slavery all of our life and the recollection of our race all-too-frequent relegation to the role of household servant. Can anyone challenge our desire to attain to the higher professions and cast off once and for all the idea of serving someone else?

And if you’ve experienced management-labor relations, you understand that no manager has any true desire to be a servant of the labor ranks and no laboring person

will accept the slightest hint that they are a servant of management or anyone else.

If you're a politician, you smile indulgently when someone refers to you as a "public servant;" you really prefer the role of celebrity.

If you're a minister of the gospel, "successful" and well-known on the speaking circuit or perhaps on television, the chances are great that you're far more comfortable signing autographs and sitting at head tables than being a servant to the flock.

You see, there will be a cost for true greatness. For our attitudes-**wrong ones**-are well solidified, despite the fact that we have had examples of true greatness over the years.

Our generation considered Albert Schweitzer to be a great man and most-even those who disagreed with his theology-would acknowledge that his was true greatness. Why? Because he became like a child and like a servant. He gave his life for the sick and oppressed. He was trusting, teachable and humble. He was a servant.

A scientist, musician, philosopher and theologian, he left what the world would have considered to be the road to greatness in Germany and went to Africa to labor among primitive, underprivileged people in a little village. Establishing a hospital, he lived his life out in full service to others, continually learning, continually enthusiastic, continually innocent.

Even the modern world, as we know it, came to understand that his greatness was somehow different from the greatness most men sought. Year after year,

he is numbered at the top of the list of outstanding people.

Similarly, polls measuring the ten most admired women in the world place a remarkable Roman Catholic nun, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, at the top of the list. This was a woman who gave up everything, in materialistic terms, to go among the poor, downtrodden masses of India to feed them, clothe them, house them and love them.

Hers is a role of a servant through and through, a refusal to lord it over anyone, and yet we somehow know she has achieved greatness.

Stepping back through history, we encounter Father Damien, the Belgian priest who gave himself entirely to service to the leper colony in Hawaii in the mid-nineteenth century. His was true greatness.

And there is Hudson Taylor, the missionary who turned away from a life of comfort in Britain to throw himself into service of the suffering and lost Chinese. His greatness still rings in the annals of missionary service.

And there was Florence Nightingale, the English nurse from a wealth family who served heroically in the Crimean War and became known as the founder of modern nursing.

These unusual humanitarians were among those who found the key to success through the Law of Greatness.

IT WORKS IN BUSINESS

The business world, too, has produced greatness. And we need to understand that the principles set forth by

Jesus are pragmatic and effective in the hard-nosed give-and-take of free enterprise.

Henry Ford was a good illustration. He wanted to make inexpensive, efficient transportation available to as many people as possible. So he came up with the Model T. Before long he was serving thousands with cheap transportation. The more he served the more money he made and the greater his business became. He became the greatest figure in the auto industry.

Japan is on track regarding the Law of Greatness. Their, thoughts of service penetrated deeper into the industrial consciousness. The desire grew to end shoddiness in automobiles and give the customers the best products on the road. The industry would serve the people.

Secondly, management and labor began to work at the idea of becoming servants of one another. Companies took pains to instill in their managers the thought that they were servants of the workers. "We're here to make their jobs better, to improve their environment, to solve their problems," they repeated. Furthermore, they became like little children and listened to their workers. "We want to learn from you," management said and before long workers were each submitting an average of eighteen suggestions a year for improving the work process; and management was adopting at least 80 percent.

The employees, meanwhile, were constantly reinforced in their understanding, through attitudes and material rewards, that they were servants of the customers.

Serving is a concept that works at every level, even in an enterprise as massive as the automobile industry of a major, very prosperous nation. For, as the world knows, the Japanese auto industry overwhelmed everyone, even gaining a foothold in America that has resulted in a major market share.

The principle works in other industries, too. J.C. Penney, for example, embraced the concept of giving a square deal to everyone-honest merchandise, honest measure, and honest price. With that in mind, he developed a giant chain of stores across America, becoming a great man in merchandising.

IT IS NEEDED NOW

So a life principle emerges. Those who serve others-whether in religion, education, science, art, government or business-are the great ones. Indeed, the deeper the sacrifice or broader the scope of service, the greater the individual becomes.

And rarely will our society award the status of greatness to those who lust for personal power and seek to exalt themselves. How often we hear applied to such persons the phrases “tyrant... Hitlers... ruthless... vain.” And though occasionally these people rise to prominence, they never touch true greatness. Invariably the Law of Reciprocity brings them down.

Looking around us in the twenty-first century, we would probably find a consensus that if ever greatness was needed in the world, it is now. We have few real statesmen of international stature, for example. Instead of greatness of spirit, we find meanness and greed. Our vision is dim.

We frankly need leadership at every level, especially in the international realm, as Armageddon looms closer with each passing day. We need men and women to lead our nation in taking on the responsibilities and the risks of serving other nations, helping them to achieve their potential, helping them with education, agriculture and industry.

We need to dare to live the Beatitudes at this level, to be trusting, teachable and humble, to discover perhaps for the first time in history how a man who is a servant can lead. We had such an opportunity with President Jimmy Carter. But because of our upside down concept of greatness we perceived his servant's heart as weakness.

In addition to the Law of Greatness being spiritually and biblically sound, this course of action yields practical results. The nation that does the most for others will be the one growing in greatness, the one other nations, customers, will turn to, the one whose products will sweep around the world. That nation will be exalted, elevated, enlarged as the Laws of Reciprocity and Use take hold.

As with nations, so with all of us.

THE LAW OF UNITY

Great creativity occurs where there is unity. God's tremendous power is released where there is harmony. Unity is central to the way heaven works. Perhaps the most powerful illustration of that is found in the Bible account of the creation. *"Then God said, let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness....." (Genesis 1:26).*

This is the only part of the Creation where such language is used. Although this passage presents many significant facts, there is one specific fact we should see here: Within the Godhead (the court of heaven) there was agreement and harmony. God moves in unity. Harmony is central to the understanding of God's incredible power.

There is a multiplication factor in unity as well. We see it in something Moses said to all of Israel as he approached the end of his life. Just one person standing on the Rock, he said, would chase a thousand of the enemy, while two would put ten thousand to flight. Unity does not cause a mere doubling or tripling of power; the progression explodes exponentially. Denise Jones, of our Prayer Request Team coined the credo of this ministry:

STANDING TOGETHER AS 1

A QUEST FOR UNITY

Unity must begin with the individual. If you are going to experience the power that can change the world, you must be unified within yourself. You must have internal harmony. In the Bible, James addresses this point specifically. "A double-minded man, will not receive anything from the Lord."

We cannot serve two masters. We cannot put our spouse and Jesus first in our lives at the same time. We cannot put our job ahead of everything and serve Jesus as Lord at the same time. Our problem is that we make a gap between the two, seeing them as two masters, and try to put each one first. That leads to spiritual schizophrenia (double-mindedness) and breakdown.

The solution, of course, is to be single-minded. Put Jesus first, and then He will say, "Love your wife as I loved the church." "Honor your husband in all things." A spouse can get no greater love than that. Similarly, put Jesus first and He will say, "When you undertake a task, do it with all your might." A job can get no more attention than that.

Single-mindedness is the solution to the internal desperation so many people regularly experience. It removes the terrible burden and heaviness that weigh upon the chest of many that stand on the brink of mental collapse.

When we have unity centered on a goal or dream there is an inherent success factor, a guarantee of its reality. Abraham had unified his quest in life. He did not fall victim to spiritual schizophrenia, which wreck so many lives. When we are torn between the pursuit of worldly goals and the pursuit of the Christian life, there's ultimate failure. Saints please hear the words of David today: *"My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed..." (Psalms 57:7)*

A COLLECTIVE PRINCIPLE

The Bible is precise in showing that what is true for the individual is true for the family, the group, the organization, the nation, and the church. *"....Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand." (Matthew 12:25)*

Although Jesus was referring to the kingdom of satan, the principle of unity apply everywhere. Even works of evil will collapse unless the evil forces are unified.

Successful organizations, as well as successful individuals, are those unified around a relatively simple statement of goals and mission. A double-minded man is "unstable in all his ways. So is a double-minded business, or a double-minded church.

It is important we understand that unity emanating from the truth of the kingdom of God does not insist on uniformity. God is not looking for a collection of robots. He is seeking people with varying personalities, talents, and styles who are unified in purpose and will work toward the common good.

When we use the Godly principle of unity harmoniously, we can overcome the crises of our century.

Keenly aware of this the night before He was crucified, Jesus prayed:

"I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me." (John 17:20-23)

Jesus knew that the fulfillment of the purpose of God would require unity. Without it there would be no flow of power to save the world and to perfect His people.

Our problem in the twenty-first century, as we perish for a lack of knowledge, is that it does us no good to have God-given authority if we don't exercise it.

Yet we have tried so hard in many cases to take seriously the words of Jesus, "*All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth, Go therefore.....*" (Matthew 28:18,19). Jesus has already accomplished the work. He has destroyed "the works of the devil," which included the robbery performed in the Garden of Eden. He, the King of Kings, has all authority. Therefore, He declares, "go."

When man, through Jesus, reasserts God's dominion over himself, then he is capable of reasserting his God-given dominion over everything else. That is the way everything on earth will be freed from the cycle of despair, cruelty, bondage, and death.

God wants us to stand in unity, assume our rightful authority and hasten the coming of the kingdom on earth. Jesus emphasized this when He said: "*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.*" (Matthew 24:14)

You see, there are many signs of the end times that we can watch for, but this one is the most critical. 'The gospel of the kingdom in all its fullness and power, with all its authority, is to be carried to every nation. Timidity must vanish. There will be "signs and wonders ... miracles and other evidences of the kingdom. Unity will guarantee it.

I challenge you to unity! Unity in your family, unity in your church, unity in your business, unity in your goals, and dreams. In that unity you will experience the explosion of the miraculous in your life and lives of your loveones. Label me a radical, and you would be

absolutely right...I am a Believer and all Believers are radical.

THE LAW OF MIRACLES

To reach into the spiritual and cause it to become physical is called a miracle. There is a God given "Law of Miracles." It governs the question of God's willingness to disrupt His natural order in order to accomplish His purpose on planet earth. When God does disrupt that natural order, the result is a miracle, a contravention of the natural laws through which He usually works moment by moment. He overrides the way in which things normally operate.

Since God is almighty, the only absolutely free being in the universe not bound even by His own creation. He is perfectly able at any time to change the way things are done. He can heal a body instantly, He can still a storm, and He can move a mountain. Those are all miracles.

Even then, however, He works within principles, and they frame the Law of Miracles. That means we need to understand the law and act on it, for Jesus introduced a new order of normality at the Day of Pentecost. With the power of the Holy Spirit, miracles were to be the normal. He expected His followers to do even greater things than He did. After all, during His incarnation He rebuked them for failing to do miracles like walking on water and casting out demons. And He praised an outsider, A Roman centurion, who perceived Christ's spiritual authority and discerned the relationship between the spiritual and the natural. "Just say the word and my servant will be healed," the centurion said.

Jesus marveled at the Roman's understanding....."I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel," He said. That is what today's believer must discover.

THE UMBRELLA OF FAITH

"Have faith in God," Jesus said. We must believe that God exists, trust Him, expect Him to enter into communion with us, to show us His divine will and purpose. Remembering that faith is the title deed to the reservoir of power residing in the Holy Spirit. It is all ours, if we know the RULES OF MIRACLES.

First, we are to take our eyes off the circumstances and the impossibilities and to look to God and the possibilities.

We have an excellent example from the Scriptures to illustrate this point. Remember Joshua and Caleb. Representing the twelve tribes of Israel, they and ten others were sent as spies to determine if God's people should enter into the promise land. They stayed forty days and returned with reports of a marvelous land filled with milk and honey, but there were also giants living in the fortified cities.

"They are too strong for us," ten of the spies said.

But Caleb and Joshua, who were to figure prominently in Israel's future, were enthusiastic and eager to move ahead. "It doesn't matter how many giants there are. The Lord is with us." They looked at God and not the circumstances; they reflected the attitude God wants to see in us today. Yet the ten others prevailed, exploiting the fears of the Israelites. They succumbed to their crisis, ignoring the principles of the miraculous, and failed to take what was theirs. The records show us,

only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter into the promise land. The only two who took their eyes off the circumstances and the impossibilities and focus on God and the possibilities?

Second, we are not to doubt in our hearts.

We have seen in previous lessons that spirit controls matter, the lesser authority yields to the greater authority and that the mind and voice are the instruments by which the will of the spirit is transmitted to the physical.

For miracles to happen through us, God's Will must first be transmitted by the Holy Spirit to our spirit. Then, Jesus declared, we must not doubt in our hearts. The inmost center of our being, which the Bible calls the "heart" or the "spirit" must be focused on the objective at all times. We must be like Abraham, who against all hope believed God would grant him a son by his 90-year-old wife Sarah. *"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."* (Romans 4:20, 21)

In fact, the persuasion in our spirit must be so strong that it seems to us the desired result has already taken place. As Jesus put it, "believe that you have received: and you will have what you say."

Jesus further tells us to command the mountain to move. Scripture points to the fact that Jesus stilled a storm by speaking to it, raised three dead people by speaking to them, cleansed a leper by speaking to him,

and healed a Roman officer's servant by speaking the Word from a remote location.

So we see that miracles begin with certainty that God is present and that He has a purpose. Then, we His people, translate that purpose into the physical world by invoking His unlimited power. We do it with our mouths, speaking the Word of the Lord to the mountain, to the disease, to the storm, to the demons, and to the finances. We do not pray further, unless the situation specifically calls for prayer, like in the area of generational curses or historical strongholds. Please don't misunderstand me, prayer is extremely important, and we are never to neglect it. In fact Jesus gave us example after example, of going off by Himself to pray, often for hours. And the Scripture writers are relentless in their admonitions to pray. Paul went so far as to tell us to pray without ceasing.

But once God's will is disclosed, then it is time to shift to speaking.

On the Day of Pentecost when the power of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, an evidence of their anointing was their speaking in tongues. Their voices were empowered by the Holy Spirit, a miracle that continues to be experienced by us today through what is known as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. From there, the disciples entered into ministry more miraculous than any they had known. They had been clothed with power from on high.

THE MAJOR HINDRANCE

Having faith, seeing, refusing to doubt and speaking are all critically important parts of the Law of Miracles. But

Jesus made another point in the episode with the fig tree. Many people wish He hadn't.

“And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.” (Mark 11:25)

With those few words, He set forth the major hindrance to the working of miracles in the physical world-the lack of forgiveness. Men and women, Christians and non-Christians, carry grudges. Any power of God within them is eaten up by resentment.

Is there any wonder that we see so little of the miraculous intervention of God in the affairs of believers today?

We noted earlier that our initial view of God and our entrance into kingdom blessings depend on being born again and allowing the Lord to remove the cloud of sin between us and God. That unobstructed view must continue if we are to evidence the miraculous. Being born again merely sets the process in motion; we must then walk step by step in a state of forgiveness. John the apostle said it this way: *“... if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son (continuously) cleanses of from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)*

He went on to say that the one who hates his brother, who is not in a state of forgiveness with him, walks in the darkness and doesn't know where he's going. Thus walking in the light equates to living in proper relationships, which also means that we can be

cleansed of our sins. The blood of Jesus does not cleanse in the dark or in a state of unforgiveness. Without forgiveness, our view of God and His kingdom is clouded. We see very limited to no miracles.

In this matter, the Lord does not appear to be speaking of the loss of eternal salvation, for we have learned that this comes by grace through faith, not works. He is not saying a grudge will prevent you from ultimately going to heaven; He can be expected to deal with that at the proper time. Rather, He is declaring that if we want to experience the miraculous now, it is imperative that we live in a condition of forgiveness. Unforgiveness is not a characteristic acceptable in the kingdom of God. It contradicts the doctrine of forgiveness itself. We will cover the entire forgiveness doctrine in a later lesson.

If all the law and all the prophets hinge on loving God with our entire being and loving our neighbors as ourselves, then unforgiveness can shatter everything. It reveals, among other things, the horrible sin of pride. For only the humble can forgive-those who surrender anger, feelings and reputation to the Will of God.

NO SMALL MATTER

We must see that these concerns are for our own good. Resentment, for example, eats into a person like cancer. Indeed, it often causes sickness, both spiritual and physical, that can be debilitating and defy medical treatment. That is why the Lord dealt with the issue so many times.

One well-know dialogue occurred with Peter right after a bit of instruction on unity: *“Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me*

and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’” (Matthews 18:21, 22)

Increasing the impact of the lesson, the Lord went on to tell a parable about a nobleman’s slave who was forgiven a debt of \$10 million dollars after coming close to being sold along with his family on the slave market to recover the money. The man turned around and seized another slave who owed him \$100 dollars and had him thrown into prison for non payment. Here is how Jesus concluded the parable:

“Then summoning him (the first man), his lord said to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?’ And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you do not forgive his brother from your heart.” (Matthew 18:32-35)

It is no small matter and I regret that the church through the years has not dealt more forcefully with it. As members of the kingdom, totally indebted to our loving heavenly Father, we must maintain an attitude and an atmosphere that promote harmony with our brothers. If we refuse to do that, we do receive the blessings from our Father and we block the flow of the miraculous power.

Our principle weapon in the crises we face in the world is love and love operates only in a state of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Pettiness must go, as well as, jealousy, pride, lack of concern for others and neglect of the poor and needy.

MIRACLES ARE AVAILABLE

If we would live in the kingdom of God today, by grace through faith, we would see far more miracles. We need only to look to Paul's instructions to the Corinthian church to discover the miracle experiences that were considered normal in that day.

He spoke of them as "manifestations" that unblocked the presence of the Holy Spirit and brought forth the supernatural.

"For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues." I Corinthian 12:8-10.

These are the supernatural evidences of God's favor and grace. They are among the effects of the blowing of the Spiritual wind in our lives. When the wind blows, tree leaves move. When the Spirit blows other things move as well. God wants each of us to reach into the spiritual world and allow him to perform miracles through us in the physical world. He will do it without limits of time, distance and circumstances. He waits for us to practice the principles he has set forth in the Scriptures. Let's put the "Rules of Miracles into practice today.

THE LAW OF DOMINION

Almighty God wants us to recapture the dominion we held in the beginning and rule as we were intended to rule. He has gone to great lengths to make that possible, sending His own Son as the second Adam to restore what was lost in Eden.

The Genesis account used two colorful words to describe this. One, *radah*, we translate "dominion." We have dominion. The word means to "rule over" or "tread down." It comes from a Hebrew root meaning to "spread out" or "prostrate." The picture we get from it is one of all the creation spread out before man, whose dominion would extend wherever his feet touched.

The other word, *kabash*, is translated "subdue." Man was told to subdue the earth. The root means, "to trample under foot," as one would do when washing dirty clothes. Therefore, in *kabash* we have in part the concept of separating good from evil by force.

With the first word, *radah*, God gives man the authority to govern all that is willing be governed. With the second, *kabash*, He grants man authority over the untamed and total mandate of dominion over this planet and everything in it. But stewardship requires responsibility. And implicit in the grant was a requirement that man order the planet according to God's Will and for His purposes. This was a grant of freedom, not of license. God's intention was that His world be governed and subdued by those who themselves were governed by God. But man, as we know, did not want to remain under God's sovereignty. He wanted to be like God without having anyone tell him what to do.

The progression toward the "Fall" is enlightening. First, note that God, after giving man dominion over the fish,

the fowl, the cattle, and all the earth, specified that this authority extended to "every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Man specifically had dominion over serpents.

Then, we ask, what happened when Eve was faced with a challenge by the serpent? She faltered and allowed the serpent to convince her that God's grant of sovereignty was faulty. She refused, and, worse than that, the serpent took authority over her and manipulated her. Worse yet, with that first erosion, mankind allowed virtually all of this dominion to slip away.

It was the Law of Use in operation. Refuse to use what we have been given and we will lose it. Since that time, Satan has been exercising a type of dominion over human beings, deceiving them, and destroying them.

God wants man to repossess that original dominion. He is ready to cause the Law of Use to work in our favor, if we will but begin to exercise what has been given.

The concept of man's dominion over the created order is too much for us to comprehend unless we get a secure grip on the fact that the Lord thinks of us as fellow workers with Him in the development and operation of His kingdom.

You see, the Bible's view is that God, in a mystery too great for us to fathom, has chosen to use us to carry the truth around the world. To accomplish this, He had to give us authority.

Obviously, in the Lord's mind authority went hand in hand with the proclamation of the kingdom. Authority authenticated the kingdom. How would it be possible to

say there was a kingdom of God that was to supplant the kingdom of Satan unless it carried power and authority?

Those two words, "power" and "authority," are rooted in Luke 9:1 & 2. First, the passage says, the Lord gave them "power," which is translated from the Greek word *dunamis*. It means "resident power." Dynamite, for example, has that kind of power. Christians who have the Holy Spirit operating in their lives also have it. It is the power to perform miracles.

In addition to power, the Lord also gave them "authority." This is translated from the Greek word *exousia*. It, too, carries with it the idea of force and power, specifically in the sense of authority like that of a magistrate or potentate.

Quite simply, Jesus gave us power to perform miracles and authority to use that power over the devil and all creation.

Too many times, we fall into the devil's trap of believing that we can somehow earn our dominion. If we fall for that, we will never feel worthy, and we will never use the dominion given to us. We will never overcome the crises of the world.

If Satan can keep us in a state of timidity, discouragement, or embarrassment, he will nullify our authority and delay the manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth.

In practical terms, the Law of Dominion works much like the Law of Miracles. It depends on the spoken word. We are to take authority by voicing it, whether it involves the devil or any part of the creation.

We should not argue with satan. We merely tell him that he has to go that he has no authority, that he must release this person or that situation. Quite bluntly, we say, "In the name of Jesus, I command you to get out of here, satan!" And mean it.

In the power, we tell the storm to quiet, the crops to flourish, the floodwater to recede, the attacking dog to stop. We simply speak the word aloud.

Again, the central point is to "have faith in God." But we do not have to await a directive from Him in ordinary circumstances as to when to exercise the authority, assuming that we are walking in His will and yielded to His sovereignty. For He has already given us general guidelines: *"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and the birds in the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."* (Genesis 1:28)

This especially covers "every creeping thing that creeps on the earth," symbolizing the one described in Christ's time as "the ruler of this world," who has now been utterly defeated. Even though we still must struggle against those forces that willingly choose to ally themselves with satan, that struggle has already been decided.

Paul described it this way: *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."* (Ephesians 6:12) God is raising an army that will stand firm in this evil day and magnify His authority. The instrument for wielding that authority is the "Word of God."

We simply are to speak forth our God-restored authority, preparing for an even more amazing life of victory.

*"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man....."
Genesis 1:26, 27.*

WHAT WILL MANKIND DO?

So, then, here we stand. What will mankind do? Will we continue to ignore the principles governing the way the world works? Or will we apply kingdom principles?

I appeal to people everywhere to lay hold of the truths of our world-the Bible's insights into the way it works-and put them into action. There is still time.

- Give and it will be given to you. This principle will not fail. We simply must begin to execute it. Individuals, families, companies, and nations must press in on giving. Imagine what our times would be like if we treated others the way we wanted to be treated.
- Take what you already have and put it to use. Don't wait until you have everything you want. Use what you have. Multiply it exponentially, consistently, persistently. The wonders of the world will explode into fullness.
- Do not give up. Persevere. Endure. Keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking. The world will keep on responding.

- Be diligent to fulfill the responsibility required of you. If God and men have entrusted talent, possessions, money, or fame to you, they expect a certain level of performance. Don't let them down!
- Resist society's inducement to success and greatness and dare to become a servant, even childlike. True leadership and greatness will follow. The one who serves will become the leader.
- Reject the dissension and negativism of the world. Choose harmony and unity at every level of life—unity centered on the Will of God. Mankind flowing in unity will accomplish marvelous results.
- Be humble enough, yet bold enough, to expect and to do miracles fulfilling the purpose of the Lord. Once and for all, become aware of the power of your speech as you walk humbly and obediently. Most importantly, grasp and fully appreciate the significance of the principle of forgiveness.
- As a follower of the Son of God, assume the authority, power and dominion that God intends for men to exercise over the rest of creation. Recapture that which prevailed in the Garden of Eden before the fall. Move with power and authority.

Obviously, there are additional laws of the kingdom that the Lord wants us to learn, and He will reveal them if we seek Him. But we can, and should begin to adhere to those that are now plain before us.

I have good news today, all is not lost. True, *“the axe is already laid at the root of the trees,”* (Matthew 3:10) as John the Baptist warned nearly two thousand years ago, and those things running contrary to God's purpose will

be cut down. The process has presumably already begun. God's plans will not be circumvented. Yet the movement to ultimate fulfillment need not be one of terror and agony. The crises of the world can be relieved. Just in themselves, the laws of the kingdom can accomplish that. The world for you and your loved ones can be a far better place as it moves toward fulfillment.

At some point, however, the laws by themselves will not be enough. A choice will have to be made regarding the kingdom itself. Relief will only go so far. There will be a final shaking by God and only the kingdom will survive.

So why wait? Why separate the laws of the kingdom from allegiance to the King? Choose Him this moment. It can all be ours right now!

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32)