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“Faith alone in Christ alone”

Greetings from all of us at Grace Evangelistic Ministries! We continue to be thankful for each one of you, our partners in grace. In particular, we are grateful for the daily prayers you present to the Father on our behalf. When offering thanksgiving, the way the Lord has chosen to bless and provide for us—through His immutable (unchanging) grace policy—stands out most in our minds; for if blessings, or our daily rations, came to us by any other means, we'd all be up a creek without a paddle. Can you imagine if our next breath depended on something we need to do to earn it? Or, what would it be like if we woke up tomorrow morning and discovered we could no longer metabolize food because we failed to obey a mandate yesterday? What if our daily ability to see and hear depended on how we demonstrated impersonal love in traffic this morning? We'd find ourselves sight or hearing impaired most of the time!

Our gracious Father took all our weaknesses and failures into account when He designed the rain to fall or the sun to shine on the good and the bad, the lovely and unlovely. He knew that we could not exist without His gracious provisions. So, convicted prisoners will awake tomorrow with the same ability to metabolize bread and water as a free citizen eating steak and eggs. That's grace! The Lord didn't suddenly stop his plan after creation and say, "Now, spiritually, you are on your own." He gave each one the means and ability to process physical food and the spiritual apparatus to process spiritual food—Biblical doctrine—by means of the Holy Spirit.

Without the Holy Spirit, we could not understand the things of God. 1 John 1:9 puts us back into fellowship where the

Holy Spirit, our Mentor, can teach our human spirits. Then we can, "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8a). The Psalmist tells us to taste the Word of God in much the same way we coax our children to taste something new to them. "How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103). To partake, we must use the spiritual means that the Lord has given us. So, at this time, before we begin our spiritual nourishment, let's take time to refresh our souls with 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [wrongdoing]."

The expression, "The best things in life are free" certainly applies to the Word of God and is the policy at G.E.M. Our support comes by trusting God in this Biblical principle: "God's work done in God's way will have God's provision," which is almost parallel to "a right thing done in a right way..." As with Moses of the Old Testament, it's our confidence also that, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our [fortress]" (Psalms 46:7); therein lies the reason this ministry is spreading like wildfire. Thus, we continue to thank the Lord for you, our partners, and ask that you remember us before His throne.

Our mission remains the same...to glorify God, to draw all men to Christ by upholding the gospel of faith alone in Christ alone.

Forever gripped in His matchless grace,

Moses C. Onwubiko
President; Grace Evangelistic Ministries

DOCTRINE OF GRACE

By Reverend Moses C. Onwubiko Lesson 12
(Continued from volume 25 Lesson 11)

GRACE-ORIENTATION IN ACTION

Without a doubt, Bible doctrine is the only compass for our spiritual journey, and undeniably, its application is the beam of light on our path. Another way of saying it is this: The test of God's Word is in its application. We have already delineated that the apostle Paul had an iron grip on the doctrine of grace. His soul soaked up grace like a dry sponge dropped in water, then overflowed to everyone who came in contact with him.

PAUL'S GRACE-INSULATED MENTAL

ATTITUDE: The Scripture concretely states that man is the product of his thinking. King Solomon put it this way: "For as he thinks within himself so he is" (Proverbs 23:7). In light of God's Word, the first notch on the grace-orientation belt is the total realization that apart from God's grace, man is merely a heap of rubbish. This sobering truth was crystal clear to King David, when he asked: "What is man [a heap of rubbles], that You are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" (Psalm 8:4).

The apostle Paul had the same thoughts when he took inventory of his life's achievements and reached this grace-thinking conclusion: "...I am a nobody" (II Corinthians 12:11c). With regard to his divine appointment, he said, "I am...not fit to be called an apostle" (I Corinthians 15:9). This is not a denial of his achievements; his secular and spiritual achievements were above the bar (v. 10b). Instead, his thinking was woven throughout with grace rather than his own merits. Thus he could say, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (v. 10a).

How in the world can any believer, regardless of his spiritual status and achievements, ever conceive in his soul that he is what he is because of anything other than the grace of God? Indeed, grace-orientation housed Paul's thinking and kept him from becoming arrogant. That's not all! Others became beneficiaries of his wellspring of grace.

GRACE-ORIENTATION TOWARD OTHERS: Ironically, people are the testing ground for grace-orientation. You need not look any farther, for they are closer to you than you may realize—our parents, spouse, children, mother and father-in-laws, family members, friends, enemies, strangers, believers and unbelievers alike, and all the obnoxious people! We run into them daily, and our attitude places us with those who are honoring God, or those who are failing in their spiritual journey. The Scriptures tell us that, "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10). In other words, grace-orientation! You cannot be grace-oriented and have the slightest thought to harm your neighbor, or treat your enemy in kind (Romans 12:19).

PAUL'S GRACE-ORIENTATION TOWARD OTHERS: Paul's grace-orientation toward other people was a perfect example of a winner believer in the spiritual battle. Let me underscore these words: Grace-orientation is not an overnight experience. It takes time. Sadly enough, only a handful of believers ever become grace-oriented. Grace-orientation is the core of the spiritual life, and it is the other side of virtuous love—they go hand-in-hand; you cannot possess one and lack the other. That would be impossible!

The Pauline epistles bore witness to Paul's grace-attitude toward others. We have previously documented that Paul could not have said to his fellow believers: "Be imitators of me," if he weren't mindful of his spiritual life. Paul wasn't being arrogant, as we've noticed. With that in mind, let's concentrate on two aspects of Paul's grace-orientation: His thoughtfulness of others, and his generosity.

PAUL'S THOUGHTFULNESS OF OTHERS—A COMPONENT OF HIS GRACE-ORIENTATION: Ironically, the same man who said, "I am nobody [of any significance]" (II Corinthians 12:11c) is the very one who wrote: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit,

but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3). Grace-orientation precludes any form of self-promotion or arrogant thinking and considers others with high esteem [hegeomia]. Paul fulfilled this concept with everyone he came in contact with—believers and unbelievers alike. Keep in mind, this doesn't mean that those with a degree in Medicine, or Engineering, should belittle themselves when around someone with only a high school diploma. Instead, consider your attainment grace-made...grace-provided. Your degree or wealth should never cause you to look down on those who are not on the same level with you. Paul put it beautifully: "For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive?" (I Corinthians 4:7a). Everything that you and I have passes through the pipeline of God's grace. It's that simple.

PAUL'S GENEROSITY—A COMPONENT OF HIS GRACE-ORIENTATION: "Do not merely look out for your own personal interest, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4) ricochets from Paul's soul to yours—the Church Age believer. Paul told us: "...They [i.e. Scriptures] were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (I Corinthians 10:11b). Thus, every jot of Scripture is for our betterment. Paul was a man of great compassion. Luke recorded him saying, "You yourselves know that these hands [of mine] ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner **you must help the weak** [the needy] and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:34, 35). Yes, you read it correctly: He financially assisted his needy partners! As a tentmaker, he used his trade and made money whenever an opportunity presented itself. His grace-orientation compelled him to care for others who were in need. He didn't look the other way.

The apostle John put it this way: "But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" John added, "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him...if our

heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God [when we approach His throne in prayer]; and whatever we ask we receive from Him" (I John 3:17-22a). Indeed, a believer's wrong attitude toward the less fortunate can have an adverse effect on his prayer. Solomon wrote, "He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will cry himself and not be answered" (Proverbs 21:13).

In James we read, "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled [sister, I will lift you up before the Heavenly throne],' and yet do not give them what is necessary [according to your means] for their body, what use is that [or what kind of grace-orientation is that]" (2:15, 16)? The 18th century George Muller, one of the greatest missionaries, once interrupted one of his prayer meetings, which they were offering for a particular need, by taking a piece of paper and writing: "George will give 50 pounds (British currency)," and he passed the paper around so that others would pledge as they purposed in their soul. After the paper was circulated, he said, "Brethren, now we can pray in good conscience." What a marvelous application of doctrine!

It's true that the well-being of other believers becomes a burden for a grace-oriented believer; however, caring or giving in itself does not make one grace-oriented. Conversely, a believer who has the spiritual gift of generosity would constantly find himself on the giving end. Grace-orientation springs out from spiritual growth. To be sure, Paul was a mature believer and consequently, the elect angels beheld his life—a life lived to God's glory.

BRIEF SUMMARY AND SELF-EXAMINATION

SUMMARY: We consider it wise to pause, review our previous studies, meditate, ask questions that are pertinent to our spiritual lives, and examine the lives of the Old Testament winner believers who applied doctrine in their soul for God's glory. So far, we have briefly covered the historical background of the great apostle Paul. With the exception of the humanity of Christ who was also called an Apostle, Paul was the greatest. We have also examined, in detail, Paul's enthusiasm to serve God before his conversion—how, in his zeal he

became a nightmare to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ by torturing, imprisoning, and aiding in the martyrdom of many Christians. In the process, we noted the principle that a right thing done in a wrong way is wrong. Paul's intention to serve God before he was converted into Christianity is a perfect example of this timeless principle.

Let's look back to the time when Paul was still called Saul to get a picture of just what kind of character he was before Grace hit him between the eyes. If you will recall, we began our study with Saul (volume 21) holding or minding the cloaks of those who stoned the first Christian martyr, Stephen:

"When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him [Stephen]; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!' Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them!' Having said this, he fell asleep. **Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death.** And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 7:58 – 8:1).

Saul (Paul) was, for sure, a nightmare to the early Christians. If we took a vote, how many would elect Saul as a candidate for God's pure grace...or to spend all of eternity in the presence of the King of kings? Yet, he was intercepted by grace on his way to Damascus. We saw how God gave him things he never deserved, namely, the imputation of God's righteousness and eternal life—imputations based solely on his faith alone in Christ alone. Above all, we have studied God's grace in action in commissioning Paul—a man who called himself the worst sinner in human history (I Timothy 1:15)—and how his conversion experience and commission became the foundation of a grace superstructure in his soul.

In addition, we looked at Paul's lifestyle—how his soul was awash in the ocean of God's Word, banked by divine viewpoint and a grace mental attitude. Indeed, a brief summary doesn't do justice to all that grace did for Paul and will do for those who persevere in God's Word. Basically, the scene opened with Saul holding

the coats of bloodthirsty killers and ends with Paul, a trophy of grace, saying this in his last epistle: "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Tim 4:6-8).

That was Paul then; and this is you today. How often do you switch from human to divine viewpoint? Has grace hit you between the eyes and taken hold of the facets of your soul? Or are you a legalistic believer? Do we "hold the cloaks" while self-righteous believers run a church member down, or the pastor? Legalism often goes hand-in-hand with arrogance. Nonetheless, the Scripture commands: "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith [your lifestyle is aligned with sound doctrine and application]; examine yourselves..." (II Corinthians 13:5).

SELF-EXAMINATION: You may take a minute or so to inventory your own soul; this is a matter of sharing in God's happiness—a matter of blessing in time and in eternity. You may wish to start by asking yourself these vital questions: Since I became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and acquainted with Col. Thieme, Jr.'s ministry and his unique expository Bible teaching, Grace Evangelistic Ministries, or any other ministry that is doctrinally sound, am I making any spiritual progress (II Peter 3:18)? Am I advancing to the high ground of spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:13)? Do my daily conversations and actions testify that I am indeed a believer who is heavenly-minded (Colossians 3:1,2)? Can I truly concur with the apostle Paul when he declared, "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things but loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:7,8)?

As an open letter, "known and read by all men", does my lifestyle draw unbelievers to Christ, and believers to sound Bible doctrine (II Corinthians 3:3)? Sure, I may be taking in Bible doctrine on a daily basis, but the question

remains, does the doctrine I learn every day affect my mental attitude toward God, self, and others? Do I truly have good rapport with my Heavenly Father and people in general (Luke 2:52)? Like the apostle Paul, is my spiritual life a trophy of grace? How do I deal with those who don't seem to have the same viewpoint with me? How do I handle problems that confront me daily? Do I keep on having a superabundance of happiness even in the midst of chaos? When I stand at the Rugged Gate of Physical Death, with just a few hours or days before my departure from this earth, will I confidently, humbly, and graciously make Paul's words my own: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith [I have applied Bible doctrine to God's glory]; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all [who will fulfill the protocol plan of God] who love His appearing" (II Timothy 4:7,8)? The answers to these questions and more are a private matter between you and the Lord. The truth of the matter is that our spiritual lives are not measured by how much Bible doctrine we know but by how much we know and apply on a regular basis.

APPLICATION OF GOD'S WORD: I have said it before, but let me say it again: Our spiritual lives and glorification of God in this fallen world are not measured by how much systematic theology and doctrine we know, but by how much we know and apply. In the end, superabundance of happiness does not belong to believers with an arsenal of doctrine in their souls but to those who routinely make application from that arsenal of Truth to life's exigencies. Christ gave emphasis to this phenomenal concept when He corrected a rude woman, who interrupted His teaching. In Luke's account we read: "And it came about while He said these things, one of the women [the rude one] in the crowd raised her voice [interrupted the Lord's teaching] and said to Him 'Blessed [Happy] is the womb [the Virgin Mary's] that bore you and the breast at which you nursed'" (11:27).

True, she was flabbergasted and stunned; true, she was overwhelmed and amazed by the Lord's expository Bible communication. But, she should have known that false teaching has damaging effects. She erroneously praised Mary, as if she were someone special. On the surface,

her proclamation appeared revelatory—as if what she were saying was God’s Word. But Christ cannot be fooled. The woman was dead wrong; and our Lord lambasted her: “But He [Jesus Christ] said, ‘[woman, you are wrong, there is nothing special about Mary!] on the contrary, blessed [happy] are those [believers] who hear the word of God and [apply] it!’” (v. 28). The apostle John, also recorded the Lord saying: “Blessed [happy] is he who heeds [pays close attention through perception and application] the words of the prophesy of this book” (Revelation 22:7b).

Let’s use Joshua’s experience to illustrate the application of Bible doctrine. We know that God uses and blesses prepared believers who have, through perception and application of Bible doctrine, become grace-oriented. These believers possess spiritual integrity and the capacity to appreciate and enjoy God’s immeasurable blessings. They also know that God does not, cannot, and will not bless us because of who and what we are, or because of anything we can accomplish in the energy of the flesh. More exactly, He blesses us based on our capacity for appreciation. The good news is that this capacity is developed through the utilization of grace assets, namely, perception of Bible doctrine and its application under the mentorship of the Holy Spirit. We are now ready to see how Joshua applied doctrine in his life.

JOSHUA: Unquestionably, after the death of Moses in the Old Testament, Joshua the Ephraimite, born in Egyptian bondage, c. 1500 BC was the oldest man among the Jews and obviously the man of the hour. We believe that, while in slavery in Egypt, his father, Nun, introduced him to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moreover, while in Egypt, prior to Israel’s liberation from slavery, he witnessed the Omnipotent hand of God work ten miracles on Egyptian land. These miracles, in addition to the doctrines he learned, became the frame of reference for his faith-rest life and his divine viewpoint and application of God’s Word. And accordingly, when God miraculously liberated the Jews from Egypt, Joshua became a student in Moses’ expository Bible class. He advanced rapidly in spiritual growth and developed confidence in God’s Word. Above all, he witnessed God’s faithfulness throughout their journey in

the wilderness, both in guidance and daily provision. The question is this: Has the Lord been faithful to you—both in provision and guidance? Has He been gracious to you in every way? How are you doing with the spiritual tests that come your way daily? You know, it’s not all about you; it’s all about God. We are here in a fallen world for one reason only: maximum glorification of God! Any other reason is unconventional, and at best satanic.

JOSHUA’S SPIRITUAL TEST: Prior to Joshua’s appointment and promotion, he was tested on human and divine viewpoint. In 1445 BC, Joshua represented Ephraim, one of the twelve tribes, and was sent to spy on Canaan (Numbers 13). When all the men except Joshua and Caleb came back from spying, they reported: “We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey [just as the Lord said in Exodus 3:7,8] and this is its fruit [as an evidence]. ‘Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong [giants!], and the cities are fortified and very large...we are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us [human viewpoint]!’” (Numbers 13:28, 29-31). These men saw giants! As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, when you look at your problems what do you see? Do you see an impassable wall...a hopeless situation?

These men did not exaggerate their findings. In fact, modern archeologists found that indeed there were numerous large walled fortresses throughout Palestine. Some of them were as large as ten acres. These made invasion by foreign armies extremely difficult. Because of their report, the entire congregation of Israel (with the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb) had panic attacks; they were ice-cold! Sadly, all God’s miracles they had witnessed were completely blotted out from their frame of reference. They instantly switched to human viewpoint. But Joshua and Caleb stood aloof, applied doctrine from their souls, and reached the conclusion: “We should by all means go up and take possession of it [the land], for we shall surely overcome it” (v. 30; see also 14:6-9).

While the rest of the people had their eyes on the problem—giants and fortified fortresses—Joshua, through the lens of God’s divine viewpoint acquired from Bible doctrine, had his

eyes on the divine solution—confident that God keeps His promise (13:1; Exodus 3:7,8; Hebrews 10:23)—and that, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My [God’s] Words will not pass away” (Matthew 24:35). As a result, the entire congregation sought to stone him, but God intervened (Numbers 14:10). “The Lord, said to Moses, ‘How long will this people spurn Me [Hebrew: Na’ats = “scorn,” it contains the idea of disdain for one who formerly received favorable attention and then rebelled]? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I performed in their midst [how long will it be before these believers begin to apply doctrine]?’” (14:11). God directed this question to the Jews in the wilderness more than 3,000 years ago; but now, it’s redirected to us in the Church Age. It’s imperative that I ask you the same question that I ask myself every day, which is: Am I applying Bible doctrine on a regular basis to God’s glory? Again, remember, it isn’t all about you, it’s all about Christ and His efficacious sacrifice on the cross—it’s all about God and His unique plan for the Church Age—it’s all about our Father’s glory.

JOSHUA’S APPOINTMENT: Near the end of Moses’ ministry, (1406 BC) and prior to his death, God, in His matchless grace, called upon Joshua, a man of great spiritual integrity, to be Moses’ successor and the Israelites’ new leader (Numbers 27:18). In lieu of this God-given privilege, the Lord spelled out to Joshua, just as He did to others and for you and I, just what we must do to be successful in the spiritual race. To Joshua He instructed: “This book of the law [the whole realm of Bible doctrine] shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate [keep on meditating] on it day and night, so that you may be careful to [APPLY] do according to all that is written in it; for [only] then you will make your way prosperous, then you will have [super abundance of] success” (Joshua 1:8). In light of the above verse, a simple formula for the spiritual success and blessing for the Church Age believer has surfaced:

- Filling of the Holy Spirit {FHS} + Perception of Basic Bible Doctrine {PBBDD} + Application of Basic Bible Doctrine (ABBDD) = Spiritual Momentum (SM).
- ß Filling of the Holy Spirit {FHS} + Spiritual Momentum {SM} + Perception of Advanced

Bible Doctrine {PABD} + Spiritual Testing {ST} + Application of Advanced Bible Doctrine {AABD} = Spiritual Focus {SF} + Grace-Orientation {GO} + Spiritual Capacity {SC} + Spiritual Sense of Destiny.

⊗ Filling of the Holy Spirit {FHS} + Spiritual Capacity {SC} + Grace-Orientation {GO} + Spiritual Sense of Destiny {SSD} + Advanced Spiritual Testing {AST} = Super Abundance of Blessing in Time {SABT}.

⊗ Super Abundance of Blessing in Time {SABT} + Ultimate Spiritual Testing {UST} = Surpassing Decoration in Heaven {SDH} + Ultimate Reward in the Eternal State {URES}.

You don't need to master the above formula, but in essence, this is what will transpire as you and I advance to the high ground of spiritual maturity. Paul, in his farewell address to the Ephesians after three years of face-to-face Bible expository teaching, said: "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace [accurate Bible teaching], which is able to build you up [give you capacity] and to give you the inheritance [blessing in time and eternity] among those who are sanctified [the believers who have fulfilled the plan of God for their lives]" (Acts 20:32). Another way of saying it is that our blessing in time and in eternity is directly proportional to our spiritual growth and capacity. We consider it wise to examine the filling of the Holy Spirit, the word of His grace, and doctrinal application mechanics before concluding this expositional teaching about Paul a trophy of grace.

THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

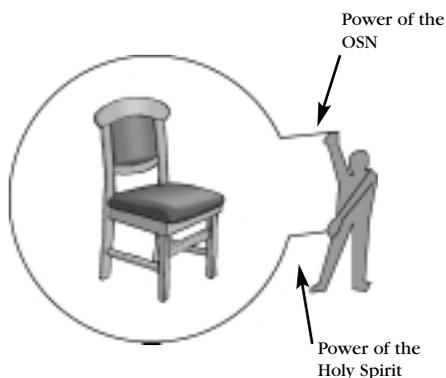


Diagram of a Spiritual Warfare

• Let's use the above diagram to illustrate how the Holy Spirit and the Old Sin Nature function in a believer's soul. The box represents the believer's body where God the Father, the Son,

and the Holy Spirit reside (I Corinthians 3:16, 6:15; Colossians 1:27). It's also the dwelling place for the Old Sin Nature (OSN) (Romans 7:17). The circle represents the believer's soul with a gate of entrance, and the chair illustrates the command post of the soul. To be specific, there are two operating powers inside the body of every believer, namely the power of the Old Sin Nature, and the Holy Spirit. The OSN fights tooth and nail to serve Satan's purpose, while the Holy Spirit endeavors to fulfill God's plan for your life. Both are in conflict wanting control of the command post of your soul—where all actions and decisions occur whether good or bad. Only one can be at the helm at a time.

The apostle Paul taught this phenomenal doctrine to the Galatians: "But I say, walk by the Spirit [keep on allowing the Holy Spirit to control the command post of your soul], and you will not carry out the desire of your flesh [the OSN]. For [purpose clause] the flesh [OSN] sets its desire against the Spirit [wanting to recapture the seat of the soul], and the Spirit against the flesh [vice-versa]; for these [two dynamic powers] are in opposition [at war] to one another, so that you may not do the things you please" (5:16,17). In light of these two verses, the following principles have emerged:

1. The soul is the battleground for spiritual warfare.
2. All actions, divine or carnal, are processed and carried out from the soul.
3. The command post of the soul accommodates both the power of the OSN and that of the Holy Spirit for operational purposes. In other words, the Holy Spirit and the Sin Nature make frequent trips to your soul so that each can fulfill God's plan or Satan's objectives respectively.
4. A believer will never commit a sin unless the OSN is in control of the command post of his soul.
5. When God the Holy Spirit controls the soul, the potential for the believer to glorify God abounds. Note that I said potential. Many believers have erroneously thought that all they need to do in their spiritual life is to take in doctrine on a daily basis and acknowledge their sins to God whenever they fail (I John 1:9). These believers assume that once they do these two things they are living the spiritual life. Nothing can be further from the truth. If that's what the spiritual life is all about, we are the most miserable creatures for the Holy Spirit has failed us! But that's unthinkable! The truth of

the matter is, the filling of the Holy Spirit is never an end in itself but the means, the Energizer, for the execution of God's game plan for the believer. A believer can be filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit and yet fail to glorify God. Let me emphasize this point: When the Holy Spirit resides in the soul, or is seated at the command post, He does not live the believer's life for him. He only provides the power (John 14:16; Zechariah 4:6) and enables the believer to accomplish the humanly impossible tasks like impersonal love for all mankind.

The apostle Peter was a typical example—a coward and beneficiary of the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit, respectively. Prior to the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit, Peter proved to be a coward. In our Lord's trial, a slave girl approached him and identified him as Christ's follower, but he categorically and vehemently denied ever knowing Christ, and he did so with an oath (Matthew 26:71-74)! That's right—with an oath!! However, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter was both indwelt and filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2), and he fearlessly and boldly preached Christ and even called the Pharisees, Sadducees, and a host of other Jews, godless men (v. 23). What a difference when the Holy Spirit controls one's soul.

6. A believer becomes helpless when the OSN is seated at the command post; that's when the potential to commit even the most heinous sin abounds. We saw this in King David's life when he, as a believer, committed adultery and murder (II Samuel 11:2-4; 12:9). Yes, murder too! It's a myth that a believer can't do this or that and still be a believer! All the believer has to do is welcome the OSN in his soul by a simple decision to sin, think contrary to God's Word, or allow evil thoughts, and the rest is down the rugged road of evil deeds (James 1:14, 15). Believers who are often led by the nose (deceived) are those who overlook the power of the OSN!
7. Every believer is the gateman of his own soul; he opens the gate to whichever power supply he chooses—the old sin nature, or God the Holy Spirit. God does have a delightful sense of humor. People tend to want to be in control of things, but without taking a vote, God elected each human being to be president of his own soul; consequently, God holds everyone responsible for the choices they make. The good news is that the Old Sin Nature has to

have your permission before it can take a seat at the command post of your soul.

8. The OSN will remain in command as a result of a committed sin, until the believer chooses to apply I John 1:9: "If we confess [acknowledge] our sins [to God], He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse [purify] us from all unrighteousness [unknown sins]." That's the only solution for the Holy Spirit to recapture the command post.

9. The length of time the Holy Spirit lodges in a believer's soul is parallel to the believer's spiritual growth. Consequently, a mature believer understands the importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in his soul more than the baby believer does.

10. So, any work that a believer performs when the Holy Spirit is not in command is classified in Scripture as "wood, hay, and straw" (I Corinthians 3:12-15)—devoid of rewards both in time and in eternity.

11. Therefore, God's command and exaltation: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit... Do not quench the [Holy] Spirit... Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise [live your spiritual life]... Make the most of your time [don't consciously expel the Holy Spirit from your soul through sin] because the days are evil... Do not give the devil an opportunity [by giving the OSN access to your soul]... [Above all, keep on being] filled with the

[Holy] Spirit" (Ephesians 4:30a; I Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 5:15, 16; 4:27; 5:18b). This is a spiritual warfare that demands spiritual power! This prepares us to study the next subject.

THE WORD OF HIS GRACE: No believer would ever develop capacity apart from acquiring an arsenal of accurate Bible doctrine in his soul. To achieve this, the believer has to make perception (learning with concentration) of Bible doctrine the number one priority. Ironically, many believers get tangled in the details of life at the expense of learning God's Word. These people often say, "When things improve, I will spend more time in learning doctrine." Things will NEVER improve until your rapport with your heavenly Father is unshakable (Joshua 1:8)! Again, perception of Bible doctrine is never the end in glorifying God. Relatively, the inventory of doctrine in a believer's soul avails the believer the potential for thinking in terms of divine viewpoint. God, in His infinite grace, has provided you with His thoughts and His plan in writing—we didn't deserve to know His thoughts—God graced us out!

APPLICATION MECHANISM: Application of God's Word is the core of spiritual warfare. The gauge of application mechanism measures whether a believer is legalistic, or grace-orient-

ed. It determines whether a believer is advancing to the high ground of spiritual maturity, or retrogressing—becoming a casualty in the spiritual conflict. It measures where we are in our spiritual growth dynamics! May I pause to underscore a very important fact: Application of Bible doctrine is the most difficult thing in our spiritual lives. But can one successfully apply doctrine to his life on a regular basis? Yes. Can he do this on his own? No chance! There is clear evidence in Scripture that every believer is responsible for learning and applying Bible doctrine on a consistent basis. A believer can have a reservoir of Bible doctrine in his soul but if he fails to apply any of it, the doctrines will not benefit the individual at all. Many believers have asked, "How can one apply Bible doctrine?" You need to realize one thing: Application of Bible doctrine varies with individuals. With that in mind, we can now develop a general mechanism:

v **FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:** The filling of the Holy Spirit is the Spirit taking hold of the command post of the soul. It's only when He resides in the believer's soul that there can be any desire to glorify God.

v **DESIRE—A KEY FACTOR:** Desire is a key factor in the execution of the unique plan of God. Action is usually a bi-product of one's desire; that's why our Heavenly Father judges the soul

The Overview of Grace Evangelistic Ministries

Grace Evangelistic Ministries is incorporated in the State of Tennessee as a nonprofit, non-denominational, sound Bible teaching missionary oriented Christian organization.

Our Mission: In obedience to the command of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.....

"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15)

WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:

Objective #1

Evangelize unbelievers with the simple, grace gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will depend solely on the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit to make the gospel clear without resorting to gimmicks or imposing our personal views on others. We must present the gospel, but leave the decision "to believe in" or "to reject" Christ to the hearers.

Objective #2

For those who choose to believe in Christ, we will seize the opportunity to assist in the following ways:

a. Help them form Bible study groups;

- b. Provide them with doctrinal materials, including recorded Bible lessons and literature, enabling them to fulfill the command: "As newborn babies desire the sincere milk of the word [sound Bible doctrine] that you may grow thereby." (I Peter 2:2);
- c. Where possible, assist them in establishing their own local churches;
- d. Help them select pastors who teach sound Bible doctrine; and
- e. As the Lord makes funds available, provide financial assistance until they are self-supporting.

Objective #3

Because those who have responded to the gospel will become unfruitful if they are not exposed to sound Bible teaching, we will seek out or establish theological seminaries to prepare indigenous pastors. Their training will be consistent with Paul's mandate to Pastor Timothy to "study to show yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." (II Timothy 2: 15)

Objective #4

As the need arises, we will send doctrinally motivated, short-term and long-term missionaries to minis-

ter to newly formed groups and churches.

Objective #5

We will use literature and other media to reach and nurture those to whom we cannot minister in person. To minimize expenses, we will establish overseas centers for audiocassette duplication of recorded Bible lessons and reproduction of doctrinal literature. In keeping with our grace policy, individuals and groups will never be charged for these materials.

Objective #6

Offer humanitarian assistance as the Lord provides and directs us. This may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Provision of used and/or new clothing;
- b. Provision of food;
- c. Provision of medicines and medical care; and
- d. Assist Grace Evangelistic Ministries associates as necessary.

Objective #7

Prepare periodic newsletters, which include Bible exposition and testimonies, for distribution to our associates by mail and the Internet.

before the action. The prophet Samuel told us: "God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart [soul]" (I Samuel 16:7). Solomon wrote, "For as he [i.e. a man] thinks within himself [soul], so he is" (Proverbs 23:7). And the Lord echoed, "You shall not commit adultery. . . everyone who looks at a woman with lust [a desire to be with her] has committed adultery with her in his heart [soul]" (Matthew 5:27b, 28). So when a believer is faced with a test, the issue is, what does he desire?

v **SPIRITUAL TESTING:** The believer is face-to-face with an obnoxious fellow believer who has ridiculed, maligned, and been cruel to him in every way. The victim recognizes through doctrine in his soul that getting even or responding in kind would not glorify God in his life. Rather, he desires to use this opportunity to glorify God.

v **THE ENABLING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:** When the believer sends the signal of a desire to glorify God, the Holy Spirit responds by providing the believer with virtue love—something he cannot produce on his own (Galatians 5:22). The believer then reaches into his reservoir of Bible doctrine, by the same enabling power, and forms a doctrinal rationale—"Never take your own revenge" (Romans 12:19a); and "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). As the believer's desire intensifies, he is motivated to pray for him—by the same power. In the end, the Holy Spirit will produce the agape love the believer needs for his enemy, and peace—which surpasses human comprehension to engulf the believer's soul. That's grace in action! Now, you see why you should never take any credit for your spiritual victory—all credits go to the Father, His Spirit, and the Word of His grace!

FINAL THOUGHT

The apostle Paul wrote, "But by His doing [minus anyone's effort] you are in Christ Jesus. . ." (I Corinthians 1:30a). God is perfect and His work is perfect. God the Son purchased you (I Peter 1:18, 19)—perfect transaction. God the Holy Spirit sealed you (II Corinthians 1:22)—perfect sealing. God the Father keeps you saved by His power (John 10:29)—perfect security. God provides salvation in grace. We have nothing to add. We are the objects and beneficiaries of His grace forever.

Heavenly Father, we pause to praise you because of who You are, and for what you are accomplishing in our lifetime. We thank You for this awesome privilege and the honor to be the recipients of this fantastic Church Age doctrine. We are very grateful to You for preserving Paul's writing so that we can tap into his mind and have a better understanding of your amazing grace. Father, we know that His life brought maximum glorification to Your Name. Therefore, we pray that we, along with our partners, may equally glorify You to the maximum. Not only us, but also for everyone who has a desire in glorifying You. Father, we live in the most unusual time of human history, we humbly ask that we be shielded from the evil one as we advance to the high ground of spiritual maturity.

We pause also to pray for president George W. Bush, that You may endow him with wisdom, so that he can continue to make good decisions and lead this client nation to God in the right direction. We pray for all those in the armed forces. We pray for their protection and continued victory both at home and abroad.

Our Eternal Father, we pray for those who have, month after month, channeled their resources and are serving Your purpose through this ministry. We humbly ask for Your continued provision for each of them. Father we thank You for answering this prayer, in Christ's name. Amen.

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling [losing your salvation], and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen" (Jude 1:24-25).

To be continued—(Volume 27—lesson 13)

WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

No question about it, we live in the most unusual time in the history of man—a period when Satan and his minions have intensified their assaults against you—a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. But here's the good news: "Greater is He who is in you than he [Satan]

who is in the world" (I John 4:4b). Satan can't get to you as long as you're where God wants you to be, and doing what He wants you to do, namely, perceiving and applying His Word through the power supply of the Holy Spirit. Satan can't get to you because "your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3b). Here's the scenario: Before Satan could reach you; he would first have to deal with Omnipotent God. That's not all! If he could do that, then next, he'd have to battle with the Omnipotent Christ! Christ defeated him on the cross 2,000 years ago. So rejoice, for you are the beneficiary of a double security!!

Don't buy into Satan's lies. He wants you to believe that your situation is a hopeless one. That's a lie, and he knows it. We are standing on the authority of God's Word to tell you that as long as you are in God's plan for your life, no matter how bleak your future may look, He who ". . . causes all things [including bleak situations] to work together for good to those who love God. . ." will honor His Word (Romans 8:28). He is the only One who can blend rotten oranges with good ones and produce a sweet and tasty orange juice! So keep advancing to the high ground of spiritual maturity—see the future through the lens of the infallible Word of God. Replace discouragement with this confidence: "He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5b).

"You shall know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free" (John 8:32).

PROGRESS REPORT

Our purpose is to inform and bring you up-to-date about what God is doing for and through this ministry. Our hearts are filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for His indelible work. When you approach His throne in prayer, please remember Grace Evangelistic Ministries. Praise Him for His work through us; our work is nothing apart from His grace.

USA

Demand for our publications continues to grow. Many of our partners have joined us in the distribution of our materials to positive believers. Our mailing list gets larger by the week, causing us to stand in awe and reverence of the Almighty God for what He is doing.

OVERSEAS

- We currently support pastors teaching doctrine in the churches we established in Africa until they become financially independent.
- Right now, we have six men that we sponsor at GEM's recommended seminaries in Africa. Dozens more are on the waiting list.
- Today, our mailing list includes addresses from Australia, Canada, China, Croatia, Germany, India, Philippines, Scotland, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Gambia, Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The list grows as God directs and removes linguistic, racial, cultural, and geographical barriers to make Himself known to those who seek to know Him. We consider it a great privilege to be His instrument in spreading the gospel and doctrinal truths.

NEW PUBLICATION

By the grace of God, we have published a new book: [Focus on Christian Marriage](#) for both married and unmarried believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. This publication is a reply to many questions we encounter about marriage as we travel from coast-to-coast. We believe that this book will help everyone who wants to understand the spiritual battle that rages on in marriage. More than that, it will enlighten everyone who aspires to glorify God in marriage. What does the Bible mean when it says, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave His life for her?" Or "Wives, be submissive to your own husbands as to the Lord?" These two mandates carry equal weight and are explained in this book.

Our stand with regard to financial policy remains the same: The book is free. We do not charge for books or any other material that is of spiritual value. We do not solicit funds; your contribution to this ministry is solely a matter between you and the Lord. Every believer has the privilege and honor to contribute to the work of this ministry as we endeavor to bring maximum glory to our heavenly Father. This is a grace ministry.

OUR PREVIOUS MISSIONARY TRIP TO NIGERIA

We are truly amazed at what God is using this ministry to accomplish! We don't have even one doubt that He is the only One running this ministry. Indeed, it's an honor for us to witness. The report we received from Moses, Darlington, and Debby is very encouraging. It shows that this ministry is truly serving its purpose—the glorification of God to the maximum.

Moses and his team covered three cities in the three States of Nigeria, namely, Lagos, the most populated state and former capital of Nigeria, Aba in Abia State, and Jos, Plateau State. They witnessed to individuals by passing out gospel pamphlets wherever there was opportunity: Airports, hotels, and all over. Their meetings were a huge success; however, they concede that one really needs to be there to see, firsthand, what God is doing in that country torn apart by austerity, ethnic conflicts, and Islamic assaults on Christians in the northern part of Nigeria where Muslims dominate! But that's just a tip of the iceberg from their report. What happened in Jos was phenomenal. Many people who came to the conference in Jos, came as far as 1,000 miles away, but what struck us was their positive volition! People in Nigeria are overripe for the gospel and accurate Bible teaching! They are really hungry!

JOS: As many of you know, the city of Jos is our headquarters, where audiotapes are dubbed, and publications are reprinted and distributed free of charge to those who are hungry. Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko and his team have made frequent visits to Jos. In the 2001 conference, the hall we rented in Jos wasn't able to accommodate people who came for the program—many stayed outside. This year, we decided to rent a larger hall to avoid what happened last year. This year's report is the same! Again, the hall wasn't big enough! The headcount was nearly double that of last year. As a result, many people stood outside for two hours! And some, amazingly, came one to two hours early just to be able to get a seat inside. Our meetings started at 5pm; those who came at 4.30 or so couldn't get inside the hall!! As one person put it: "Do we call what is happening in Nigeria a revival or what?"

REPORT BY DEBBY A. HAGAR

(A team missionary member)

Greetings from all your Nigerian friends! With

every communication, verbal or written, the Nigerian faithful admonish me to greet the brethren in the US. Thanks so much to all our supporters for your continued care for this ministry. My third trip was even more enjoyable because I was able to see old friends in each location as well as make new ones. The positive volition witnessed in Nigeria is truly a joy to behold.

Three conferences were taught by Moses:

1. Pastors and Church Workers in Lagos
2. Pastor's Conference in Jos, GEM's Africa Headquarters
3. General Conference in Aba

Though each venue was successful, the Pastor's Conference hosted by GEM Jos, exceeded our expectations. Though we changed to a larger facility, we still had a packed house with an overflow crowd from day one. People came an hour early just to get a seat inside. 500 pastors from 30 states came to hear Moses challenge them to abandon tradition and go back to the Bible to study and teach and feed their sheep. He encouraged them to examine their life to see if they were serving God, man, or self. The actual topics were:

1. Power of Prayer
2. Believers and Demonism
3. Ministers and Money
4. The Amazing Power of Spiritual Maturity and
5. Justification by Faith Alone

The pastors who attended received a Hebrew Greek Key Word Study Bible, a Vines Bible Dictionary, or Chafer's 52 Major Bible Themes; our supply ran out before everyone could get one!

I heard pastors, who came to visit with Moses, say how grateful they were for the teachings because they previously "just didn't know" and now could proceed correctly. Many asked for training aids for children, and we were able to supply a sample set of all training aids and handout sheets we had with us.

It's interesting to note that the group of 500 grew from a small group. There were 60 pastors the first year—then Moses spoke! The

next day, that number was reduced to 45, then 35, then 25, ending with 15 or 16. During the year, the Holy Spirit went to work convicting and mentoring them. The second year, the number grew to about 300 and from there the 500. Pretty amazing stuff!

In Aba, Moses challenged the participants with the teachings of Grace and then took a close look at the three stages of spiritual maturity and the characteristics of each phase. Pastors and others were greatly edified and encouraged. Many traveled from as far as three hours away to hear accurate Bible teaching – some took long, daily bus trips in order to be fed. Everyone wanted more!

In Lagos, a large crowd was fed daily for a week. The teaching began with a focus on Grace and ended with Questions and Answers. At each location, books were distributed until supplies ran out. Book order forms from R. B. Thieme, Jr. Bible Ministries were handed out, and the completed forms were carried back to the states and then forwarded to Thieme Bible Ministries. This saves Nigerians a stamp of 100 naira (about 80c) but probably a day's wage for a minimum wage worker.

The Jos Office reported that it sends out about 800 tapes per month; however, when I got there, they had been out of blank tapes since February. Running out of tapes and books is something hard for us in the States to imagine but it is a common occurrence over there—please pray about this.

Everywhere I went, I saw people I had met on previous trips, and I can report that they are GROWING IN GRACE. When a person is liberated from taboos and legalism, and false doctrines are replaced by grace and eternal security, the validity of their testimony is heard in their voice and seen in their eyes—not just words. They speak with a deep conviction and with the relief of someone who's just been let out of jail. Many are positive and very hungry—it is just hard for them to get all the study material they need.

Debby taught in the following locations:

1. Lagos, one group for three days
2. Jos, two schools for one day each

3. Aba, two schools for three days each, and two groups for one day each

It is a treat to teach for three days because the first day is always about the Essence of God with a gospel presentation. Additional days allow us to explore rebound, prayer, and growing in grace. The kids are bright, attentive, and anxious to see "Oibo" the white woman (I am the only one). Still amazing to me—I am considered a special guest. America and Americans are highly revered, so this makes my visit special to them. A training aid that they can color is great cause for excitement - and to have your picture taken is reason to jump for joy! We take so much for granted.

Thanks to the efforts of Danna Schott, of Joe Griffin's church, I was able to leave behind Essence of God Banners for follow-up teaching. Angie Gryson and Lois Delnay have also provided materials for children that they have been developing, and many others provided all kinds of assistance. The team is growing. The main goal is to start these kids off in the right direction with correct doctrine; we know how hard it is to uproot false doctrine once it takes hold in the soul.

I wish everyone could see what I see. I will try to be your eyes and ears - to paint a picture of what is happening. The Lord continues to amaze us daily! We travel with a wall of fire around us and a cushion of payer support beneath us. Thanks for all the prayers! I assured the Nigerians that even though they only see me (one person) that there are legions behind me...that many are praying for them, asking about them, and sending their love. They get this incredulous look on their faces—because they just can't imagine—and then they smile from ear to ear and are ENCOURAGED!

HERE IS THE TRUTH

Does the believer's blessing depend on tithing? And what about Malachi 3:10? "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you [the nation of Israel] a blessing until it overflows."

In the dispensation of the Jews, tithing for blessing, yes; but in the Church Age, emphatically, NO!

Briefly, the origin of tithing cannot be concretely pinpointed. It was a system of paying tributes to kings; even God warned the Israelites about this system of taxation when they demanded a human king (1 Samuel 8:15). History reveals that it existed in Babylon in ancient times, also in Persia and Egypt, even in China (all heathen nations). It is quite certain that Abraham knew of it when he migrated from Ur. Thus, it was a system of flat rate taxation for many ancient nations! It was never a means of spiritual giving. With this in mind, let's examine this doctrine that has enslaved many believers for decades.

ABRAHAM'S TITHE TO MELCHIZEDEK (KING OF SALEM): Abraham's tithe is the origin of Biblical tithing, or better yet, taxation. Ironically, when a believer has a better understanding of what took place between Abraham and Melchizedek, the believer has a grasp of tithing in the Old Testament. First, who is Melchizedek? He was a king of Salem. According to Josephus (Ant. IX,2), Jewish writers generally regarded Salem a synonym for Jerusalem (see Psalm 76:2). King Melchizedek was a mortal man (Hebrews 7:4,8). His name appeared in Scripture both in the Old and New Testaments because of the parallelism he shared with our Lord Jesus Christ. Like the Lord Jesus Christ, he was the only man in Biblical history who was both a king and priest. The Bible does not provide us with his genealogy. That does not mean that he had no human parents. It simply means that we do not have a record of the day of his birth, death, and so on. (Hebrews 7:3). Secondly, why did Abraham tithe from his spoils and not from the wellspring of his wealth? Beneath the answer lies what historians reveal about tithing. God richly blessed Abraham prior to his journey to Salem. In Genesis we read, "Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis 13:2). By today's standard, he would be regarded as a multi-millionaire! In addition, he had 318 trained men working for him (14:14)!

When Abraham's nephew Lot, and his family, were led captive, Abraham took his trained men and went to war against the people (vs. 14-16). He defeated Chedorlaomer, freed his nephew, and brought some spoils with him (15-17). On his return, he met king Melchizedek and paid him a tithe of his spoils (Hebrews 7:4). Spoils were things he acquired from the war. He couldn't pay a tithe, or tax on his wealth, to Melchizedek because he didn't earn the wealth within the vicinity of Salem. Apparently he did

pay tithes on his wealth while in his homeland, Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 11:31). This is true today. When a foreigner migrates into a country with his wealth, the government does not tax him on his possession. He is only taxed on any income he made while residing in his migrated land. That's exactly what took place between king Melchizedek and Abraham! Thus when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, he was simply fulfilling the law of the land. One may ask, "Why was Abraham, a multi-millionaire, so stingy in his gift to king-priest Melchizedek?" It wasn't a gift! He was just paying his taxes—it wasn't a freewill offering; otherwise, he would have been more generous.

TITHE IN ISRAEL: When God liberated Israel from Egypt, He introduced this system of taxation generally referred to as a tithe [or 10% of one's income] for the entire nation, including aliens who live within her perimeter. In fact, the very moment God commanded the Israelites to pay tithes it became a law. One important question is, who were the beneficiaries of this tithe? The Levites.

THE LEVITES: Levi is the third son of Jacob (Genesis 29:34) and the line of priesthood in Israel. Concerning this tribe, Moses wrote, "You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion... and to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithes in Israel for an inheritance... it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance" (Numbers 18:20-23). Actually, God forbade the Levites from acquiring any land which meant they couldn't farm. Rather, God gave them all the tithes that were collected in Israel for their sustenance.

MOSAIC LAW AND GOD'S BLESSING: The Mosaic Law belonged to the Israelites, including the law concerning tithing. Consequently, God's blessings to them was anchored on their obedience to His laws. Moses, in the Old Testament, used the entire 28th chapter of Deuteronomy to define Israel's blessing and cursing in lieu of their obedience and disobedience, respectively. The chapter begins with, "Now it shall be, if you will diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments [including the law concerning tithes]... the Lord your God, will set you high above all the nations... blessed shall be your basket... the Lord will command His blessing upon you in your barns... the Lord will open for you His good storehouse in the heavens (28:1-14). On the other hand, "...if you [the Israelites] will not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments... curses shall come upon you and overtake you... the Lord shall make the rain of your

land powder and dust [severe drought]... you shall bring out much seed to the field but you shall gather a little, for the locust shall consume it...." (15-38). This brings us to Malachi.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI: The entire four chapters of the book of Malachi were written in response to Israel's apostasy. They violated God's laws in every imaginable way; as a result, God cursed them and their land just as He said He would in Deuteronomy 28. In their suffering, they wondered as to why the Lord was so harsh on them. It was at this juncture, that God raised up Malachi to make known and pronounce their indictments.

The book of Malachi was addressed to Israel only. Chapter one verse one reads: "The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi" (1:1). And thus the indictments began: "...if I am a Father, where is my honor [they failed to honor God]? And if I am Master, where is My respect [no respect for God]... you are presenting defiled food upon My altar [illegitimate sacrifice]... you present the blind [sacrificial animals]... you present the lame and sick [animals]... you bring what was taken by robbery [as an offering to the Lord]" (Malachi 1:1-14). The indictments continued through chapter two. In chapter three, God outlined what they should do in order for Him to remove the curse, which He had placed on them. Malachi wrote, "...Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the Lord of hosts... 'will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me... in tithes [taxations] and offerings [spiritual giving]... you are cursed with a curse... the whole nation of you... Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this... if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows... I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground... and all the [Gentile] nations will call you [Israel] blessed, for you shall be a delightful land,' says the Lord of hosts" (3:7-12).

When we carefully examine the above six verses, we see the parallel between those verses and Deuteronomy twenty-eight. In essence, God was not giving the Israelites a new promise. Rather, He was reiterating the promise He made to them in Deuteronomy should they obey His law.

TITHE DURING THE TIME OF CHRIST: The Lord did not condemn the tithe in His day, as we note in Matthew 23:23, because He did not come to abolish the law, including that of tithing, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17,18). And in the Pauline epistle we are told, "For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who

believes" (Romans 10:4). The moment God commanded the Israelites to pay a tithe, it became a divine law; however, when Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek, he unequivocally observed the city of Salem's ordinance. Thus the Bible took notice of it, because Melchizedek's office was unique like that of Christ—holding two offices, namely kingship and priesthood (Hebrews 10:10). Tithe is not a spiritual giving—not now, not then and not any time!

CHANGE OF PRIESTHOOD WARRANTS CHANGE OF LAW (7:12)

(To be continued volume 27)

THE GOOD NEWS

When our Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross, He had you on His mind. All sins, including those you have not yet committed, were poured out on Jesus Christ, and He was judged for each and every one in your place (1 Peter 2:24). The penalty has already been paid. He endured the judgment for all the sins of the world to pave the way for you to have eternal life through faith in Him. No matter how sinful you have been, you can be forgiven and your slate wiped clean by God. How? By telling God right now that you are believing in His Son, Jesus Christ. The moment you do this, you share God's eternal life forever. The Bible says, "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Will you believe in Him today? Or will you reject Him? The decision is entirely yours.

“You shall know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free”

(John 8:32).

BIBLE DOCTRINE FOR THOUGHT

"Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they [unbelievers] are white for harvest... Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together" (John 4:35,36). "Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but [sadly] the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of harvest to send out workers into His

harvest" (Matthew 9:37). What was a great source of concern for our Savior 2,000 years ago ought to be our concern today! It boils down to this: Do you care for those who are perishing? You may pause and meditate on this.

BUDGET SHEET FOR THE UPCOMING TRIPS

The provision for the conference and soul winning for Christ are entirely up to the Lord. Our stand regarding the financial provision remains unchanged: If God has opened these doors for our ministry, He will provide. If He doesn't provide, that's a clear indication that He didn't open these doors, and Rev. Moses and his team would go fishing!

- ✓ Zimbabwe: (July 31- August 8, 2002)
- ✓ South Africa: (August 9-16)
- ✓ Germany & Poland: (August 23-September 7)

BUDGET BREAKDOWN:

• Total Airfare	\$2,800.00
• Room and Board	\$2,150.00
• Venue	\$1,300.00
• Publicity (Radio, Banners, flyers)	\$1,750.00
• Local transportation	\$1,000.00

JESUS CHRIST THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF A PRAYER WARRIOR

The God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, gave us a perfect example to follow. His life and earthly ministry was encapsulated in a lifestyle of prayer. Prayer occupied a place of singular importance in His own life and teaching. In time of decision and crisis He gave Himself to prayer. Thus our Lord prayed when He was baptized (Luke 3:21,22); when He chose the twelve disciples: "As it was at this time that He [i.e., Jesus Christ] went off to the mountain to pray and He spent the whole night in prayer to God [the Father]" (Luke 6:12,13); when He was transfigured (Luke 9:29); when He was engaging in sustained and exhausting service: "And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lone place [for privacy], and was praying there" (Mark 1:35-39); when He called forth Lazarus from the grave (John 11:41); when He

was burdened for Simon Peter (Luke 22:31-32); when He faced betrayal, execution, and divine abandonment, and thus the Scripture recorded: "And He withdrew from them [i.e., His disciples] about a stone's throw, and he knelt down and began to pray... And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:41,44). He prayed when He thought of His disciples and their future ministry (John 17) and before His physical death (Luke 23:46). Therefore, if you are a believer who finds it difficult to spend time with our heavenly Father, sin no more. "Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23).

If Jesus Christ, a perfect God and a perfect Man spent all night in prayer (Luke 6:12-13), we the mortal believers should spend all year in Prayer!

In light of the importance of prayer,

WOULD YOU JOIN US IN PRAYER

As we pray for:

- ❖ President George Bush (For wisdom in all decision-making)
- ❖ The US (For a great revival, peace, and freedom from terrorism)
- ❖ The US military
- ❖ God to provide for the missionary work in Africa (August-September 2002)
- ❖ The safety of Moses and his team as they travel
- ❖ Col. Thieme Jr.'s ministry and his wife's health
- ❖ The spiritual growth of the churches we formed
- ❖ Seminary students that we support (that God will equip them in every way)
- ❖ Special fund to establish a printing press for reprinting of GEM's and Thieme's publications in Africa
- ❖ Israel's protection
- ❖ His provision for three budgeted publications this year
- ❖ For the provision of many open doors in the year 2002
- ❖ Our partners (that God would continue to meet their needs)

CONTAINER SHIPMENT TO AFRICA

Over the years, many of our associates have called wanting to donate one thing or the other. We are now accepting donations for shipment to Africa.

ITEMS NEW OR USED:

- ➔ Bibles (Good versions for new converts & study tools for doctrinal pastors)
- ➔ Computers, monitors, copy machines, printers
- ➔ TVs & VCRs for tape groups
- ➔ Doctrinal literature
- ➔ ETC (if you have something else to donate, other than those listed, please call us)

Mail donations to:

Grace Evangelistic Ministries
% Mr. Danny Warner
7706 Fairdale
Houston, TX 77063

INTERNAL REVENUE DISCLOSURE

Grace Evangelistic Ministries is a non-profit, tax-exempt, missionary organization. And under the Internal Revenue code 501-C (3), all contributions to this ministry qualify for tax-deductions.

FINAL NOTE

If you would like to be on our mailing list to receive this bi-monthly issue of Grace News Today with no obligation, please write to us:

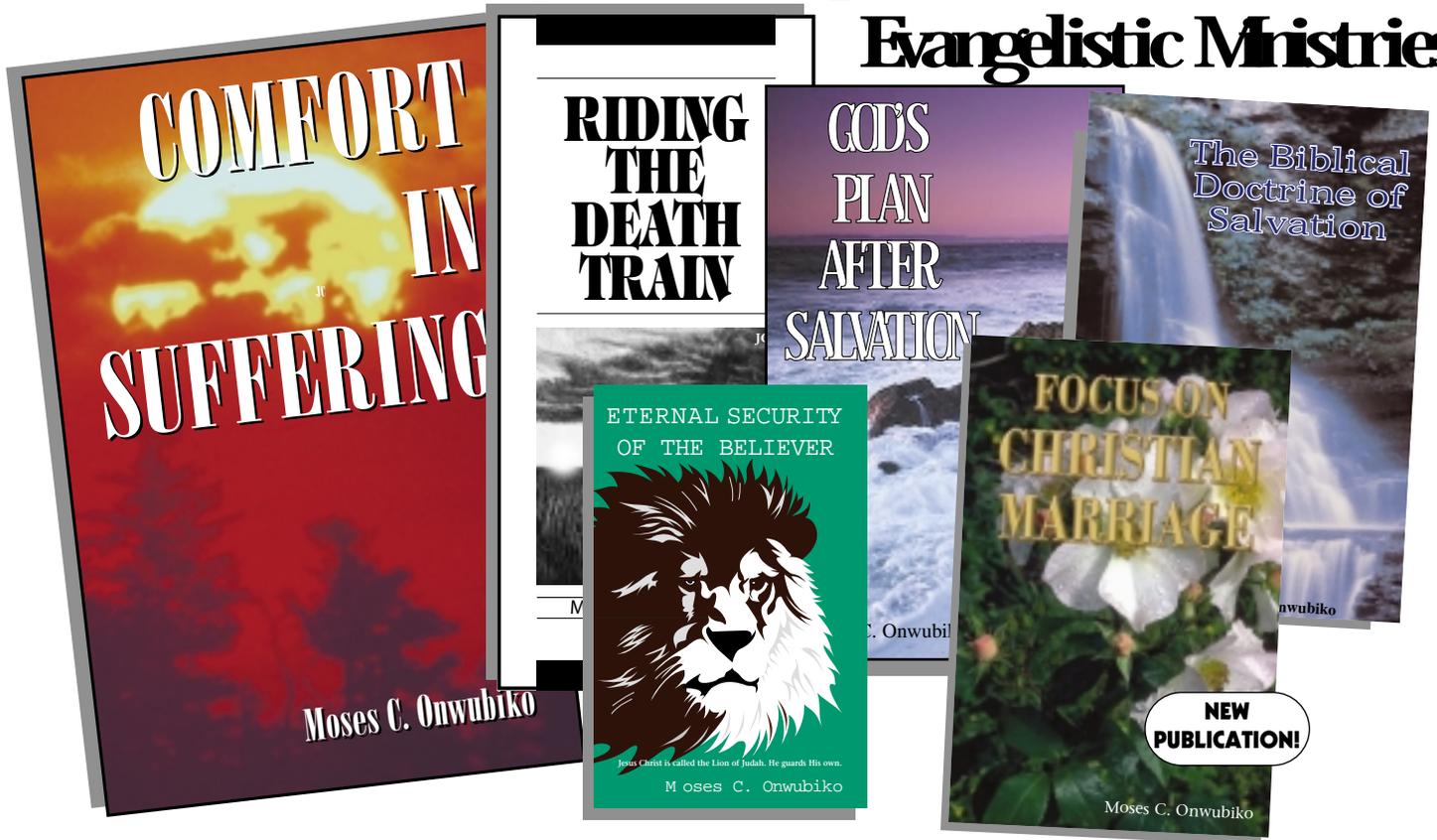
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PO Box 17246

Nashville, TN 37217-7246

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on the Internet at:

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