***Confession, Bible Study, Perception, and Spirituality

RV19-01***

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap if we don't faint. Behold, I am coming soon. My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."

**Divine Good Works**

Turn with me in the Word of God to Revelation 2:19 as we continue studying the letter to Thyatira. This is segment number seven. In this letter, Jesus Christ is identifying qualities which He values highly in a local church congregation, which were exemplified by the people in the church of Thyatira. One of the things for which the Lord commended them was the production of divine good works. These are works performed in God's service which were of the divine good type rather than the human good type.

**"Agape" Love**

The second thing that he commended was that the members were controlled by mental attitude "agape" love that governed their actions, rather than emotional "philos" love. They had, in other words, a relaxed mental attitude.

**Faith Rest**

Third, he commended them for the fact that they were functioning on the faith rest principle. This characterized their attitude toward God and toward His Word.

**Christian Service**

We now come to a fourth commendation of Jesus Christ. This was a commendation concerning their Christian service which was being performed by them. We are gathering together to study these very important words here in Revelation – a series of concepts (categories of truth) that we are simply presenting in a concise form. I do want to remind you that all of these things are in vastly greater detail in other studies that are available. You may pursue these on your own, and you really should periodically review them.

We found in the matter of considering the fact that Jesus commended them for their service, that the Bible very aptly compares the Christian's role to that of a soldier. The Christian life is basically a military operation. Christians are daily engaged in the angelic warfare of Satan and his demons against Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is no longer available as the target of that attack. But we, who represent Him, are the targets of the attack. So every local church is a combat team in the Lord's service. The pastor-teacher, which is provided by the Holy Spirit to lead each local church, is the drill instructor who is appointed by the Lord to train his people for spiritual combat service.

The divine objectives of the local church training program are given for us in Ephesians 4:12. If you will turn to that, we will anchor our thinking there today. Ephesians 4:12 presents to us the training program which God Himself has designed for his Christian soldiers. It says, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." You will notice the word "for" three times in that passage in the Greek language. The first "for" is represented by the preposition "pros" which indicates the basic objective. The next two "fors" are represented by the preposition "eis" which indicates the consequent objectives when you've reached the first one. The second and third objectives can never be reached unless you reach the first one. Guess where the devil is going to hit his effort to frustrate the plan (the training program) of God? Obviously, it is at point number one. As we look into that, I think you will see that here is where he has been monumentally successful in local church operations. Rarely will you find a local church that has a training program that is executing point number one. And if point number one is not executed, then he doesn't have to worry about point number two and three, those second and third objectives which really devastate him.

**Perfecting the Saints**

It behooves us, therefore, to know point number one, and to be sure that we're in a training program that is functioning on that basis, and to get out of one if it isn't. The divine objectives are in Ephesians 4:12. The first objective is described by the words "the perfecting of the saints; that is, of the believers. This is perfecting the believers for spiritual combat duty. We have pointed out that the word "perfecting" in the Greek means "to equip." This is a training program equipping the Christians for spiritual military duty. This training program is conducted in the local church at its public gatherings for worship. That's when you train.

**Church Attendance**

Every time we open the doors of this auditorium for a public worship service, it is a time of training. It is a time of combat training. Any loss of training means less preparation for spiritual combat. Therefore, it is a very grave thing to be absent from a church service. It is quite evident in the lives and the performance and the character of people who are erratic in church attendance.

There are certain people such that you can walk in this auditorium, and you know that they're going to be here (besides me). There are some people such that you can walk in this auditorium and you know they're not going to be here. There are some people such that when you walk in, maybe they are here, and maybe they're not. You're really not sure whether they are whether going to be here or not. You just sort of have to walk in and see, and they'll be here in the morning and won't be here in the evening, or the other way around. They're like whales. They got a big gulp of spiritual air and then they go down, and then we all stand there watching; looking around; and, waiting for the monster to surface again. And he surfaces, and all of a sudden they're in a church service, and they spew and get a gulp, and then they go down again. And we wait anxiously for them to surface. And we do wait anxiously.

We took our kids on our Florida tour, and we were out there on John Pennekamp Underwater State Park, and all of us were on our scuba tanks. With 500 pounds on the gauge, you're supposed to come up. So I'm chicken liver, and before I get to 500, I'm up. But then after I'm on the deck, I must confess, I'm looking out there on the water, and I'm counting my chickens because I know that their air is running out, and I'm anxious for them to surface. Then I've got a few of them that have the big tanks (like my number three son), and they are the last ones up, and they're always making us a little edgy that they're still watching their gauges and getting out.

We have the same concern for our people in spiritual matters. This business of being a whale that goes below, and then you surface periodically is a very incompetent type of training, and you know that no military organization would tolerate that. That's why, when you enter the military service, you are told everything: what to do; when to get up; when to go to bed; and, when to turn out for training programs. You're not asked if you wish to do so. Well, some of you haven't caught on to the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ hasn't asked you either. Just check Hebrews 10:25, and it will tell you very specifically to get yourself in a church service every time the door is open. That's the training program. That's where it's at. You never come to the point where you don't need more training, and you don't need to keep your skills sharpened.

So absence from the church service (get it straight) is absence from the training program. And absence from the training program is undermining the will of God for your life. And absence from the training program means incompetence in spiritual combat. It's bad enough that that hurts you, but the problem is that you happen to be a member of this combat team, and your incompetence hurts the rest of us when we get into action. Your lack of character hurts the rest of us. Your lack of capacity hurts the rest of us. Don't you kid yourself that it doesn't hurt you to be absent from the church service. That is a vicious quality which has been injected into the thinking of Bible church Christians in recent years to reduce the time that they spend in training. The excuse is that they spend more time at home with the family, and more time at home in your closet praying with the Lord.

**Absenteeism**

Ill-prepared Christian soldiers are highly vulnerable to becoming spiritual casualties and to experiencing defeat in the angelic conflict. The higher the level of absenteeism in the local church services, and the consequent training program that's carried on there, the less effective that church is as a spiritual combat team. You will discover that the more absenteeism you have in the local church, the more fighting you have of the Christians against one another. They are picking on each other instead of on the enemy. You will find that the higher the absenteeism, there will be more of a lack of a spirit of mutual support. You'll find that the higher the absenteeism, the more inclination there is to steal God's financial provision for personal use. God has made great deposits with all of you this week in one way or another in the salary that he has given you. That's His deposit with you as a steward. You're His banker. And the more absenteeism you have, the more the Christian bankers are stealing from the Lord, and not delivering the financing to Him that He has entrusted to your care. That's because of lack of attending the training program. The higher the absenteeism, the more confusion there is on the divine objectives to be taken. It is the people who are absent from the worship service who come up with the kooky ideas as to what we should do as a church, and with some great, wonderful, new brainstorm of some objective to be pursued that doesn't amount to a hill of beans, and is worthless. The more absenteeism you have, the higher the level of desertion of posts of duty and neglect of duty. Dereliction of duty is high when you have great absenteeism. The higher the absentee level, the more traitors you have to divine viewpoint truth – people who are willing to compromise with the world system. The higher the absenteeism, the more people want to inject carnal techniques into the angelic warfare.

**The Techniques of the Christian Life**

The pastor-teacher drill instructor's preparation of his troops for spiritual combat takes place in those worship services – those public gatherings of that local church congregation. This program of training the believer soldier consists basically of what we call the techniques of the Christian life. If you don't like that name, you can call it whatever you like. But it includes basic procedures for living the Christian life. This is what is involved in the training program in the local church. We're going to briefly review these. You can get these more extensively in other studies. First of all, why do you come to a local church service? To be trained as a Christian soldier. What training do you need as a Christian soldier to be able to fight effectively in the angelic conflict, and to survive so that you do not become a casualty, and to achieve the objectives and the goals so that you enjoy victory?

1. **Confession of Sins**

Well, first of all, you need to be taught the technique of confessing sins. Christian soldiers have to be taught how to maintain temporal fellowship with God the Father. That is what we're talking about. When you are born again, you come into a circle called eternal fellowship. That is a circle as the result of your faith in Christ the Savior from which you can never depart. But you also, at the same time, enter an inner circle, which is temporal fellowship. Temporal fellowship is in the center of the will of God. Temporal fellowship is being spiritual. Temporal fellowship is walking according to divine viewpoint. This is the place of spirituality. When you sin, your step out of the inner circle, but you do not step out of the outer circle of salvation. This is the place of carnality. You return to the position of spirituality by using the technique of the confession of known sins.

All the while that you are floating out in the area of carnality (out of temporal fellowship, and out of walking with the Lord in harmony with His purposes), you are a zero. You are a zero multiplied to infinity in your Christian life; in your productivity; in your storing treasures in heaven; in your personal spiritual development; in your prayer life; in your witnessing; and, everything else. You are a zero. You're a zero in your social life. You're a zero in your educational life. You're a zero in pursuit of goals; your ideals; and, the whole bit. You are out of touch with reality. And if you stay here long enough, and deliberately enough, you go spiritually insane, so that you are completely berserk in spiritual things, so that you have no reality – no touch with spiritual reality whatsoever. And if it gets bad enough, God will take your life and take you home to heaven, and exercise the judgment of sin unto death.

So what we're talking about is how to stay in the inner circle of spirituality. This is the inner circle of fellowship with the Lord – fellowship in time, or temporal fellowship. We have within all of us this inherent propensity to evil. This tempts a believer to perform evil acts which result in broken temporal fellowship. These evil acts may be of two kinds. They may be outright sins. These are violations of the Word of God. They are the things God says we should not do, or sins in the form of things that we fail to do that He says we should do. They are moral disruption, or they may be in the form of human good. They're not sins as such. They are good things, but they are human good originating from the sin nature. Those things are evil. They break fellowship. A Christian soldier who is out of temporal fellowship with the Father is neutralized completely in the spiritual combat of the angelic warfare. And that is the point.

So obviously, if we're going to train you to be soldiers of Jesus Christ, the first thing you have to know how to do is not to be neutralized on the field of battle, because that is the first thing you always want to do on the field of battle. The first thing you try to do when you face an enemy on the field of battle is figure out how you can neutralize these people, and to make them ineffective, and thus to overrun and to conquer them. And this is the first step of neutralizing – to have unconfessed known sin within the life of the believer.

**1 John 1:9**

However, confession of known evil of sins and human good to the Father restores our fellowship and our combat effectiveness as per 1 John 1:9. The word "confess" means simply to name (to admit) the evil to God the Father. It does not mean that you run around relating your sins to your friends, or standing up before the congregation and relating your sins to them. It means that your evil, as always, is against the Father, and you confess it to Him. Temporal fellowship is not therefore restored in combat effectiveness. It is not restored by your asking for forgiveness. There's always somebody that likes to stand up sometimes (not here, but I've heard it other places) and somebody leads in prayer, and then they get to the end, and they say, "And Lord, forgive us our sins we pray, and save us in the end." That final phrase is not only bad theology, but bad wording as well. You're not going to have your sins forgiven because you say, "Please forgive my sins." No, you don't have to ask for forgiveness. You don't have to run around trying to get somebody else's response. The problem is between you and the Lord, as your own personal sins of forgiveness and non-forgiveness are between you and the Lord.

Temporal fellowship is not restored by asking God to forgive us our sins. It is restored by confessing our sins. That's how it works in the age of grace. All of the evil of the believer soldier is covered by the payment of Jesus Christ on the cross, and that's the basis of our forgiveness of sins in time. Those things are not forgiven because God says, "I don't care about them. Ignore them. Forget them." It is because God has already paid for them.

**Unlimited Atonement**

Incidentally, some people are so passionate for limited atonement – that Jesus Christ only died for the sins of those who are going to believe. This is in contrast to unlimited atonement (which we believe) – that He died for the sins of the world, as 1 John 2:2 says. The unlimited atonement people claim that position (that He only died for the believers) because they say, "God is sovereign. He decides that He's going to apply His salvation only to those who are going to believe." It's interesting to ask them that if the sovereignty of God is the main character of God, why didn't God just say to man in his sin, "I'm just going to forgive you? I'm like a good grandfather. You've misbehaved, but I'm just going to forget it. I'm going to forgive you, and I'm going to let it go." Why didn't He say that? Well, because the essence of God in terms of His justice would not permit that, and God's absolute righteousness would not permit that. So God's sovereignty is not the supreme controlling characteristic of God. It is God's holiness that is the supreme characteristic. And His sovereignty cannot do anything that would violate His holiness.

So the whole Reform group that is so heavy on the idea of limited atonement because of God's sovereignty as the supreme characteristic of God's essence is completely on the wrong track. God has taken care of our sins. The technique of confession of known sins works because He has already paid for those sins completely. All of the evil has been paid for.

**Cleansing**

And, as 1 John 1:9 tells us, we are cleansed from all righteousness when we confess the sins that we are aware of. There are unknown evils that we are guilty of, and those are covered when we confess the known sins. Confessed evils, however, must be forgotten as part of the technique of confession of sins. Even people who know how to confess sins sometimes miss it at this point. The technique requires you to forget the sins you have confessed, and to move on in the battle. If you end up with a guilt complex over what you did; if you make the mistake of attributing some present suffering or crisis in your life to your past sins; or, if you have an attitude of bitterness because of the discipline you have suffered from God because of what you did, all of that results in temporal fellowship being broken again. Guilt complexes are sins. Resentments toward God's discipline are sins. Attributing current sufferings to a vengeful God who is going to keep punishing you for what you did in the past is a sin.

So this is like the old Christmas tree lights. One used to light from the next one, and if one went out, the whole string went out. That's lighting one from another. That's series lighting. It's lighting one sin from the next sin. Each one takes you out of fellowship.

So point number one, if you're going to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ capable of sustaining a combat readiness, you are going to have to know how to exercise the technique of confession of known sins. Your local church should be training you and keeping you alert to the necessity of that practice, and training you how to do it, and when to do it, and to be aware that it is constantly necessary. You don't get to the end of the day and say, "Now Lord, I want to clean up my life. Let's see. What should I confess?" If you haven't confessed it by then, you're already in deep trouble. This is a moment-by-moment situation, and as you become more sensitive, as the sanctification progresses in your life, you'll become more sensitive to when you've broken the fellowship, and that's when you'll confess. You won't wait. You won't sit around, because if you sit around, now you're exposed to the enemy. The moment you are out of that inner circle, you are exposed to the enemy. And a Christian soldier learns how to keep himself in the protective custody of the inner circle.

1. **Bible Study**

Technique number two that your local church should train you in, and which is God's provision for the training of Christian soldiers, is the technique of Bible study. When a person enters the Christian life, you're born again into the family of God. You enter with a total deficiency of divine viewpoint in your soul. You are zilch when it comes to thinking like God thinks. You have absolutely nothing when it comes to divine viewpoint. You are satiated and engrossed with human viewpoint to every brain cell that you have in your head. Now this spiritual deficiency can only be corrected in one way, and that is that it has to be removed through the intake of Bible doctrine into your mentality. As you take doctrine into your mentality, you take God's divine viewpoint into your mind, and it rubs out and moves out the human viewpoint.

**The Grace System of Perception**

The pastor-teacher drill instructor removes the deficiency of divine viewpoint in his troops by instructing them in the Word of God – in the principles of doctrine. He does this by means of that very wonderful provision which God has provided for this to be accomplished. The technique is called the grace system of perception. This is a system of understanding spiritual phenomena by means of grace.

**Stages of the Grace System of Perception**

This system consists of several stages. Let's review them briefly. This is what enables you to remove human viewpoint from your mind:

* 1. **The Scriptures**

One is that you have the Scriptures. You have a completed Old and New Testament Scriptures – the completed canon of Scripture. These are all the books that belong in Scripture. They are completed, and they are preserved, and they are inerrant. That is the first provision.

* 1. **The Local Church**

The second provision in the grace system of learning spiritual things is the local church. The local church organization is established as the training center, and it is the core of this program of training.

* 1. **The Pastor-Teacher Gift**

Factor number three provided by God is the pastor-teacher gift. This is the authority and the ability to communicate Bible doctrine truth in an intelligible way. He does this, if he is doing his job properly, by the HICEE technique. This should be one of the clues to you whether a church is functioning as a battle training station, or whether its blowing it; whether it's a cutesy-poo little social club for the Christians to gather around, or whether it is really engaged in the realities of the spiritual combat that surrounds us. What does the HICEE technique mean? We'll take trouble to review this.

**Hermeneutics**

The "H" stands for "Hermeneutics." Hermeneutics refers to principles of interpretation. There have to be certain guidelines for interpreting Scripture. One hermeneutic or principle, for example, is the principle of literal interpretation – that the Bible is written in language that we can understand, and God means what he says. Therefore, you do not take a book like the Revelation and say, "My goodness, the things it says are so staggering to the human imagination. God must be talking in symbols. He surely doesn't mean literally what He says there." Wrong. The first way that you read the Bible is literally for what the words say. So that's a principle of hermeneutics. There are many more that guide you not to make mistakes in interpretation.

**Isagogics**

The second letter (the "I") stands for "Isagogics." Isagogics is the background of Scripture. There is a great deal in the Bible that we would not understand if we did not know the geography of the Bible; if we did not know the customs of the people at the time; if we did not know the world conditions that surrounded Israel at a certain point in its history; or, if we did not know the status of governments and the viewpoints and the attitudes in the ancient world, and so on. All of these are factors that have to be considered when we read a statement in Scripture so that we understand what the writer is trying to say to us.

**Categories**

The next letter, "C," stands for "Categories." Categories is a word for summaries – summaries of doctrine. Periodically, we stop and say, "Here's the doctrine of the atonement in so many points." Or we might say, "Here is the doctrine of the blood of Christ in 25 points: point number one..." This is an attempt to bring together what the Bible teaches on a doctrine. These are all the basic concepts. If you know a summary of a truth, and if you know a doctrine in its general summary, then as you read the Bible, the individual pieces can be related to the basic principle, and you'll interpret it in the right way. You won't go off in the other direction.

For example, one of the things that the amillennialists like to point out is that Jesus said, "Someday the dead will hear My voice, and some will rise to eternal life in glory, and some to eternal condemnation." They have built the principle on that basis that there is a judgment day, and at one judgment day, everybody's going to be raised from the dead. That's what you get from reading that one Scripture. Yet we know that when we follow through what God has said about resurrection throughout the Scripture, we discover that there is a first and a second resurrection. While Jesus made a summary statement of some people who are raised to eternal life and some to eternal condemnation (the lake of fire), He didn't bother explaining that there was a 1,000-year stretch between them, and that the believers are going to be raised at the beginning of the millennium, and unbelievers are raised at the end of the millennium. The only way we know that is from other Scriptures. That's why categories are so important. You will foul up a doctrine if you do not know, and you can't think, in categorical teaching.

And by the way, this is one of the things that will mark a local church for you. It will mark a church that is called a categorical church. It means that it teaches, in terms of summarizing for people, these basic concepts. If it's a church which is teaching categories, you can almost count on the fact that the preacher is explaining from the original languages to the people of God what God has said, and bringing together from that language of Scripture these general summaries. And categorical churches, I guarantee you, are not popular churches in our day. They are viewed by the Bible church group as a very suspicious and a very threatening group. They're very antagonistic to categorical churches. Some of you have been hurt by that. You get some of the good Christians in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and they meet you with a mouthful of smile, and they grab you by the hand, and a warm Christian brother will say, "Where do you go to church?" You say, "At Berean Church in Irving." And they say, "Oh." And then you get the cool water thrown on you, and you wonder what happened.

Well, this is what happened, because it's known as that kind of a church. In fact, somebody told me the other day that the John Birch Society puts out a publication on educational institutions, and Berean Christian Academy is listed as one of the schools you should send your children to. So one man called me and said, "Are you a secret member of the John Birch Society?" I said, "Man, I'm not secret about anything. And furthermore, there's nothing wrong about the John Birch Society." He didn't really know much about it. It was in honor of a captain who had been killed by the tyranny and the treachery in World War II by a group of communists, and his death exemplified what the communists are out to do – to rule the world and kill anybody who stands in their way. But the John Birch Society is hated by the establishment and by the liberal mentality of our government, because it says the communists believe their doctrines. They believe that history is in their favor. They believe that they are called by history to conquer the world, and that they are going to be victorious, and that death and the muzzle of a gun are the means for them to do that. They are going to do it just as soon as they can get the United States out of the way where it's not a threat to them.

Our president has just learned that. You heard him say that on television – that in 24 hours, he learned more than he has in two-and-a-half years of his presidency about the communists. And this is the guy who wakes up every morning and they give him a summary of world events. You and I don't have the summaries. We have a lot of them here in this church because we have sources that we draw on. But he wakes up every morning, and they give him a whole summary sheet on what's going on in the world. And he never caught on to what the Russians were doing. One of the things that people don't like is a church which is categorical. I don't know who put us in the John Birch book, but they spotted us as a church that has basic principles, because if you are a categorical church, you believe certain things very firmly. They are clean-cut positions. They're not gray. They're clean-cut positions. Somebody has sat in this congregation (people come in and out here all the time), and they made an analysis, and they put us in the book. And that's what you're branded with now.

**Etymology**

The first "E" in "HICEE" stands for "Etymology," which is the meaning of words. You have to know what words mean. God wrote in a specific language. You cannot understand the Scriptures from the English text. You know, for example, that every time you see the word "if" in Scripture, there are four different kinds of "ifs" in the Greek language. Each one of them is very important – which condition it is. You have to be taught that. You have to have that explained to you – the significant meanings of these Greek words.

How many people in Christian churches know the difference between "agapao" love and "phileo" love? There's a very critical difference. But how many people among the Christian community understand the difference, so that they really are capable of exercising the love that Jesus Christ has called upon them to exercise toward one another instead of the nonsense that people try to do in Bible churches under the category of love. The only way you know that is from the meaning of words. That's etymology.

**Exegesis**

The last "E" stands for "Exegesis." Exegesis is a word that means "interpretation." It is taking what the Scriptures have said, and you make an interpretation. Every statement in the Bible has one interpretation, and only one interpretation. For example, in Ephesians 4:25, it says, "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth of his neighbor, for we are members one of another." There it is. That's a statement, and we can interpret what that means. But the applications of that statement are without limit. God the Holy Spirit comes up, and He says, "Now, in your case, I want to apply the principle of lying in your life in terms of this and in terms of that." But the interpretation of what that statement has made (what that Scripture has said) is what we come to from this process.

So if you are going to be trained in the technique of Bible study, look for a church that operates on the HICEE technique. Otherwise, get out of it, and go to one that does. If you don't have one close by that does, then you better get yourself on some tapes that will help you through.

* 1. **Priesthood**

Every Christian is his own priest to deal with God directly and privately in his spiritual training. We are listing the ways that the grace system of learning spiritual things works: have a completed Scripture without error; have a local church organization; have the pastor-teacher gift teaching according to the HICEE technique; and, you are your personal priesthood responsible for the training program. That's why we say that you're responsible for being here at the sessions. Don't give us that guff about how you're feeling tired, and you've got a lot to do at home, and you've got this thing and that thing, and you're under pressure. I have yet to hear anybody who gives me a hard, sad, sob story that I can't equate it, and better. From now on, I've decided that every time somebody does give me a sad, sob story about why they couldn't do something or be here, I'm going to give one right back. I made a list of them. I have them on cards here, and I have the appropriate one to read to you so that before you're through, you will be crying before me. You'll just be crushed. OK. You're your own priest and you are responsible.

* 1. **The Holy Spirit**

Next is the indwelling Holy Spirit. That has been provided in this system. You have the Spirit of God indwelling you in order to teach you God's point of view, so you understand what is explained by the pastor-teacher.

* 1. **Temporal Fellowship**

Then you have temporal fellowship as the next factor provided. That is the filling of the Holy Spirit. That's what temporal fellowship is. It is necessary for learning doctrine. That's made possible by confession of known sins.

* 1. **A Living Human Spirit**

Then God has also provided a living human spirit. You have a living human spirit now so that you are capable of storing divine viewpoint. That's where you store God's viewpoint – in your living human spirit. When you were spiritually dead, you couldn't store it. You had no storage place. Now that you are spiritually alive, you have a container for God's viewpoint.

So that's the grace system of perception. A Christian who is on positive volition to the training program of the local church through this great system of perception will store it as divine viewpoint truth in his human spirit, which will guide his soul: his thinking; his will; and, his emotions in the spiritual combat of the angelic warfare. When you believe with faith what you have been taught, that's "gnosis" knowledge. That's knowledge in the head. That becomes converted to "epignosis" knowledge which is knowledge stored in the human spirit. You've got a lot of Christians running around with knowledge up in the head, but that doesn't mean anything. You cannot function on that. You have mental reservations toward it. They're negative toward it. Oh, they've heard it, and they're learned it. You probably have sat in this session, and you may have heard me say several things already that you have taken into your head, and you have gone negative toward. You have reacted and said, "No, I don't want that. I am against that. I disagree with that. I won't do that. I won't make correction. I won't make response." OK, you've got some information. It's up in your head. You never can act upon it. It'll work against you from here on out. It is only what you receive of what God has said with a positive volition response that comes into the living human spirit where now it can affect your soul. If it can't affect your soul, it's no good. That's "epignosis" – full knowledge.

Finally, the Christian soldier is responsible to maintain a daily personal program of study of his combat manual, the Bible. You are personally responsible. Matthew 4:4 says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Psalm 119:11 says, "Your word have I hidden in my heart (that is, my mentality) that I might not sin against you." The Christian soldier is responsible for this kind of a daily intake of the Word of God.

1. **Spirituality**

The third technique which is pursued in the training program of the local church is the technique of spirituality. This, of course, is closely tied to the technique of confessing known sins. A Christian soldier who is controlled by the indwelling Holy Spirit is in temporal fellowship. He's in the inner circle. He's in a status of spirituality. A Christian soldier who is under the control of his sin nature is a carnal believer. He's out of the inner circle. He's out of temporal fellowship. He is unspiritual. A spiritual Christian soldier has great firepower in combat. He has high morale. He has great battlefield effectiveness because he is a spiritual soldier. He is in the center of the will of God. He is in the inner circle. That is spirituality. Without spirituality, a Christian soldier is dependent on his mere human ability; his human goals; his human IQ; and, his human personality. Spirituality is walking in the light of God's divine viewpoint. Thus, you possess maximum intelligence information for the battle.

More battles have been lost because of bad intelligence information about the enemy than you can imagine. A Christian who is functioning on spirituality has maximum intelligence information flowing to him concerning Satan and the demonic hosts, and how it relates to our society. The combat readiness status of a Christian soldier is determined by his spirituality. In Ephesians 5:14-18, we are told. "Wherefore, he said, awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light." That is, those who are out of temporal fellowship are asleep. "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." The one who is walking out of temporal fellowship is a fool. The wise one walks in temporal fellowship: "Redeeming the time because the days are evil. Wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." What is the will of the Lord? "Be not drunk with wine in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." That is combat readiness status: filled with the Spirit – spirituality.

There are false means for trying to achieve spirituality. Let's get those out of your mind. You do not achieve spirituality by praying for it. You will never become spiritual by praying for it. You will not become spiritual because you have some kind of a great experience of whatever kind. You will not become spiritual because you have achieved a certain emotional reaction – a feeling that you have developed. You will not have spirituality because you compare yourselves with other Christians – other Christians who are less than you are, or other Christians that are so-called "spiritual giants" that you try to imitate. You will not achieve spirituality because of external results of your service. God can bless some of the biggest clods in His work. Remember, I don't care if the devil himself were up here in this pulpit preaching Bible doctrine truth. It's still Bible doctrine truth. That doesn't change the truth. The communicator is nothing in the process. God's divine viewpoint is God's divine viewpoint. There can be fantastic external results by those who are completely out of touch with God. You don't determine your own spirituality on the basis of your external results.

You do not evaluate your spirituality by your devotion to religious rituals – the fact that you observe the holy days of Easter and Christmas, etc. You don't mark your spirituality by the fact that you observe certain taboos – certain things that you don't do. You don't achieve spirituality by self-crucifixion procedures. We don't have too much of that around here. We used to have that in years past, but the self-crucifixion crowd has killed itself, so we don't have it anymore. Self-crucifixion is never going to give you any spirituality.

You will also never become spiritual by your determination to be yielded. Do you know what it means to be yielded? How many times have you been told by preachers, "Now, brother, sister, you just be yielded. You'll become spiritual." That means to be in the inner circle. Do you know how you get yielded? 1 John 1:9, when you confess your own sins: that's what yieldedness is. Then God the Holy Spirit is in charge and control of your life. You're responding to Him. That's yieldedness. It's not something you do in terms of anything else. It's confession of sin. You don't just determine that you're going to be yielded, and grit your teeth, and achieve it.

You're not going to achieve spirituality by practicing asceticism. You may come in here, and you never fix your hair, so that you look like a floozy. You come in here, and you wear the clothes your grandmother wore so that you're nice and out of style. And you say, "Now, that's a sign of being spiritual." Baloney. That's a sign of having bad taste. And anything else of that nature is asceticism. It's a crude thing. Yet that's the core of a lot of spirituality among believers.

Also, self-discipline (as valuable a quality as it is) is not going to achieve spirituality. Confession of known sins does it. It's a very important principle. If the troops aren't trained on how to be spiritual, they're neutralized, and they're in trouble.

The basic guidelines for spirituality, very briefly, are these: 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says, "Quench not the Spirit." That means do not be disobedient to Bible doctrine, and to the Holy Spirit's guidance. The second principle for spirituality is, "Grieve not the Spirit" in Ephesians 4:30. "Grieve not the Spirit" means do not practice willful, deliberate evil from your old sin nature. The third quality (the positive one) for achieving spirituality is, "Walk by means of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:16, which means to live in dependence on the Holy Spirit; on His guidance; and, on His enablement.

There are two more techniques of the Christian life of which you must be aware, and which are at the core of the training program. We'll go into those next time. They are very critical for your survival in the field of battle in the era of the angelic conflict.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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