



## ***THE PERFECTION PROCESS***



***Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)***



## ***INTRODUCTION***

***Just as a good foundation is important to a building in the natural world, a good spiritual foundation is important for the believer. Through the parable of the two builders you learned that your spiritual foundation must be built on the Word of God.***

***Hebrews 6:1-3 reveals that the foundations of the Christian faith are:***

***-Repentance from dead works -Faith toward God -  
Doctrine of baptism -Laying on of hands -Resurrection of  
the dead -Eternal judgment***

*These are basic doctrines of the Word of God.*



## **PERFECTION**

*In Hebrews 6:1-3 Paul gives an additional step which is necessary in building your spiritual life:*

*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. (Hebrews 6:1)*

*Repentance from dead works, faith toward God, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment are all principles of the doctrine of Christ.*

*Two extremes are common among believers. One is that they have a knowledge of the Word of God but do not apply that knowledge to daily living. The other extreme is that believers emphasize experience and ignore doctrine. Both doctrine and experience are important. A proper understanding of doctrine results in experience. But experience that is not based on Biblical doctrine is not trustworthy.*

*You must not only understand the basic doctrines of Hebrews 6:1-3 but you must also experience them. Once you have built your life on these doctrines through experience, you must learn how to "go on unto perfection". That is the purpose of this message.*



## **DEFINITION**

*The word "perfection" means complete, finished, and mature. The Bible uses the word "perfection" rather than "maturity" to describe a spiritually mature believer. A "perfect" Christian is one who has achieved spiritual maturity. This means his body, soul, and spirit are under the control of the Holy Spirit.*

*The word "perfection" is similar to the word "sanctification" or "consecration" which are also used in the Bible. "Sanctification" means holiness and "consecration" means to be set apart in righteousness.*



## **TWO DANGERS**

*There are two dangers if spiritual foundations are emphasized without attention to perfection:*

- 1. One danger is to lay a good spiritual foundation and not go on to spiritual maturity.*
- 2. The other danger is to attempt to build a "superstructure" of perfection on a faulty spiritual foundation.*



## **COMPLETING THE FOUNDATION**

*A foundation is not a completed building. A superstructure must be built on the foundation. A superstructure is that part of a building which is visible above the foundation. A good spiritual foundation is not the final goal for a believer:*

*Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him.*

*Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

*(Luke 14:29-30)*

*Many people begin with God. They hear the Gospel, repent from dead works, and have faith toward God, but they never progress beyond this point. They never complete their spiritual foundation and go on to perfection.*

*A partial foundation in the natural world is not functional. You cannot construct a building on a partial foundation or it will collapse under stress. You must complete the foundation and then construct the building.*

*Believers who have not completed their spiritual foundations will have difficulty under stress. They will live "up and down" lives spiritually. Their spiritual building will not weather the storms of life. They cannot go on to perfection [spiritual maturity] because their foundation is incomplete.*

## ***BUILDING THE SUPERSTRUCTURE***

***In the natural world, a foundation alone is not very functional. It is the building constructed on that foundation that serves as a home, office, or school. The reason some people are spiritually immature is because they only lay a spiritual foundation and never finish the building by going on to perfection.***

***Paul spoke of these spiritually immature believers:***

***For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not strong meat.***

***For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: For he is a babe.***

***But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14)***

***Paul told the Corinthian believers that it was time they should be teaching others the Gospel. Instead, they were having to be taught the first [foundational] principles of God. He compared them to babies who only could drink milk. By "milk" he meant the first principles of God.***

***Milk is very healthy and brings growth, but there comes a time when a baby goes on to solid foods:***

*Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. (Isaiah 28:9)*

*Just as weaning from milk is necessary in the natural world if a child is to develop properly, it is also necessary in the spiritual world. Believers must go beyond first principles on to spiritual maturity [perfection]. Spiritually mature believers are able to feast on the "meat", not just the "milk", of the Word of God.*



### ***THE CALL TO PERFECTION***

*Jesus calls His followers to perfection:*

*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)*

*This perfection reflects the presence of God:*

*I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one.  
(John 17:23)*

*It results in spiritual maturity:*

*Brethren, be not children in understanding...in understanding be men.*

*(I Corinthians 14:20)*

*Perfection was a goal of the early church. Paul wrote:*

*For...this also we wish, even your perfection...*

*...Be perfect... (II Corinthians 13:9,11)*

*Individual perfection results in your being perfectly joined together with other believers in the Body of Christ:*

*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (I Corinthians 1:10)*

*Divisions in the Body of Christ are a result of spiritual immaturity.*



## **THE EXAMPLE OF PERFECTION**

*Jesus is the example of perfection for believers:*

*For even hereunto were ye called: Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. (I Peter 2:21)*

*For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (Hebrews 2:10)*

*And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. (Hebrews 5:9)*

*God planned believers to be conformed [be made like]  
Jesus who is our example of perfection:*

*For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to  
be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be  
the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)*



### ***THE STANDARD OF PERFECTION***

*The standard of perfection by which believers are  
measured is God's Word. Jesus was the example of  
perfection and conformed perfectly to the Word because  
He was the visible revelation of God's Word. God has set  
standards in His Word which are to govern our lives. The  
first standards He gave man were called the "law" and  
are recorded in the first five books of the Old Testament.*

*Much of the history of the Old Testament records the  
inability of man to keep God's laws. God knew man would  
not be able to keep the law through his own efforts. But  
God had some specific purposes for giving the law. One of  
the purposes of the law was to show men their sinful  
condition. Another purpose was to show them that they  
could not become righteous by their own efforts:*

*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be  
justified in His sight: For the law is the knowledge of sin.  
(Romans 3:20)*



*God did not leave us in this hopeless condition. Through the law He promised the Messiah:*

*I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.*

*And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.*

*(Deuteronomy 18:18-19)*

*In Acts 3:22-26 these same words are quoted by the Apostle Peter and applied to the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*In the Old Testament, various sacrifices were required by God for sin. After Jesus sacrificed His life for the sin of all mankind, the Old Testament sacrifices were no longer necessary:*

*For the law having a shadow of good things to come...can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect...*

*For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:1,14)*

*The purpose of the law is summarized in these words:*

*But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

*But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*

*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (Galatians 3:22-24)*

*Man could not keep the standards of a righteous God through self-effort. The law showed the need for a Savior and led man to Jesus Christ. It is through Christ, not self-effort, that you are perfected. It is through Him that you are conformed to His example of perfection and to the standard of the Word of God.*

*For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope [Christ] did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. (Hebrews 7:19)*



## **LEVELS OF PERFECTION**

*There are two levels of perfection:*

### **INITIAL PERFECTION:**

*In I Corinthians 1:2 Paul calls the believers "saints" which means "sanctified ones". Yet in the same letter he corrects these "saints" because of sin. They were believers and sanctified in Christ, but some of them were not living right in their daily conduct.*

*These believers had received initial perfection. They were forgiven of their sins through redemption from dead works. These sins were forgiven once and for all (Hebrews 10:14). This initial perfection was received at the time they accepted Jesus as Savior. But these Christians had not gone on to perfection. They had not continued to put off the "old man" of sin:*

*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

*(Romans 6:6)*

*Paul told them it was not right to continue living in sin after conversion. He said:*

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (II Corinthians 5:17)*

*As a believer you should live a new life. It is not right to continue in sin. Paul said:*

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

*God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

*Therefore...we also should walk in newness of life.  
(Romans 6:1,2,4)*

*We must go on to perfection.*



## **PROGRESSIVE PERFECTION:**

*Initial perfection from sin at the time of salvation is the start of a progressive life of sanctification. After salvation, you are to live a new life in Christ:*

*I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)*

*Paul described progressive perfection in his own life:*

*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.  
(Philippians 3:12)*

*Paul had not attained complete perfection, but it was his goal. He described his struggle for perfection in another passage:*

*For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

*If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that is good.*

*Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

*For I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

*For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

*Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

*I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*

*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:*

*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Romans 7:15-23)*

*Paul wanted to live by God's standards, but he realized that by himself [in his flesh] he could not achieve this goal. There was a constant battle between his flesh and his spirit. His spirit wanted to keep God's laws (verse 22). His flesh wanted to sin. He discovered that the only way he could achieve perfection was through Christ:*

*And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

*But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you.*

*...but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (Romans 8:10,11,13)*

*It is only through the Spirit of God that you can overcome the evil desires of the flesh and conform to God's standards. When the "flesh" results in you doing those "things we would not", God has provided a way to restore you to perfection.*

*For if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (I John 1:9)*

*You do not have to try to live this new life in your own strength. You live it through "faith in the Son of God". Whenever you fail, you can be restored to perfection before God by confessing your sins and asking forgiveness.*

*When you are born again, you are just like a baby in the natural world. You have much to learn spiritually. While you are learning you make mistakes. When you make mistakes, you must confess your sins and God will forgive you.*

*As a believer, you fight your enemy, satan. This is a spiritual battle which takes place in your mind and through the circumstances of life around you. On occasion, you may lose a battle to the enemy. But this does not mean he has won the war. You may temporarily go down in defeat but through confession of your sins you*

*can rise again in righteousness to continue on to perfection.*

*As you learned in a previous message, Jesus has already judged satan. Satan was defeated by Jesus at Calvary. The power of God within you is greater than the power of the enemy:*

*...Greater is He that is within you than he that is in the world.*

*(I John 4:4)*

*You go on to perfection through the strength of this power, not human effort. Going on to perfection is not a course in self-improvement. It is learning to live as the new creature you are through faith in Christ Jesus.*



*The following things are necessary for the perfection process to occur in your life:*

### ***A GOOD FOUNDATION:***

*As you have learned in this message, a good spiritual foundation is required to go on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1-3).*

### ***RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD:***

*One of the purposes of the Word of God is to provide correction which results in perfection:*

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

*That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (II Timothy 3:16-17)*

*Just studying God's Word will not perfect you. You must make a personal response to the Word:*

*Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls.*

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

*For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass;*

*For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.  
(James 1:21-25)*

*You must not only look into God's law, but "continue" [live] according to it. You must make a personal response to the Word by laying aside all "filthiness and naughtiness". Being a doer of the Word brings assurance of salvation:*



*But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: Hereby know we that we are in Him. (I John 2:5)*

**PRAYER:**

*Prayer results in perfection:*

*...always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Colossians 4:12)*

**CONSECRATION:**

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

*And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)*

*By consecrating your life to God you will know His perfect will. Consecration means to be set apart. When you consecrate your life to God you refuse to conform to the standards of the world. You choose to conform to the standards of God's Word.*

**GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

*One of the purposes of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is to assist the perfection process in your life. As you learned*

*in a previous message , God has ministry gifts in the church for...*

*...the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;*

*Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.  
(Ephesians 4:12-13)*

### ***SUBMISSION TO PROVEN MINISTRIES:***

*God uses spiritual leaders in the perfection process. You should submit to the leadership of those God sets in authority in the church. Submission to "proven" ministries means submitting to spiritual leaders whose ministries have shown conformity to God's Word. The role of spiritual leaders in the perfection process is revealed in Paul's writings:*

*Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith. (I Thessalonians 3:10)*

*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 1:28) ...always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Colossians 4:12)*

*...this also we wish, even your perfection. (II Corinthians 13:9)*

## ***SUFFERING:***

***No one likes to suffer. Suffering is caused by the enemy as well as our own choices, but when suffering comes in the life of a believer it can have a positive result:***

***Suffering results in perfection:***

***But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.***

***(I Peter 5:10)***

***Patience during times of suffering results in perfection:***

***But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (James 1:4)***

## ***SELF-CONTROL:***

***Part of the process of perfection is learning self-control.***

***We are told to...***

***...cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (II***

***Corinthians 7:1)***

***One of the most difficult things to control is the tongue. But control of the tongue is a key to self-control of your whole life:***

***If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. (James 3:2)***



## ***RESPONDING TO SPIRITUAL CORRECTION:***

***Correction received from mature believers is also part of the perfection process:***

***Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.***

***(Galatians 6:1)***

***You will be restored to perfection if you respond properly to such correction.***



## ***SUMMARY***

***Spiritual maturity does not mean advancing in God's favor. It does not mean the work of salvation is incomplete. It does not gain you access to Heaven, because this was done through the death of Jesus Christ. It is through Jesus you are justified before God. It is through Him you are saved and have the promise of Heaven.***

***Perfection does not come by maintaining a set of standards. It is possible for a person to maintain standards that give an outward spiritual appearance yet be unspiritual and maybe even unsaved.***

*Spiritual maturity does not depend on how you feel emotionally. It does not come automatically through years of being a Christian or by Christian service. Spiritual maturity [perfection] comes through an increase in and application of spiritual knowledge. This increase in knowledge comes by study of God's Word.*

*This message results in understanding of the processes for perfection and the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. Personal application of what you learn leads to spiritual maturity through the enabling power of God.*



### ***NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES***

#### ***COMMANDS TO BE PERFECT:***

*Matthew 5:48*

*John 17:23*

*I Corinthians 1:10*

*II Corinthians 7:1; 13:9,11*

*Colossians 4:12*

*Hebrews 6:1; 13:21*

*James 1:4*

#### ***THINGS THAT PREVENT PERFECTION:***

*Luke 8:14*

*Galatians 3:3*

*Philippians 3:15*

*Hebrews 7:11,19; 9:9; 10:1*



***REASONS TO BE PERFECTED:***

*John 17:23;*

*Romans 12:2*

*Colossians 4:12*

*II Timothy 3:16-17*

*James 1:4; 2:22; 3:2*

*I John 2:5*



***HOW WE ARE PERFECTED:***

*Matthew 19:21*

*Luke 6:40*

*II Corinthians 7:1; 12:9*

*Galatians 3:3*

*Ephesians 4:12-13*

*Philippians 3:12,15*

*Colossians 1:28; 3:14*

*II Timothy 3:16-17*

*Hebrews 2:10; 7:11*

*James 1:4,17,25; 2:22; 3:2*

*I Peter 5:10*

*I John 2:5; 4:12; 4:17-18*



### ***OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES***

*Abraham was to be perfect before God: Genesis 17:1*

*Isaiah was perfect before God: Isaiah 38:3*

*God's way for us is perfect: II Samuel 22:31*

*Read the books of I and II Kings. You will find the phrase "his heart was not perfect" used often to describe evil kings who ruled Israel. As you read their stories, observe why their hearts were not perfect and the results of this lack of perfection.*

### ***PERFECTION IN THE PSALMS***

*Study what David said about perfection:*

*God's way is perfect: Psalms 18:30,32*

*God's law is perfect: Psalms 19:7*

*The end of the perfect man is peace: Psalms 37:37*

*We are to walk perfectly before God: Psalms 101:2,6*



### **FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH**

*New believers are like newborn babies in the natural world. You would never take a newborn baby, show him the door, and say, "We will look in on you in a couple of weeks". Yet this is often what happens in the church. This is why many newborn believers die spiritually. Your responsibility for the souls of men and women does not end at an altar where they pray the prayer of repentance. You are responsible to move the new believer from the altar to the church.*

*A new believer has entered a strange environment. He has been born into the Kingdom of God (John 3:3-7). We speak a language different than he has ever heard. There are terms like faith, repentance, baptism, eternal judgment, etc., which must be explained. Not only must he learn the language of the Kingdom, he also must learn the basic principles of new life in the Kingdom.*

*Each new believer needs the personal care of a mature Christian. He needs nurture in the spiritual world just as a baby in the natural world. A baby is in greater need of*



*care immediately after birth than at any other time. Use the following guidelines to provide proper spiritual care for newborn believers:*



**STEP ONE:**

*Within 24 hours after a person has responded to the Gospel message, repented, and accepted Jesus as Savior, he should receive personal contact from a mature Christian.*

*The new believer may live in a bad environment surrounded by cursing, immoral conversation, and sinful actions. Personal contact from a mature Christian will provide encouragement and let him know someone cares and is praying for him. The objectives of this first follow up contact are:*

- To let the new believer know he has a Christian friend who cares.*
- To answer questions he may have.*
- To pray with him regarding any personal needs.*



**STEP TWO:**

*As was stressed in this message, continued teaching after conversion was the pattern set by Jesus and followed by the early church. There are two ways this can be done:*

*First: Form a class for new believers. This should be taught by a mature Christian and should be repeated continuously in the church.*

*If he misses a session, the teacher should make personal contact and provide opportunity for makeup sessions.*

*The advantage of this method is that new believers are taught in a group situation with other new Christians.*

*They become acquainted with people on their own spiritual level with similar needs and questions.*

*Second: A mature Christian can be assigned to each new believer. This Christian will meet regularly with the new convert to study on an individual basis.*

*The advantage of this method is that a new believer can progress spiritually at his own rate of speed. He can move rapidly or slowly through faith lessons as he is capable.*

*There is more opportunity for personal questions to be answered and a relationship to be established between the new believer and his teacher. He can turn to his teacher with questions, needs, and problems requiring spiritual counsel.*



**STEP THREE:**

*Guide the new believer into regular prayer and Bible study. Do not assume he knows how to pray or study the Bible. Give him basic instruction in these areas.*



**STEP FOUR:**

*New believers should be guided to the experiences of water baptism and baptism in the Holy Spirit as soon as they are ready spiritually. For some, this might be the same day, week, or month of their conversion. For others, it may take more time to prepare them for these experiences. If you are teaching new believers in a group situation, do not hold one person back until the group is ready. Let each progress as he is spiritually capable.*



**STEP FIVE:**

*Help the new believer find his place in the Body of Christ, the Church. Guide him in the discovery of his spiritual gift.*

***Power Principles***

*Jesus told the religious leaders of New Testament times...*

*Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.*

*(Matthew 22:29)*

*The truth of the Gospel is two-fold. First, it is the Word of God as revealed in the Holy Bible. To know the Scriptures you must study, understand, and apply them.*

*But the truth of the Gospel is more than the Scriptures. It is also the power of God. To know the power of God you must understand and apply power principles. The power of God must become a reality in your life through experience.*

*The early church was born in a demonstration of the power of God, not through great public speakers or theological debate. Paul wrote:*

*And my speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*

*That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (I Corinthians 2:4-5)*

*Paul recognized that. . .*

*. . . the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. (I Corinthians 4:20)*

*Jesus left believers with a great mission of reaching the world with the Gospel of the Kingdom. This task will not be accomplished by words alone. As in the early church, there also must be a demonstration of the power of God.*

*Many people know the Word of God but have not experienced the power of God. They do not really*

*understand the power of the Gospel. Many ministers today are well educated. They preach with enticing words of man's wisdom, but there is no demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power.*

*In some churches the miraculous has been replaced with human reasoning that demands a logical explanation for everything that happens. Power has been replaced by theological debate over whether the miraculous is for today or was only for the early church. When reason and debate take the place of the miraculous, the life flow of God is replaced by man-made religion. People have had their fill of religion and its accompanying ritual. They want to experience reality. They need to witness the visible manifestation of God's power.*

*If your faith is to stand in the power of God instead of the wisdom of man, you must experience the same flow of power as did the early church. Believers in the early church. . .*

*. . . went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following. (Mark 16:20)*

*We have talked of working for God. We plan our ministry and ask God to bless it. But the Biblical method of effective ministry is the Lord working with us, confirming His Word with miraculous signs.*

*The world is attracted to Jesus when they see visible results of the power of the Gospel which has changed*

*your life. The world is attracted by the demonstration of spiritual power as the Lord works with you to confirm His Word with miraculous signs.*

*Power principles taught in this message will enable you to experience the spiritual power taught in the Bible. This message answers the heart cry of those who have hungered for reality instead of religion. It will move you from being a spectator to a demonstrator of the power of God.*

*O God, thou art my God: early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. (Psalms 63:1-2)*



## **INTRODUCTION**

*Just as there is a deceiving sleep and warmth which comes upon a man who is dying from cold by freezing to death, so it is in the spirit world. There is a stupor and an unconcerned attitude when people are dying spiritually.*

*Religion is the attempt of man to know God. It is ritual and regulations, works and words without power. Religion brings spiritual death. The power of God is the visible demonstration of His desire to reveal Himself to man. Spiritual power is God's Kingdom in action. It brings spiritual life.*

*Many have experienced religion. They have joined various cults and denominations. These organizations have lulled them into an unconcerned spiritual attitude. They have not experienced the power of the Gospel which can change their lives. They are defeated and discouraged, sick and wounded. They are dying spiritually. Their heart cry is as that of the Psalmist David who wrote. . .*

*O God, thou art my God: early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;*

*To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. (Psalms 63:1-2)*

*These people need to experience life after religion.*



## **TYPES OF POWER**

*There are many types of power in the world today:*

*Political power is held by those in control of organizations, tribes, villages, cities, states, provinces and entire nations.*

*Intellectual power results in new inventions, literary and musical creations, and the establishing of educational institutions.*

*Physical power is possessed by strong men, many of whom become professional athletes.*

*Financial power is held by the bankers and businessmen who head corporations and great financial empires.*

*Military power held by great armies is used to defend and gain new territories.*

*The power of energy serves men in many ways ranging from a simple fire for warmth to electricity serving an entire city.*

*Religious power results in great denominations and religious cultures.*

*All of these are great powers at work in our world today. But the call from Jesus is not to worldly power. It is to spiritual power. It is a power that asks not "How can I be master?," but rather "How can I serve?"*



## **THE DIFFERENCE IN STRUCTURE**

*Jesus explained the difference between the power structure of the world and that of the Kingdom of God.*

*He said:*

*... Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.*



*But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;*

*And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant;*

*Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

*(Matthew 20:25-28)*

*The call from Jesus is to relinquish worldly power for spiritual power which is given for the purpose of serving a suffering, lost, and dying world.*



## **SPIRITUAL POWER**

*When we speak of power in this course we are not talking about man-made religious denominations or religious organizations. We are not speaking of authority delegated through a vote by the majority. It is not authority given by a title or office. It is not power based on education or ability.*

*When we speak of power in this message, we are referring to the Biblical concept of spiritual power. The Biblical meaning of the word "power" is spiritual might, ability, force, and strength. It is a supernatural dominion which results in mighty works and miracles.*

*A similar word, "authority," is also used in this message. As in the Bible, it is closely related to and has similar*

*meaning to the word "power." Authority refers to legal and rightful power to act on behalf of another. Taking authority is the action of demonstrating power. It is possessing the right to exercise delegated power within defined boundaries.*



### ***FORCES OF SPIRITUAL POWER***

*There are several supernatural forces operative in spiritual power. The Biblical source of spiritual power is the true and living God who is revealed in the Holy Bible. God is a triune person composed of God the Father, God the Son Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father is the source of power:*

*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. (Romans 13:1)*

*God has delegated power to His Son, Jesus Christ:*

*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (Matthew 28:18)*

*Jesus has delegated spiritual power to believers. This power is experienced through the Holy Spirit:*

*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

*(Acts 1:8)*

*There is another force of spiritual power, but it is a negative force. It is the source of evil spiritual power and responsible for witchcraft, voodoo, and all other evil practices. That force is Satan. Satan is a spiritual power, but his power is evil, not good:*

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)*



### ***THE DEMONSTRATION OF POWER***

*When Jesus began His public ministry, it was a ministry of miracles. His ministry did not succeed because of its great organization. He started with twelve disciples and ended with eleven. It did not succeed because of popularity. In the end, everyone turned against Him including His own followers. His ministry touched the multitudes because of the demonstration of power:*

*And they were astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with power. (Luke 4:32)*

*And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! For with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits and they come out. (Luke 4:36)*

*How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil; for God was with Him. (Acts 10:38)*

*The early church was birthed in a demonstration of power. It was said of them. . .*

*. . . These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.*

*(Acts 17:6)*

*The early church affected entire cities and nations, but they did not do it by just preaching alone. People listened and lives were changed because they witnessed the demonstration of God's power: . . . the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.*

*For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them; and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.*

*And there was great joy in that city. (Acts 8:6-8)*

*When Peter came to Lydda, he found a man named Aeneas who had been bedfast for eight years. . .*

*And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.*

*And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.*

*(Acts 9:34-35)*

*In Joppa, Peter raised a woman named Dorcas from the dead. When this miracle took place. . .*

*. . . it was known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.*

*(Acts 9:42)*

*Each miraculous demonstration of God's power focused attention on the Lord Jesus Christ. Each power encounter resulted in multiplication of the church.*

*Political influence is not what we need to reach the world with the Gospel. The early church did not have enough influence to keep Peter out of prison, but they had enough power to pray him out.*

*More preaching is not what will reach the world. The early church prayed for days, preached a few minutes, and 3,000 souls were saved (Acts 1-2). Today we pray ten minutes, preach a ten day revival, and see only thirty saved.*

*More money for ministry does not assure reaching the world with the Gospel message. While it is true that finances are important to the work of the ministry, they are not the most necessary essential.*

*When Peter and John passed by the temple gate at Jerusalem, a lame beggar asked for a few coins. Peter and John did not even have this small amount of funds. But they gave what they had:*

*Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*

*And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

*And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. (Acts 3:6-8)*

*What they had was power and authority in the name of Jesus. They had no advertising budget to reach the city of Jerusalem. They had no printed tracts or Bibles, no television networks. But they had power. Through the demonstration of God's power, the entire city was affected by the Gospel message (Acts 3-4).*

*The early Church realized that the Gospel of the Kingdom was not only of word but of power:*

*For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. (I Corinthians 4:20)*



**THE POWER OF CHOICE**

*When God created the world, He made many different kinds of creatures. He made animals, fish, insects, and birds (Genesis 1).*

*But God's greatest creation was man who was created in His own image. Man is unique among all creatures because he has a body, soul, and spirit. He was created to worship and fellowship with the true and living God (Genesis 2-3).*

*Man, by creation, is the companion of a miracle working Father, the true and living God. Man, endowed with the breath of God and made in His image, has a capacity for power unlike any other created being. The miracle working realm should be man's natural realm.*

*Man has the most powerful, intelligent mind of all of God's creatures. Man has the power of choice. Man can choose to do good or evil. He can choose to obey God or satan.*

*The first temptation of man by satan in the Garden of Eden focused on this power of choice (Genesis 3). Because of a wrong choice to sin, a basic sin nature has been passed from Adam and Eve to all mankind.*



## **THE BASIS OF SPIRITUAL POWER**

*If man is to experience true spiritual power, he must choose to serve God. Since all are sinners, all are in need of forgiveness:*

*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.  
(Romans 3:23)*

*Forgiveness comes through repentance and belief on  
Jesus Christ:*

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and  
the truth is not in us.*

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us  
our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (I  
John 1:8-9)*

*Repentance from sin is the basis for spiritual power. You  
cannot experience the power of God if you remain in the  
spiritual death of sin.*

*When the disciples were preaching in one city, a man  
named Simon witnessed the power of God in action. He  
offered money to Peter and said:*

*. . . Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay  
hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:19)*

*Peter answered: . . . Thy money perish with thee, because  
thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased  
with money. Thou has neither part nor lot in this matter;  
for thy heart is not right in the sight of God Repent  
therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps*



*the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. (Acts 8:20-23)*

*Repentance is the basis of all true spiritual power. You will never experience God's power unless you have first experienced repentance. Salvation from sin is the greatest demonstration of the power of God.*

*God does not pour His power through sinful vessels. He does not work through people who try to improve their lives through self effort (Matthew 9:16-17). God demonstrates His power through holy vessels who have repented and are serving Him.*



### ***POSSESSING THE PROMISES***

*Believers have been promised spiritual power. But there are two parts to every promise of God:*

*The promise: The content, the actual words and meaning of the promise.*

*The possession of that promise: You cannot use that which you do not possess. You must claim the promises of God in order for them to become reality in your life.*

*How do you claim the promises of God? Here are the steps:*

## **1. YOU MUST CHOOSE TO DO SO:**

*You have the power to accept the promise of God, reject it, or ignore it. Many people have rejected the promise of spiritual power. They believe it was only for the early Church. Others have ignored it. They read the promises in the Bible, but do not act upon them. These people do not have the demonstration of God's power in their lives because they have exercised their own power of choice and failed to claim the promise.*

*Whenever there is a promise in God's Word that is not fulfilled in your life it does not mean it is not true or not for you. Do not interpret the Bible on the basis of your own experience. Just because you have not experienced a promise of God does not mean it is not a true and valid promise. The promise of power is a gift from God. But you must choose to accept that gift.*



## **2. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLES:**

*To possess any Biblical promise, you must understand the principles upon which it is based. Promises of God are always based on certain principles which always involve a response from man.*

*For example, many promises of God are based on the "if/then" principle. God says "If you will do this certain thing, then you will receive the promise." (See Deuteronomy 28 for an example of this principle).*

*To experience the promise of spiritual power, you must understand the Biblical principles of power. In the natural world, it is similar to reading the instructions that come with a product to learn how to operate it properly or like using a recipe to learn how to prepare a certain food.*



### **3. YOU MUST APPLY THE PRINCIPLES:**

*Someone can give you a lovely gift in the natural world. You can choose to accept it. It comes with instructions. You can read the instructions and understand them thoroughly. But unless you use the instructions to operate the gift, the product is still useless to you.*

*Mere understanding of the Biblical power principles taught in this message is not enough. You must apply these principles to your own life and ministry.*



### **BEYOND BLESSING TO POWER**

*Many believers do not experience power because they never get beyond the point of spiritual blessing. The Holy Spirit begins to move upon them and they feel great joy. They may express it in singing, shouting, dancing, or crying. They are blessed by God and respond emotionally.*

*There is nothing wrong with this. The Bible is filled with such spiritual experiences. But God wants to move His*

*people beyond the point of blessing into the realm of spiritual power, beyond emotion to demonstration.*

*There is a story in the Old Testament which illustrates this truth. It also illustrates the link between a promise and the possessing of that promise. The nation of Israel traveled for many months from Egypt through the desert to the land God promised them. When they reached the edge of this promised land, Moses sent in spies to check out the land. Ten of the spies brought back a negative report. They said there were giants in the land and there was no way Israel could go in to possess the land. Only two spies urged the people to enter the land and possess it as God had promised.*

*Israel chose to listen to the negative report. Because of this, although it was only an eleven day journey from where they were camped to the Promised Land, it took Israel forty years to make the journey*

*(Deuteronomy 1:2).*

*God brought Israel to the point of blessing. They were at the edge of the Promised Land. God's power was available to conquer the enemy. But Israel refused to move forward in God's power. There was nothing wrong with the promise. The problem was Israel's refusal to possess it.*

*You must not stop when you get to a point of blessing in your life. You must break through into the spiritual realm of power. If you do not do so, you will continue to wander in a spiritual wilderness of dry, powerless existence.*

*You must move beyond the point of blessing into the realm of power. You must become a demonstrator instead of a spectator; a doer instead of only a hearer. When you do so, you will experience the true flow of God's power. You will experience a life force and anointing within you which you have never before known. You will experience life after religion.*



### **ORDINARY PEOPLE**

*You may think you cannot experience this power because you lack education. Perhaps you do not hold ministerial credentials with any denomination. You may live in a village far away from a Christian college and you are unable to obtain a Bible school education.*

*None of these things need stand in the way of your receiving spiritual power. The Word of God is filled with examples of ordinary men and women who were used of God in mighty ways:*

*Abraham. . . lied about Sarah being his wife because of fear, yet he was used of God to found the great nation of Israel.*

*Moses. . . was not a good speaker and killed an Egyptian in anger, yet God used him to lead an entire nation of over two million people to the promised land.*

*Peter. . . sank while walking on water, always said the wrong thing at the wrong time, and in the end denied he knew Jesus. . . yet this ordinary fisherman stood and gave a powerful witness on the day of Pentecost which resulted in the salvation of 3,000 souls.*

*Gideon. . . a young man hiding in fear to thresh the harvest grain was called to deliver an entire nation from oppressive captors.*

*King David. . . committed adultery, took another man's wife and had the man murdered, yet he was the greatest King of Israel and called a man after God's own heart.*

*Peter and John. . . both were poor fishermen and had no money or education, but the healing power of God flowed through them to stir entire cities.*

*The Apostle Paul. . . it was said of him that his letters were powerful, but his bodily presence weak and his speech poor (II Corinthians 10:10).*

*Jacob. . . was a deceiver, liar, and schemer. But when God touched him, he became a "prince with power with God and man."*

*If men such as these can be entrusted with spiritual power with God and men, you can also, despite your human failures! God calls ordinary men and women and makes them extraordinary. He does not see you as you see yourself. He does not see you as others see you. God sees you as you can become when you are endued with*

*spiritual power. God uses ordinary people, what the Bible calls "earthen vessels." The reason He does so . . .*

*. . . that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

*(II Corinthians 4:7)*