

SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL

Our world is locked in a death struggle we call the angelic conflict (Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:3-5). Whether we like it or not we live on a battlefield, surrounded by two kinds of spiritual forces: those of God-the forces of good-and those of Satan-the forces of evil. Every one of us is caught in this conflict either as a POW entrapped in the "domain of darkness" or as a combatant who, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, has been transferred to the kingdom of light and is a soldier in the royal army of God. (Col. 1:12-14)

As combatants we are called to "be strong and courageous" (Josh. 1:6, 9; 2 Chron. 15:7). Our goal is to advance spiritually (Phil. 1:12-14, 3:12-14) to the high ground of spiritual maturity (Heb. 6:1-2) and to become "more than conquerors through Christ" (Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14).

The only way to make this advance is by growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18), by learning and applying the truths of the Word of God to our lives. It is in learning to meet the small struggles of daily life with Christ-centered faith that we gain the toughness and perseverance that will enable us to stand firm in the formidable battles of our times.

The great General Douglas MacArthur understood the principle that the ordinary challenges of life prepare us for the extraordinary tests. Early in his career, when he was superintendent of West Point, he had engraved on the stone portals of the academy gymnasium these words:

*Upon the fields of friendly strife
Are sown the seeds
That, upon other fields on other days,
Will bear the fruits of victory.*

To meet the daily challenges of life it is not enough that we have the truths of the Word in a Bible on the shelf. We must carry them within us. In this hostile environment of the cosmic battlefield, we must have a spiritual survival kit in our souls (Ps. 119:11; Isa. 33:6). This manual is designed to help you put such a kit together.

It is my prayer that the truths to which this book points will provide the necessities of spiritual survival for many Christian warriors as they fight in the pain and darkness of their own private battlefields.

Vincit Omnia Veritas! Truth conquers all!

THE COMBAT ATTITUDE

In any conflict the key to survival is mental readiness. Only as the mind is equipped and conditioned can the body respond to conflict. Military and law-enforcement personnel use a color code in training their troops to be vigilant and prepared. The code illustrates five levels of mental readiness.

WHITE/Apathy - The person in condition white is asleep: untrained, undisciplined, totally unprepared for confrontation and crisis.

YELLOW/Vigilance - The person in condition yellow recognizes the potential of danger and is constantly alert.

ORANGE/Identification - The consistently alert person will be able to quickly identify real threats when they occur. Condition orange is that higher level of readiness in which the threat has been identified.

RED/Action - The person in condition red aggressively responds to the crisis by taking whatever action is necessary to neutralize the danger.

BLACK/Panic - The person who lives in condition black will invariably rush into blind panic when a crisis occurs.

We have, in the written Word, the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). As Christians we are expected to think. Over and over in Scripture we are told to watch, to perceive, to mentally calculate, to bear down with our minds. Consider the acronym **THINK**:

Train - To get out of condition white, you must train. God uses prepared people.

Have A Plan - To be vigilant, you must have plans because once crisis strikes, it is too late to prepare. In condition yellow you must be alert. Prepare yourself by having a plan based on the Word of God.

Implement The Plan - When the attitude of vigilance spots trouble, you switch to condition orange. With the problem identified, you must implement the plan of action. This is where your training must take over.

Neutralize The Danger - The appropriate action you take in condition red neutralizes the threat or danger. The Word of God is your weapon; applied wisely it always stops the enemy short. or be

Killed - Condition black - blind panic - has only one result: you become a casualty.

Don't be a sleeper (Eph. 5:14-16; Rom. 14:12; 1 Thess. 5:6). Develop an attitude of readiness and stay awake! Study. If you can count to five, you can master the principles in this book. Look up the Scripture passages cited and meditate on them. **THINK!**

ORIENTATION

In His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ won the strategic victory against Satan and the forces of darkness. Until His promised return to earth, the royal army presses the battle for tactical victory, empowered and led by the Holy Spirit.

MISSION - Our mission is none other than the cause for which the Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth, a cause clearly stated in Luke 19:10: *"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."* As ambassadors of Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:18-20) we are commissioned to carry on the fight for eternal destiny of the souls of men (2Cor. 5:14-15; Matt.28:19-20)

MOTIVATION - Without motivation, without the will to win, no soldier will ever taste victory. Our motivation is the love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14). As that love becomes more real to us, it fosters within us an inner drive that enables us to overcome all external obstacles (Ps. 18:28-29). We become more and more driven to win, through the conduct of our lives (1 Cor. 9:24-27), the approval of the One who enlisted us (2 Tim. 2:3-6).

MOVEMENT - With time, training, and experience, any raw recruit can be forged into a seasoned veteran. Only as he becomes seasoned does the soldier become truly effective and able to take the offensive in combat. And only by bold offensive action are wars won; a soldier on the defensive may survive, but he is unlikely to prevail.

The same is true in the Christian life. Spiritual growth based on consistent study and application of the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15) is our means of advancing on the objective. We must lead the way in spiritual progress (Phil. 1:12, 25) by leaving behind failures and pressing on toward the goal of our calling in Christ (Phil. 3:12-14).

MOMENTUM - Persistent movement toward a goal builds momentum. The straighter a football player runs down the field with the ball, the faster he can go and the greater his momentum. Each dodge and turn breaks his stride and slows him down. As Christians, we must not allow our stride to be broken; when we fail to make the most of the time given us (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5), we do just that. To maintain our momentum, we must be fiercely single-minded (Phil. 2:5; James 1:8) and focused only on the person of our Lord and Savior (Heb. 3:1, 12:1-3).

MASTERY - To master life, we must master self, but to master self, we must master God's Word and allow ourselves to be mastered by God. God is in the process of forging heroes out of "zeros," but remember that where there is a forge, there must be fire. "Fire" wrote the Roman philosopher Seneca, "is the test of gold, adversity of strong men." At every stage of our spiritual growth, we are tested by adversity, by circumstances impossible to master with our human abilities. This is no accident, for in every skirmish the victory can only be won "by grace, through faith" (Eph. 2:8). God's power is perfected through weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). The heroes of faith commended in Hebrews 11 became great God's way: "out of weakness [they] were made strong" (Heb. 11:34). When we become weak before God and allow ourselves to be mastered by the Spirit of God, through His grace and truth, then we achieve mastery in life.

FAITH

All Spiritual power comes by grace through faith. The power is God's alone, but faith lays hold of the power. As a mighty river follows a channel, so the power of God follows faith. We must orient to two great facts: "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26) but "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Because the Jews thought in concrete rather than abstract terms, their words were designed to form mental pictures. There are five Hebrew word-pictures of faith found in the Old Testament. They are progressive, and they illustrate steps in spiritual growth.

AMEN/Faith is a staff - The Hebrew word *amen* means to lean on for support. It is usually translated "believe." "Then he [Abram] believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6; compare Rom. 4:3). David illustrated *amen* faith when he said to the Shepherd of his soul, "They rod and Thy staff, they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4).

BATACH/Faith overcomes - The word *batach* is a wrestling term that draws the picture of someone bodyslamming his opponent to the mat. It is most often translated "trust," as in Psalm 37:3. The New Testament provides a perfect picture of *batach* faith in 1 Peter 5:6-7; "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you."

CHASAH/Faith is a refuge - *Chasah* pictures a rabbit which, fleeing from a wolf, runs into the cleft of a rock and is safe. "For my soul takes refuge in Thee" (Ps. 57:1). David wrote these words in the Cave of Adullam, where he had fled for his life from King Saul.

In Psalm 144:2 David call the Lord "my lovingkindness and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I take refuge." In the new Testament. Christ is pictured as the believer's hiding place and refuge (Col. 3:3; Heb. 6:18).

YACHAL/Faith gives healing - *Yachal* means to trust in extreme pain and suffering. Generally translated "hope," *yachal* draws the picture of healing salve being applied to a wound. "Though He slay me." Job wrote in the heat of his affliction, "I will hope in Him" (Job 13:15). Is was this kind of faith that delivered Jeremiah from the depression into which he had plunged after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian army. "This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope, the Lord's lovingkindness indeed never cease, for His comparisons never fail. They are new every morning" (Lam. 3:21).

QAWAH/Faith weaves a rope - *Qawah*, the strongest Hebrew word for faith, pictures the weaving together of small threads into an unbreakable rope. Ecclesiastes 4:12 tells us that "a cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart." *Qawah*, translated "wait," speaks of patient endurance as we weave promises, principles, and doctrines from the Word of God into the rope of faith - our lifeline. The Hebrew in Isaiah 40:31 promises that those who wait for the Lord will "exchange their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles..."

SALVATION

We stand in hostile territory. The enemy holds multitudes of POWs. Our mission is to reach these prisoners and offer them their only hope of escape: the Gospel. The plan and the message are simple. The greatest threat to our success is that we will be distracted from that very simplicity.

THE CROSS - Our salvation is provided entirely by the finished word of Jesus Christ on the cross (John 19:30). He willingly took our sins upon Himself to provide for us the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). The simplicity of the Gospel is that Christ was crucified and buried and rose again from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3-5). His once-for-all work, provided salvation *once for all* (Heb. 10:10, 12, 14).

GOD'S GRACE - "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us...made us alive together with Christ...For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:4-8). The grace of God is unmerited, undeserved favor. Grace and mercy are two sides of a coin: mercy holds back judgment we deserve; grace gives blessing we don't deserve. Salvation is offered only through grace and can be received only by faith. We cannot be saved by our efforts of righteousness, only by the regeneration or "new birth" given by the grace of God (Titus 3:5).

THE GIFT - What God freely gives in grace (John 3:16), we may receive only by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). Because every person has sinned and every person is a sinner, no one could ever become perfectly righteous; no one could ever work his way to heaven. Christ died for us so that He could offer as gifts what we could not earn ourselves (Rom. 3:23-24, 4:16). God's Word declares that eternal life and righteousness are gifts of God to all who will take them. You can't buy a gift; when one is offered, you can only accept it or reject it.

FAITH - Faith simply believes God's Word. To "receive" Christ means simply to believe in Him and his word on the cross (John 1:12). God's offer of eternal life hinges on one issue: will we receive or reject the Son of God (John 3:18)? If we believe in Him (Rom.

4:5, 24), we have peace with God (Rom. 5:1-2) and can know beyond an doubt that we have eternal life (John 5:24; 1 John 5:10-13). If we reject Him, we remain captives of death.

RIGHTEOUSNESS - Jesus Christ alone is righteous. When we place our trust in Him, he becomes our righteousness (Rom. 1:17; 1 Cor. 1:30). He can give us His righteousness because he willingly bore our sins (2 Cor. 5:21). Righteousness is imputed to - placed to the account of - the one who believes (Gal. 3:6; Rom. 4:3-5). Every believer in Jesus Christ possesses the righteousness of God. (Phil. 3:9; Heb. 11:7).

SECURITY

When you fight behind enemy lines, you must have perimeter set up for your own security. Knowing the perimeter is there gives you the confidence that you need. As a spiritual warrior, you need to understand the security you have in Christ. There is no place for fear in this struggle. (2 Tim. 1:7; Heb. 2:14-15).

Our perimeter is the love of God. This love moved Him to send His Son to die for sinners (John 3:16; Eph. 2:4-6). Since God did the "most" for us as enemies, He can only do "much more" for us as his children (Rom. 5:6-11, 8:31-34). He holds us in His "everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27); He has promised to never leave or desert us (Heb. 13:5); He wants us to understand that nothing can sever us from the love of God in Christ (Rom. 8:35-39).

BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT - Two words in Scripture speak of the most exalted position in the universe: "in Christ." We enter into the body of Christ at salvation by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). Not only have we been identified with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4), but we have also been positionally seated with him in heaven (Eph. 2:4-7; Col. 3:1-4). We can no more be cast out than can the Son of God Himself. This is the greatness of God's grace and the assurance of our security.

REGENERATION - This is the work by which God the holy Spirit makes us spiritually alive. Regeneration is a work of both cleansing and quickening (Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:4-6). We are totally new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Because Jesus was judged for us, we are no longer under divine condemnation (John 3:18; Rom 8:1). As God's children, we can be disciplined (1 Cor. 11:31-32), but we can never be cast out (John 6:37). By regeneration we are enabled to live "in newness of life" by resurrection power (Rom. 6:4).

INDWELLING - At the moment of salvation, we are permanently indwelt by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9-11, Heb. 13:5). We now have the potential of being "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18) as we consistently confess our sins (1 John 1:9). Our fellowship with God is dependent on the study of the Word of God in the filling of the Spirit (John 15:7; 1 John 1:7). We can lose the filling of the Spirit and take ourselves out of fellowship with God (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19; 1 John 1:5), but we can never cease to be his children.

GIFTING - God has a work for every child of His (Matt. 25:15; Mark 13:34, Eph. 2:10). For this work He provides divine enablement called spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12:1-8; Eph. 4:11-12). The purpose of our spiritual gifts is to manifest the power of the Spirit of God within us by edifying the Body of Christ in some way (1 Cor. 12:7). These gifts are sovereignly bestowed by the Spirit at the moment of our salvation (1 Cor. 12:11, 18). Because we are spiritually secure, we can never lose our gifts, "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29).

SEALING - One of the many spiritual blessings we receive we receive at the moment of salvation (Eph. 1:3) is that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30). In ancient times, the seal signified three things: ownership, security, and safe delivery. In Romans 15:28, Paul applies all three ideas when he says he has put his seal on money collected in Asia for the saints in Jerusalem: the money would be identified, kept secure, and delivered safely to its ultimate destination. Even so, we are "sealed in Christ," secure forever!

TACTICS

Tactics, from a Greek word that means to arrange in battle formation, is defined by Webster's as both the "science and art of disposing and maneuvering forces in combat" and "the art or skill of employing available means to accomplish an end." As every soldier must learn tactics, so must every Christian, for only with good tactics can we achieve our mission. Armed with salvation and security (Eph. 6:10-18), we can advance on the enemy in five stages.

CLEANSING - Just as the soldier daily cleans and cares for his weapons, we must see to it daily that we are clean and ready for use by God. Confession of our sins to God brings instant cleansing (1 John 1:7). The more alert we are to our sins and the more quickly we confess them, the more useful we are to our Commander in chief in the spiritual conflict (2 Tim. 2:20-21).

SPIRITUALITY - The moment we confess our sins, God cleanses us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9); when we have no unrighteousness in us, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and are operating under His power. This is "spirituality." At every moment we are either "in the Spirit" and are pleasing to God, or we are "in the flesh" and are not (Gal. 5:16-17). As we move on in the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:15-18), we learn to study and serve in spiritual power (Eph. 1:18-19, 3:16-20). As we maintain a spiritual walk, we see "the fruit of the Spirit" produced in our lives. (Gal. 5:22-23).

FATH-REST - Because the battle we fight is a lifelong battle, we must learn to reserve our strength, to fight in such a way that we achieve maximum results with minimum effort. As we spend more and more time in spirituality, we learn to rest spiritually even as we toil physically. Jesus described this rest to His disciples in the picture of a branch abiding vine (John 15:4-5). Apart from fellowship with Christ, we can do nothing; in that fellowship, we can do nothing but receive. We must learn to resolve anxiety and inner conflict (Matt. 6:25-34; Phil. 4:6-7) by trusting and resting in the promises and principles of the Word of God (Matt. 11:28-30; Isa. 28:12; Ezek. 34:15). This is the faith-rest life (Heb. 4:1-3).

LIVING IN THE WORD - A soldier must carry his environment with him. He has to be able to stop anywhere, throw up his tent, and be at home. We have a similar provision. We are to be at home in the Word, while Jesus the Living Word is at home in us (Eph. 3:17). The Hebrew in Psalm 138:2 says that God magnifies his Word above His very name; we must give the Word first place in our lives (Matt. 4:4). This means we must develop a lifestyle that makes Bible study the priority (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18). The textbook on living in the Word is Psalm 119. *Study it!*

OCCUPATION WITH CHRIST - Though we do not see Christ physically (1 Pet. 1:8), as we learn to live in the Word, we begin to perceive Him more clearly by the eye of faith (2 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11:27). In the spiritual battle, it is the unseen - not the seen - we must be

concerned with (2 Cor. 4:17-18). Concentrate on the person of Jesus Christ (Heb. 3:1-2). Fix your attention on Him exclusively (Heb. 12:1-3). Only in this way can you follow His steps (1 Pet. 2:21) through the minefield of the cosmic system.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Every military force has some sort of code of conduct to which the individual soldier is expected to adhere. The higher and more noble the code of conduct, the greater the army that stands under it. This was as true in the times of the mighty men of David (1 Chron. 12) and in the ancient Roman Empire as it is today. The greatest conduct code in the history was revealed in the life of Jesus Christ and is condensed perhaps nowhere more clearly than in Romans 12-15.

THE LAW OF LIFE - In Romans 8:1-4, we are introduced to the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This law, Paul tells us, has set us free from "the law of sin and death." Because we have "passed out of death into life" (John 5:24), we are to conduct ourselves as those who are "alive to God" (Rom. 6:11-13). The life that Christ gives is "abundant life" (John 10:10).

THE LAW OF LIBERTY - Because Christ died to set us free (Gal. 5:1), we are not to live as slaves to rules and regulations and laws of man (Col. 2:20-23). We are to live instead by the law of liberty (James 1:25, 2:12), under which each of us must decide for ourselves how to act in matters not prohibited or commanded in the Word. We are not to use our liberty for license to sin (Rom. 6:1-2, 14-15; Jude 4), for then we become enslaved again (1 Cor. 6:12).

THE LAW OF LOVE - Though we have great freedom in Christ, as we mature we begin to willingly restrict ourselves out of love for our fellow soldiers (James 2:8). The law of love dictates that we limit even good activities if they are likely to be misunderstood or to cause weak believers to stumble (1 Cor. 8:9-13; Gal. 5:13-15; Rom. 14:1-4, 15:1-3).

THE LAW OF SELF-DENIAL - If we allow love for weaker believers to limit our use of freedom, how much more consideration ought we to have for the effect of our lives on the unsaved? Self-denial is the basic tenet of the Christian life (Matt. 16:24). As ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-21), we should seek to develop lifestyles that will honor Christ and draw unbelievers to Him (1 Cor. 6:12, 10:23-33). Our lives are to be epistles of Christ (2 Cor. 3:2-3).

THE LAW OF SUPREME SACRIFICE - Jesus Christ was the personification of self-sacrifice. He laid aside His eternal riches and became poor so that we could be such forever (2 Cor. 8:9). Paul followed the example of Christ by being willing to make any sacrifice necessary to promote His cause (1 Cor. 9:1-27). When we willingly lay aside, for the sake of reaching the lost for Christ, things that are good and proper in themselves, we have become "living sacrifices" (Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17).

THE SKIRMISH LINE

When the principles in this manual are fixed in our souls, we are prepared to engage the enemy. With a full magazine of spiritual ammunition we can go out into the cosmic jungle in a lock-and-load posture. The Word of God is what the enemy fears. There is nothing so comforting as having a full spiritual survival kit when we venture into the DMZ (Devil's manipulation zone).

Study these principles. Learn them. Then you will be ready to MOVE OUT!

Endure hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
(2 Tim .2:3)

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