

Disciplined Warriors

by
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“Healthy churches produce true disciples who engage in & win the battles of spiritual warfare.”

Highlighted for teaching purposes
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Introduction:

Has it ever seemed as though supernatural forces were doing everything possible to keep you or your church from growing? (the explanation can be found in Matthew 16:18)

God's people will win, but not before first wrestling against the forces of darkness. (Ephesians 6:12) The enemy wars against any church that seeks to grow for God's glory. Regrettably, he often wins battles simply because we are unprepared for the conflict.

I fear that church growth principles sometimes are being abused to produce something other than a biblical church. The inherent danger... they might grow a crowd rather than a church. Church members, if biblically and theologically ill-equipped, often don't recognize the difference between the two.

I am concerned that too little attention has been given to the theological foundation required for any healthy church. ...far too many churches that appear otherwise "healthy" lack a solid foundation.

I contend that prayer is so evident in the early church that prayer itself should be a purpose of the church.

Qt: Disciplemaking is much broader than a program or strategy. Indeed, biblical discipling encompasses all purposes of the church.

Qt: We have had years of discipling programs, and we are not disciplined.

Donald McGavran coined the term "church growth" to refer to evangelism that results in fruit-bearing disciples of Christ. "Church growth" was to be measured not in "decisions" but in "disciples."

Peter Wagner has argued that church growth principles are often ineffective unless they take into account the spiritual battlefield on which the secular person must be approached.

This battle is real. We cannot ignore the reality of spiritual warfare as we grow healthy, biblical churches. (Ephesians 6:12) At the same time, the biblical church must do spiritual battle in a biblical manner.

Qt: Many believers err in ignoring Satan, others err in giving him too much attention. Warfare strategies often focus more on our power, rather than on our weakness and God's strength. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Qt: The process of "putting on the full armor of God" (Ephesians 6:10-17) is essentially biblical, lifestyle discipleship.

This book is both theological and practical. Local churches must learn to reach and disciple their communities while maintaining a biblical foundation.

Our greatest enemy is the flesh. (Romans 7:14, 18; 8:1-17; Galatians 5:19-21) Satan often wins because we are easy prey.

Qt: Spiritual warfare is not about reacting to the Enemy – it is about putting on the armor of God in preparation for the battle. The church, rather than the Enemy, should have the upper hand in the battle.

CHAPTER ONE *Establishing the Foundation of a Church*

Qt: *Only a biblically healthy church will win the very real spiritual battles that we face daily. The healthy church produces Christian disciples who are prepared for a spiritual war.*

The Model: see Exhibit 1-2

Four essential elements to the model:

- A. The **FOUNDATION** – the foundation must be biblically and theologically sound, focusing on our knowing God and our identity in Him. (see Ephesians ch. 1-3)
- B. The **PILLARS** – represented by the purposes of the church as described in the Scriptures, particularly the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:35-40), & the portrayal of the early church (Acts 2:41-47). The “pillars” or purposes are:
 - a. Exalting God through Worship (Matthew 22:36-37) (Acts 2:43, 47)
 - b. Evangelizing the world through proclamation & missions (Matthew 28:18-20) (Acts 2:41, 47)
 - c. Equipping believers through teaching & mentoring (Matthew 28:18-20) (Acts 2:42)
 - d. Edifying one another through ministry & service (Matthew 22:39) (Acts 2:44-45)
 - e. Encountering God through prayer (Acts 2:42)
 - f. Encouraging one another through fellowship (Acts 2:42, 46)
- C. The **ROOF** – depicts where the truths of this model become evident in one’s life... it is the “external component” of this model. (see Ephesians ch. 4-6)
- D. The **CROSS** – reminds us that our mandate as a biblical church is to proclaim the gospel to the world. A healthy church always looks beyond itself to fulfill the Great Commission.

The most basic component of congregational health is a biblical understanding of Christianity & the church.

Because so few churches offer solid biblical and theological training, we have produced generations of believers who have a weak foundation for their faith.

Qt: *Churches without a biblical foundation have little to offer to a world searching for purpose. They certainly don’t alarm Satan very much. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

Qt: *Only the church that accepts and follows God’s Word as authoritative will ever be healthy.*

The healthy church must first have a theological foundation based upon knowing God and who they are individually and corporately in Christ. It is He who gives us power to win the battles. (Ephesians 1:18-19; 3:14-21)

Ephesians chapters 1-3 describe the theological foundation (and roof) of the healthy church model. Chapters 4-6 shift the practical side of life and the believer’s victory in Christ.

Paul essentially said to the Ephesians, “Who you are in Christ must affect every area of your life.” Our faith must affect our personal walk (Ephesians 4:1 – 6:9) at home (5:22-6:4), at church (4:1-5:21), and in the workplace (6:5-9)

Leaders must then ask: “Do we as a body help members to live out their faith in all areas of life?”

To assume church members automatically apply our teachings is naïve.

The continual challenge for a church is to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses ALL the areas noted in Ephesians while maintaining a solid biblical and theological foundation.

Satan is seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8) He wants believers to question God's Word and make choices independent of it (see Genesis 3:1-7).

What do we do about the Enemy's strategies? Putting on the full armor of God in preparation for spiritual battles (Ephesians 6:11) was imperative for the Ephesians. It remains imperative for us as well.

Our focus must be on God alone! The armor we are to wear is His armor. (Ephesians 6:13) Unfortunately, we preach more about human needs than about the grace of God.

Salvation is in Christ alone! It is imperative that we remember that our position "in Christ" depends on Him alone. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12) We who were dead in our sins were without hope apart from the grace of God. (Ephesians 2:1-9) Only by grace through faith in Him are we "in Christ." (Ephesians 2:8-9) His love is so great for us that we ultimately cannot comprehend its magnitude. Furthermore, we are sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13) A healthy church teaches that eternal salvation is available only through a personal relationship with Jesus.

Focusing on God's grace has the following benefits:

- A. Believers who begin to understand the depth of God's grace are less likely to boast. (Ephesians 2:9) Pride weakens a church's health, producing strife & division (see 1 Corinthians 1:11-13; 3:1-4; 11:18-19). Understanding God's grace produces Christ-like humility.
- B. Believers who appreciate grace resist temptation.
- C. Knowing who we are "in Christ" (in grace) helps us ward off spiritual attacks.

In Christ, we have privileges & responsibilities: see Exhibit 1-6. We need to recognize our privileges and fulfill our responsibilities! A church that expects anything less from its members is not biblically healthy. A new Christian must be taught kingdom privileges and responsibilities... Every believer needs guidance.

Qt: Churches built upon scriptural truth produce believers who aren't afraid in the storm.

CHAPTER TWO

The Goal: Disciplined Warriors

The healthy church produces disciples of Jesus rather than just converts. Only disciples can overcome the inevitable spiritual battles that all of us face.

Expressions of the Great Commission occur five times in Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8. All five statements challenge us to be His witness to the world! The statements reveal **five basic truths about the commission**:

- A. Christ is the authority who demands our obedience (Matthew 28:18; John 20:21)
- B. Christ commissions us, and He is the focus of our message (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47)
- C. Preaching, teaching, and baptizing are strategies to fulfill the commission (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47)
- D. The message we proclaim is for the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8)
- E. Christ promises His power and presence as we go (Matthew 28:20; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8)

The Nature of Discipleship:

- A. The term translated “disciple” comes from a verb meaning “to learn”
- B. At the core of discipleship is learning – a disciple is first a student.
- C. But... biblical discipleship is much more than intellectual learning...
- D. ***Biblical discipleship is a lifestyle!*** (Luke 5:27, 6:40; Matthew 9:9, 19:21; Mark 1:17, 2:14, 8:34; John 1:43)
- E. ***Qt: A disciple is a committed follower who seeks to model his/her life after his (ultimate) teacher.***
- F. The book of Acts reveals a community of disciples whose entire lives were controlled by their commitment to Christ!

The Process of Disciplemaking: **Qt: “Equipping is a better term for discipleship”**

- A. The process of discipling is captured in the instructions “baptizing them” and “teaching them” in Matthew 28:19-20
 - a. Baptizing represented conversion & commitment to Christ (Romans 6:3-4); evangelizing also happens as an outcrop of this process.
 - b. Teaching was the task of instructing, a command to obey all that Jesus taught.
 - i. ***Qt: Head knowledge was to become heart knowledge & changed lifestyle.***
 - ii. ***Obedience to the commands of Christ indicated the disciples’ love for Jesus (John 14:15, 15:10)***
 - iii. Those who obey the Great Commission make disciples through evangelism, leading to baptism, and teachings that result in obedient lifestyles. **Qt:** Legitimate church growth is Great Commission growth!
- B. Challenges to the process of disciplemaking
 - a. ***Making disciples is a process... NOT a program!***
 - b. ***The process of teaching and obeying should never end.***
 - c. *A disciple is always in the process of becoming more like Jesus*
 - d. Too many discipleship “programs” do not include evangelism training
 - e. Too many discipleship programs thus become inwardly focused, often missing entirely the “baptizing” element of the Great Commission.
 - f. Biblical disciplemaking assumes/requires accountability
 - g. Where obedience was not evident, the church took steps of discipline (1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 1:18-20)

- C. **Model for discipling**
 - a. **Healthy, discipling churches teach their members:**
 - i. **ALL that Jesus commanded**
 - ii. **Purposes of the biblical church**
 - iii. **How to worship**
 - iv. **How to serve**
 - v. **How to evangelize**
 - vi. **How to pray**
 - vii. **How to equip**
 - viii. **How to fellowship**
 - b. *Healthy, discipling churches help believers apply & evaluate this faith in EVERY area of their lives.*
 - c. The entire process – taking believers from theological foundations to practical living – is biblical discipling!
 - d. See Exhibit 2-1

If we are satisfied with leading people to Christ (conversion) but not discipling them after the fact, we have failed them and our calling.

Satan and Discipling:

- A. Making disciples is the central aspect of the Great Commission.
- B. *FACT - Satan schemes against churches that seek to produce disciples.***
- C. *The Enemy always fights against believers who obey the Great Commission***
- D. The Enemy often strikes at new believers... often with the same temptations they faced before they became Christians (causing the new believer to doubt the authenticity of their conversion)
- E. **Undiscipled leaders don't produce disciplined warriors.**
- F. The Church's Proper Response: (Ephesians 6:10-20)
 - a. Be strong
 - b. Put on the full armor of God
 - c. Stand
 - By putting on the full armor of God, we (like the Ephesians) can resist the Enemy and stand against his schemes. The full armor of God consists of:
 1. Belt of Truth
 2. Breastplate of Righteousness
 3. Foot-covering of the Gospel of Peace
 4. Shield of Faith
 5. Helmet of Salvation
 6. Sword of the Spirit
 - *Summary of Ephesians 6:10-20 Theologically & positionally, our victory is secure in Christ. Practically, the spiritual battle continues. Prepare for and fight the spiritual battle by putting on & living out the armor of God.*
- G. Biblical spiritual warfare is not about knowing Satan... it is about knowing God so well & walking with Him close enough to readily recognize the counterfeit offers of the Enemy.
 - a. *Faithful Christian living is itself effective in undermining the Enemy*
 - b. *We don't need new ideas and fancy programs, just obedient lifestyles*

God's Full Armor... Defined:

- A. **Belt of Truth**
 - a. Know Christ, who is the truth
 - b. Trust the truth of God's Word
 - c. Live truth by practicing honesty & integrity
- B. **Breastplate of Righteousness**
 - a. Be grateful for God's righteousness given to us
 - b. Live a life of holiness
 - c. Make righteous choices – imitate God
- C. **Foot-covering of the Gospel of Peace**
 - a. Stand firm in faith
 - b. Be willing & ready to share your faith
 - c. Go where God calls
 - d. Proclaim God's peace... even in the midst of spiritual battles
- D. **Shield of Faith**
 - a. Know & trust God's promises
 - b. Act in accordance with assurance that God will keep His promises
- E. **Hemet of Salvation**
 - a. Having God's salvation, live with hope
 - b. Know who you are in Christ
 - c. Think differently than the world thinks!
- F. **Sword of the Spirit**
 - a. Know God's Word (a.k.a. the Bible)
 - b. Proclaim & teach God's Word
- G. **Having put on the full armor of God, believers are to pray.**

Believers must be taught. Through teaching, believers learn to live effective Christian lives.

Qt: Churches that fail to teach believers send them unarmed into the spiritual battles.

Qt: Discipled warriors walk courageously into the battle.

Qt: Churches that fail to strategize discipleship are easy prey for the enemy.

Because Satan is a strategist, we must also strategize against his attacks. Some churches are easy targets imply because they have no direction, no purpose, and no united front.

Qt: Strategizing for growth is a necessary weapon in the spiritual war!

Qt: When the Devil attacks (and he will), undisciplined believers are wounded because they do not have the armor.

CHAPTER THREE *Discipled Warriors - Exalting God*
(Matthew 22:36-37; Acts 2:43,47)

Healthy churches recognize that the Enemy often uses internal arguments over worship style as a strategy in spiritual warfare. Discipling churches keep the focus on God and train disciplined warriors how to worship.

He who created the universe – including us – has a right to expect worship from us.

Qt: Worship is the proper response of the...

- A. ...created to the Creator. (Revelation 4:11)
- B. ...dependent to the Sovereign (Revelation 22:12-13)
- C. ...redeemed to the Redeemer (Revelation 5:9)

When we truly realize who God is, worship should be the result. (Matthew 22:37-38; Acts 2:43,47)

Qt: *Worship should be a “lifestyle” of submission & service.*

Words used in the Bible for “worship” indicate:

- A. To bow or stoop before someone (Exodus 4:31)
- B. To labor or do service (Exodus 3:12)
- C. To prostrate oneself or to kiss the hand (John 4:24)
- D. To do ministry or service (Romans 12:1)

Qt: *Christians badly miss the point if they understand “worship” as only a Sunday morning gathering designed to make us feel good about ourselves and about our religion. So do those who assume that worship is an evangelistic event directed toward nonbelievers. Worship has become more about humans than God.*

Qt: *The Enemy does not care if we gather for a worship service – as long as our attention is on anything & everything but God.*

Worship is one of the six purposes of the church that is built on a theological foundation centered on God. Each of the purposes is equally important... BUT, none of the other five exists apart from worship.

The “Worship Purpose-Umbrella”

- A. We EVANGELIZE so that all the world will be drawn to worship a holy & merciful God.
- B. We EQUIP believers so that their lives might give worthy praise in service
- C. We EDIFY others through ministry intended to be a practical expression of praise & adoration
- D. We ENCOUNTER God in prayer as One worthy to hear our praises & confessions
- E. We ENCOURAGE each other through fellowship as part of our mandate to honor Him with our lives and uphold His standards.

One reason Satan attacks worship is that the entire church is weakened when our worship is wrong.

Qt: *Genuine worship develops from a proper attitude of the heart. Satan’s primary goal is to direct us away from God so that worship is at least misdirected if not nonexistent.*

Qt: *The Enemy invites us to focus on ourselves, while genuine worship requires us to focus on God.*

One of the enemy's subtle ways to direct us away from genuine worship is to focus us on our own needs. (Exodus 32:1-10).

Qt: The Enemy wants us to focus so much on ourselves that we can attend an entire worship service and never really see God. NOTE: On this issue, the critics of "felt need" preaching (a.k.a. typical "Topical" preaching) deserve to be heard. *Addressing "felt needs" might be a legitimate (and effective) means to attract the unchurched, but this approach to preaching is insufficient to foster genuine worship. A steady diet of human-centered messages furthers the Enemy's agenda to focus attention on ourselves.*

Qt: *"Consumers" seldom become disciplined warriors.*

Qt: *The Enemy offers the temporal, while genuine worship demands a focus on the eternal.*

Qt: Satan directs our attention toward the temporary, so the eternal seems insignificant. Our goals and plans become more important than what God wants.

Qt: "...lost people are still looking for spiritual answers, but they no longer look to the church." (- Tom Clegg & Warren Bird) The problem is not that the alternative religions are so attractive but that the church no longer focuses on the eternal.

What are we (leaders) doing to help believers develop a lifestyle of worship?

Qt: *The Enemy offers power, while genuine worship results in brokenness.*

Believers succumb to the temptation of power even in the very context of what are supposed to be worshipping communities... (Ouch!) Some people think that they should have control over what happens within the church. Power-hungry groups welcome some & reject others with an attitude that exudes: "This is our church, and we're in charge here." Pastors & staff are also vulnerable to this temptation of power. Some are driven forward by unspoken dreams of an earthly kingdom. Worship services can consequently become a mere showplace where God is often being used to display man's talent rather than man's talent being used to display God.

The Enemy encourages careless worship, while genuine worship requires that we worship God's way.

Qt: Careless attention to the details of worship might bring the judgment of a God for whom worship is deadly serious. (Genesis 4:3; Leviticus 10:1-3)

"Portrait of Corporate Worship" (JDP's description)

- A. Jesus taught that we must worship "in spirit & truth" (John 4:24)
- B. Genuine worshipers are born of the Spirit (John 3:5-6)
- C. Genuine worshipers are brought to knowledge of God through Christ (John 14:6)
- D. In response, true worshipers have an attitude of dependence and integrity before God.
- E. Gratitude, confession, & holiness mark the worship of true worshipers.
- F. Only one with clean hands, a pure heart, & no deceit can stand in the holy place (Psalms 24:3-4)

Qt: Rituals means little if our hearts are not broken and contrite. (Psalms 51:16-17)

Qt: How might worship change (and how might the Enemy be more threatened) if the people in the church arrived/gathered ready to worship? How might worship change if we worship God's way?

The Enemy encourages division over worship, but genuine worship unites believers. Because disunity threatens the church's witness (John 17:20-23), the Enemy will exploit any disagreement to foster disunity – especially in worship.

Learning to truly worship together prepares us for heaven! (Revelation 7:9)

The Healthy Church Stands Armed:

- A. ***Genuine worship is not optional for a healthy, biblical church.***
- B. Genuine worship affects ALL that the church does
- C. ***Genuine worship (and a healthy church) will focus on God***
 - a. Focusing on God reminds us that worship is a lifestyle issue
 - b. Call the church to give their whole lives to God
 - c. The Enemy cannot stand against such worship
- D. ***Healthy churches keep the Word (biblical teaching) central***
 - a. Three times Satan tempted Jesus in the desert & three times Jesus responded by quoting God's Word (the Old Testament) (see Matthew 4:1-11)
 - b. *We must be cautious about emphasizing the power of warfare "techniques" over the truth of Scripture. Popular strategies focus more on proclaiming power instead of proclaiming biblical truth. The truth of God's Word ultimately sets people free. (John 8:32)*
 - c. ***The proclamation of the gospel is itself an act of warfare against Satan.***
 - d. Our primary weapon against the Enemy is the Sword of God's Word (Ephesians 6:17)
 - e. The Word of God is alive and we have God's promise that it "will not return to Me empty." (Isaiah 55:11)
 - f. The Enemy is dislodged when the Word is proclaimed.
- E. ***Pastors who devote themselves to the study & teaching of God's Word train disciplined warriors & grow healthy churches.***

Teach Members to Worship:

- A. Keys to understanding genuine worship
 - a. ***Worship is about God (not you, me, the regulars, or the visitors)***
 - b. We don't invite God into our worship services; rather, God invites us into His presence
 - c. ***Holiness is not optional for the worshiper***
 - d. **Genuine worship changes people**
 - e. There can & should be a certain degree of mystery to genuine worship
 - f. More than one worship style is modeled in the Bible
 - g. Heaven is about worshipping God forever.
- B. Teach the theology of worship
- C. Teach about holy living (Hebrew 10:31)
- D. Teach people to worship in their homes. Note: Families who read the Bible together, pray together, & praise God together will contribute much toward worship in a healthy church.
- E. Teach the church about worship around the world – help others to see the value and beauty of other styles.

What about “Warfare Worship?”

- A. 2 Chronicles 20:14-23 describes the defeat of an enemy king through prayer & praise, rather than through armed conflict... Consequently, there are some who would say that praise “binds” the devil.
- B. How should we respond to this understanding of worship?
 - a. A case can be made that praise & worship does, in fact, counter the work of God’s enemies.
 - b. What is not so evident, however, is that God’s people are to praise & worship Him “so that” the Enemy will be defeated... and unfortunately, some practice “warfare worship” from this position.
 - c. **Qt: *Effective spiritual warfare might be the by-product of worship, but it is not the purpose of worship. Disciplined warriors worship God because of who He is, and that focus on God weakens the Enemy’s hold.***
- C. The Enemy may at times win over us, but he will not win over God. (Colossians 2:15; Revelation 20:1-3)

CHAPTER FOUR

Discipled Warriors - Evangelizing the World (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41,47)

Evangelism is not easy, that should not surprise us. *Evangelism is about reaching out to people who are caught in the Devil's snare.*

Qt: Evangelism is itself a spiritual battle, as we take the gospel of light into the kingdom of darkness. The healthy church must be prepared to face spiritual warfare.

The New Testament church lived evangelism! They took seriously Jesus' command to go, to baptize, to teach... (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

The success of the early church was not without battles. Disciples were imprisoned (Acts 4:1-3; 5:17-18), deception was brought into the church by Satan (Acts 5:1-11), Stephen was martyred (Acts 7), Saul (who later became Paul) ravaged the church with persecution (Acts 8:3), demons were encountered by the disciples (Acts 5:16; 8:5-8; 16:16-21; 19:11-12). The believers faced opposition on every front as their enemies tried to shut down the young church. They simply did not give up!

Our calling remains the same... to preach the gospel to the world in spite of any opposition.

Satan has three basic strategies based on the specific person he is dealing with or the group of people he is trying to hurt.

- A. The Enemy blinds unbelievers to the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). Satan blinds people by the lure of sin. **Qt:** The Enemy always makes sin look inviting enough that we ignore the long-term consequences of our actions.
- B. The Enemy tries to sideline and minimize the witness and ministry of those whose soul he lost to Christ.
- C. The Enemy tries to attack the corporate Church to keep it from reaching out to a dying world.

Satan blinds people by giving them lies to believe. Everybody believes something in the spiritual realm, even if they don't realize it. Even the atheist believes "something" – that there is no God.

The Devil is the "father of lies" (John 8:44).

Some of the lies people believe today:

- A. "God is a loving God who wouldn't allow anyone to go to hell."
- B. "You'll always have tomorrow to follow God. Enjoy yourself today."
- C. "There are many routes to God. Just choose the one that best fits you."
- D. "Jesus was just a man. He wasn't really God."
- E. "The Bible isn't really the Word of God."

Qt: *Satan's lies are almost always built upon humanity's self-centeredness.*

Dangerous patterns of thinking:

- A. If I can choose my own route to God, then I set myself up as God.
- B. If the Bible isn't really the "Word of God," then I need not worry about its teachings
- C. *Ultimately, I can live my life the way I choose (without consequences)*

The Enemy's lies draw non-believers further into their self-centeredness & sin. Why would they want to turn from something they enjoy? They subsequently see the witnessing believers as little more than extremist killjoys. Blinded by the Enemy, they “naturally” resist the gospel.

Qt: False teachers in the church are sometimes the source of these lies. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) Hence, the need for a strong theological foundation is essential!

The Enemy snatches the Word away when non-believers hear it... *When the Word does not take root in a person's life, the unbeliever remains blinded.*

The Enemy seeks to discourage & defeat believers.

Qt: *We are called to take the gospel of light to people who have been so deceived that they don't even know that they are in the darkness.* Clearly, God must intervene to help people recognize their darkness.

God has chosen to use us as His instruments of light. (Matthew 5:14-16; John 8:12)

Satan attacks believers with continual temptations to sin. Defeat leads to discouragement, & discouragement leads to less resolve to fight the next temptation. The cycle becomes a vicious pattern of defeat (see Exhibit 4-2 and Matthew 26:69-75)

Believers who constantly wrestle with and lose battles in temptation offer little hope to a hurting world.

Satan fosters discouragement even among faithful believers. *Satan knows that discouraged believers usually make few efforts to tell others about Jesus.*

Qt: *The Enemy encourages inwardly focused churches!*

God is a missions-minded God who took the initiative to go to a lost world. He expects us to be willing to do the same. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; etc.)

Qt: Christians must share in God's commitment to the salvation of all peoples.

The healthy church that wants to win the battles of spiritual warfare must think and minister globally. *Anything less than a global focus plays into the Devil's strategy.*

Some evangelists are vulnerable because while they are evangelizing, thus drawing the attacks of the Enemy, they themselves have not put on the full armor of God.

Qt: *Believers who have not been disciplined become discouraged... Discouraged warriors don't last long in war.*

Healthy Churches Stand Armed:

- A. *Teaching believers biblical discipleship*
- B. *Teaching believers to proclaim the good news*
- C. *Teaching believers to share their faith*
- D. *Teaching believers to pray for one another*
- E. *Teaching believers to get involved*

Qt: *Biblical evangelism has a very specific message of good news to proclaim: “Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...” (Romans 5:1, 8-9) The gospel is about God’s coming to us in Christ, dying for us on Calvary’s cross, saving us (hence Jesus is our Savior) through His blood, living in us through His Holy Spirit, and ultimately welcoming us into heaven.*

Qt: Anything less than the telling of this good news is not *biblical* evangelism.

Qt: The Enemy is not alarmed when we preach “good” or “nice” messages, nor is he concerned when we tell comforting stories and affirm one another – as long as we never tell the good news of Jesus, the Son of God.

Train people how to share their faith:

- A. *Fear is the number one obstacle to believer’s sharing/witnessing...***
 - a. Fear of embarrassment
 - b. Fearing not knowing what to say
 - c. Fearing an inability to answer tough questions
 - d. Fear of not being comfortable
 - e. Fear as an extension of general shyness
 - f. Fear of witnessing alone
- B. **Qt:** Fear that keeps us from doing evangelism is never from God. (2 Timothy 1:7)**
- C. Developing an effective training approach for evangelism will take significant effort & organization (see Exhibit 4-4). We set ourselves up for defeat if our efforts are haphazard & disorganized.**

Teach church members to pray for each other, especially for the church’s leadership.

- A. Paul asked those to whom he ministered to pray for him (Ephesians 6:19-20 and Colossians 4:2-4)**
- B. Paul sought prayer support for:**
 - a. Boldness
 - b. Clarity
 - c. Opportunities to share the gospel.

Healthy, biblical churches “get involved” by taking advantage of EVERY opportunity to make an impact upon the world for Christ.

- A. The world is crying out for healthy, biblical churches who will invest themselves in reaching a lost humanity. (Luke 10:2)**
- B. *Empower your church to be a “going & sending” force that is unafraid to engage the darkness.***

CHAPTER FIVE

Disciplined Warriors - Equipping Believers **(Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42)**

No one would put an untrained civilian at the controls of a state-of-the-art warplane, but we think nothing of sending troops into spiritual warfare without a proper understanding of God's arsenal to live victoriously. We are more of a threat to the church than to the Enemy.

Qt: Healthy churches take the time to equip believers through teaching & mentoring.

A primary goal of equipping is to prepare believers to do something in the ministry of the church.

Equipping does assume action on the part of the equipped. In an equipping church:

- A. Members are taught & are expected to witness (share their faith)
- B. Teachers are trained to teach & then are placed in teaching roles
- C. Group leaders receive training
- D. Worshipers learn how to truly worship
- E. Members are taught how to pray & are then challenged to do so
- F. Deacons are trained in caring skills & then are held accountable to do ministry
- G. All members of the church are expected to serve
- H. Leaders teach and model true, multifaceted discipleship

Qt: *Disciplemaking is the overall process of guiding believers to become fully devoted followers of Jesus. Equipping is one essential component of disciplemaking.*

An equipping church strives to produce disciplined warriors trained to faithfully carry out the ministry of the church.

Attacks on the Unequipped Body:

- A. *Unequipped leaders are susceptible to pride (1 Timothy 3:6-7)*
- B. *Unequipped members are targets for attacks of discouragement*
- C. *Churches that do not disciple & prepare members foster inactivity:*
 - a. *By not equipping people, the church gives them license to come but not be expected to do anything*
 - b. *No one expects much from them so no one gets much from them...*

Qt: *Complacency leads to an unguarded heart – and the Enemy airs his arrows at unguarded hearts.*

Attacks on the Equipped Body:

- A. Satan also attacks the “equipping” churches... Attacks here are more subtle but no less potent.
- B. Equippers themselves are susceptible to attack. **Qt:** *“The great enemy of souls takes care to leave no stone unturned for the preacher’s ruin, for he knows what a rout he can make among the rest, if the leaders fall before their eyes.” - Charles Spurgeon*
 - a. Leaders must watch out that they do not become “self” reliant (Proverbs 16:18)
 - b. Leaders who work alone are asking for the Enemy’s attack. We are most susceptible when we are alone.
 - c. **Qt:** The Enemy loves to lead us into hidden sin and then to turn on a blazing light so that everyone knows we have failed.
- C. Satan also leads “equipped” believers to misuse their spiritual gifts.
- D. *Satan infiltrates “equipping” churches through bad doctrine.*

Recommended Implementation Plan:

- A. ***Enlist a prayer team to pray for leaders/equippers*** (James 5:16)
- B. Pray specifically that leaders...
 - a. Have a spirit of humility (Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 5:5)
 - b. Maintain their time with God (2 Timothy 2:15)
 - c. Lead in their families (Ephesians 5:25; 6:4)
 - d. Have victory over sin (1 Corinthians 10:13)
 - e. Be faithful evangelists (Ephesians 6:19-20)
 - f. Will equip others effectively (Ephesians 4:11-12)
- C. ***Hold members accountable for their privileges & responsibilities***
 - a. The Enemy focuses our attention on the privileges rather than the responsibilities as a way of shifting our focus toward self.
 - b. ***Qt: People who are obsessed with what the church should do for them are thinking little about their service to the Lord.***
 - c. Even one single uncommitted member weakens the body (1 Corinthians 12:14-26)
 - d. Healthy churches often use Membership Covenants for this purpose (see Exhibit 5-1)
- D. ***Help members discern how God has prepared them for service. (SHAPE)***
 - a. ***S = Spiritual Gifts***
 - b. ***H = Heart (passions)***
 - c. ***A = Abilities (talents)***
 - d. ***P = Personality (natural fit)***
 - e. ***E = Experience***
- E. ***Train members to do what God has called them to do... EVERY member has been gifted by God. Hence, EVERY member should be equipped to serve.***
- F. Develop a mentoring program. Mentoring is clearly evident in Scripture.

CHAPTER SIX

Disciplined Warriors - Edifying Others (Matthew 22:39; Acts 2:44-45)

The healthy, biblical church offers ministry that edifies & challenges others to press on in the battle.

Our call to Edify in Ministry & Service:

- A. Love your neighbor! (Matthew 22:37-40)
 - a. Jesus' response in the passage above (answering one question with two linked responses) teaches us that the two commandments He shared cannot be separated.
 - b. We are also told that if we say we love God but not people, we are liars (1 John 4:20)
 - c. **Qt: Genuine love for God is expressed in genuine love toward others.**
 - d. **Qt: Disciplined warriors love God, love one another, and love the unreached. They also "do something" with their faith, including ministering to those who have little to offer in return.**
- B. Serve one another!
 - a. Here is a sampling of "one another" passages in Scripture: (Romans 12:10; 12:16; 15:7; Galatians 5:13; 6:2; Ephesians 4:1-2; 4:32; Colossians 3:12-13; 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24; James 5:16; 1 Peter 1:22b)
 - b. **Qt: Scripture calls us to minister to and serve others – the opposite of what the Enemy wants us to do.**
 - c. *Focusing on others is one way to counter the Enemy's attacks.*
 - d. Church members who serve one another are best prepared to minister to others.
 - e. **Qt: Healthy, biblical churches produce "servant troops."**
- C. Build others through ministry!
 - a. *Healthy churches develop holistic ministry programs that offer mercy but also promote transformation & training.*
 - b. Love compels said churches to build up those to whom they minister
 - c. **Healthy churches produce disciplined warriors rather than dependent ones.**

Strategies of the Enemy:

- A. **Qt: Generally, Satan's goal is to get us to focus on ourselves. He promotes idolatry of self so that we neglect the needs of others.**
- B. The Enemy promotes arrogance.
 - a. Servanthood is for "others" who need purpose & meaning... not for those who already know how significant they are
 - b. *Pride entices us to look down on others rather than build them up*
- C. **The Enemy distracts with pain.**
 - a. *The Enemy wants us to focus on our pain... If we live in despair, we have little joy to offer a hurting world.*
 - b. If we hang on to our pain for attention, "we" become the center of our world.
 - c. Jesus knew some people prefer to wallow in their pain rather than be healed... Pain brings attention from others which makes the person feel important.
 - d. **Qt: Ministry halts when hurting people become self-centered and ministering people get burned out trying to help them.**
- D. The Enemy offers power without sacrifice
 - a. **The Enemy's strategy is to offer power & position without the trouble of taking up a cross daily to follow Jesus (Luke 9:23)**
 - b. **Few who pursue these paths ever do ministry.**
 - c. **True ministry demands humility & a servant's heart. It requires sacrifice.**

The Healthy Church Stands Armed:

- A. Prayerwalk your community
 - a. A simple way to see people with God's eyes is to prayerwalk a community.
 - b. *Prayerwalking is simply walking through a community praying for its people.*
 - c. **Qt:** The goal of prayerwalking is to "pray on-site with insight."
 - d. ***We tend to pray with more focus and intensity where and when we have seen the needs personally***
 - e. See Exhibit 6-2 (Prayerwalking & Ministering chart)
- B. Lead in serving others
 - a. "Invasion" occurs when we take light into the darkness by demonstrating kindness in the power of the Holy Spirit... a.k.a. "servant evangelism"
 - b. "Servant evangelism does simple acts of kindness as a potential open door to sharing the gospel.
 - c. ***The goal of servant evangelism is to show God's love in action & perhaps gain a hearing for the gospel***
 - d. Benefits of doing servant evangelism:
 - i. Forces a church to look outward and move into the community
 - ii. An easy, low risk way to get members involved in service
 - iii. Takes members a step forward toward more extended commitments
 - iv. Entire families can participate in projects together
- C. Minister through Small Groups
 - a. Small groups provide a context for:
 - i. Training
 - ii. Encouragement
 - iii. Accountability
 - iv. Ministry
 - b. Small groups can become the ministering arm of the church over time, providing the personal touch that everyone needs
 - c. Small groups counter the Enemy's strategy by:
 - i. Small groups encourage healthy friendships
 - ii. Small groups equip members to stand firm against the Enemy
 - iii. Small groups provide accountability & prayer structure
 - iv. Small groups promote corporate worship
- D. Teach about Grace
 - a. *Teach about the radical human depravity & the grace of God.*
 - b. *Believers who truly realize the depth of their need for God will lose any arrogance they once had & become willing to minister to others.*
 - c. **Qt:** *We who have been saved by grace must offer grace to others.*
 - d. *Grace is always sufficient for our pain. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)*
 - e. *The enemy dug his claws into the apostle Paul, but the deeper he dug, the more Paul learned about grace. Rather than wallowing in pain, Paul rejoiced in his pain & directed the attention to God.*
 - f. *People who trust God in their pain often make the best ministers. They know the reality of the war, but they also can proclaim the joy of victory through God's grace.*
 - g. **Qt:** *The healthy, biblical church teaches grace, lives grace, & shares grace.*
 - h. **Qt:** *Disciplined warriors never forget that the armor is theirs because of grace.*

The Enemy wars against ministry & service by leading believers to focus on themselves and to ignore the needs around them.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Encountering God (Acts 2:42)

Our calling to pray... Whereas most writers simply assume prayer within the other five purposes of the church, I have elevated it to its own category. Let me explain why:

The Early Church Prayed:

- A. Acts 2:42-47 is a snapshot of life in the early church, the five purposes that most writers recognize are clearly evident:
 - a. Worship
 - b. Evangelism
 - c. Discipleship
 - d. Ministry/Service
 - e. Fellowship
- B. There is another aspect of the church's ministry is also indicated in Acts 2:42... "They were continually devoting themselves to... and prayer"
- C. ***Throughout Acts 2 prayer is a vital part of church life***

Scripture Calls us to Pray:

- A. The Bible assumes that we will pray
- B. Jesus prayed...
 - a. He sought quiet places to pray (Luke 4:42; 5:16)
 - b. He prayed before making major decisions (Matthew 26:36-46; 27:45-46)
 - c. He prayed passionately for His followers (John 17)
- C. Paul prayed...
 - a. He prayed for thanksgiving and intercession (Romans 1:8; Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:3-4)
 - b. He considered prayer essential (Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2; 1 Timothy 2:1)
 - c. He expected believers to pray continually (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- D. Prayer was nonnegotiable in the life of the early church – as it should be in today's church!
- E. ***God expects us to pray and grow healthy churches that focus on praying.***

Qt: Believers must pray if we want a strong relationship with God, and we must have a healthy connection with Him if we expect our prayers to be effective.

Qt: The Enemy leads us away from prayer so that our ties to God are weakened & he strikes at our walk with God so our prayer life is ineffective.

Christians are lured from prayer...

- A. **Why would a believer pray?**
 - a. *Our relationship with God is so anemic that talking with Him daily doesn't seem important. **By contrast, people in love are highly motivated to communicate with each other.***
 - b. *When love begins to die, the efforts to communicate decrease. We stop talking when we stop loving.*
 - c. *We don't pray because we think we can get by without it... a deception of the Enemy.*
 - d. *Consuming doubt can also keep us from praying... If I doubt God's existence, concern, or ability to respond, why should I pray?*
 - i. *Why would a loving God delay my answer when I need a response now?*
 - ii. ***Qt: The Enemy is a master at producing doubt.*** (Genesis 3:1)
 - iii. *Satan wants us to doubt God so that we no longer pray to Him.*

Ways prayer is made ineffective...

If the Enemy can't keep believers from praying, he seeks to lead us astray so that our prayers are ineffective.

Satan tempts us to sin so that our prayers might not be heard. (Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalms 66:18; James 5:16)

Qt: *The Enemy directs our attention away from God toward the potential pleasures of sin. We choose to give in to the temptation... Satan offers more and more pleasure until our prayer line is broken.*

Qt: *Lost communications with God is the price we pay for continued sin – and the Enemy wins.*

Qt: *Satan also aims at our interpersonal love. Peter told men to treat their wives with honor and respect “so that your prayers will not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7) A husband (or wife) who does not treat his/her spouse well is not inclined to pray, nor can he/she pray effectively.*

The Enemy wants to destroy our relationships & wants the sin of broken love to sever our communion w/ God.

Qt: *Recognize that our connections with each other have much to do with our prayer life. (Proverbs 21:13; Matthew 5:23-24; Mark 11:25; 1 Timothy 2:8)*

The Enemy leads us toward arrogant & selfish praying. (Matthew 6:5; Luke 15:11-32; 18:10-14; James 1:3; 4:4)

Churches talk more about prayer than pray...

- A. The programs are there to teach prayer, but the passion to maintain prayer is woefully lacking.
- B. “Prayer is a constant attitude of the heart toward a dialogue with God.” – Randy Cheek
- C. Some good ideas:
 - a. Add a prayer room or area to the church
 - b. Offer people a place to submit their prayers (i.e. a “Prayer Box”)
 - c. Create a prayer hotline via the phone/web
 - d. Champion the truth: “A family that prays together stays together”
 - e. Champion the same truth in regards to a church...
- D. See Exhibit 7-1 (Prayer “talking” vs. Prayer “doing” churches)
- E. Read the book “Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire”

A Healthy, Biblical Church Stands Armed:

- A. **Qt:** *Prayer allows us to stay in touch with the Commander during intense battles.*
- B. Equip believers to resist temptation:
 - a. Be aware of patterns that make you susceptible to temptation.
 - i. Avoid those patterns.
 - ii. Keep watching and praying so you don't fall into temptation (Matthew 26:41)
 - b. Pray everyday asking God to protect you from the Evil One (Matthew 6:13; James 1:7)
 - c. Run to God when temptation occurs. The longer you linger over the Devil's offer, the more likely you are to fall.
 - d. Focus on God's goodness and blessings, overall & in your life.
 - e. Remember the often devastating consequences of sin. Think past the temporary pleasure to recognize the long-term pain of disobedience.

- f. Thank God for protecting you when He gives you strength to defeat the Enemy
 - g. Hold yourself accountable to another Christian, who will pray for you to experience victory over temptation.
- C. Teach prayer**
- a. *“Lord, teach us to pray.” (Luke 11:1)*
 - b. Many people are waiting to be taught how to pray...
 - c. Benefits of teaching prayer:
 - i. People learn more about God’s gracious nature, thus strengthening their theological foundation (Romans 8:15-16)
 - ii. Thorough teaching gives patience when prayer seems to go unanswered.
 - iii. When teaching is also modeled and applied by the leadership, it keeps the church’s focus on God.
 - d. Do as Jesus did and use the “Lord’s Prayer” to show people “HOW” (vs. “what”) to pray.
- D. Pray in families:**
- a. ***Prayer in church should begin with prayer at home.*** (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
 - b. Challenge and train parents to pray at home.
 - c. Family prayer begins with couples who pray together. ***Beginning steps for couples...***
 - i. *Schedule prayer times on the calendar*
 - ii. *Pray for brief time periods at first*
 - iii. *Pray for things that are important to you both (i.e. children)*
 - iv. *Keep variety by praying a portion of Scripture or singing*
 - v. *Take turns praying*
 - vi. *Stick to the prayer time from week to week*
 - d. **Qt: Parents fight for their children best on their knees.**
 - e. Parents should not only pray for their children, they should also teach their children how to pray. (Ephesians 6:4)
- E. Pray in the workplace:**
- a. *Our faithful praying at work becomes a witness to nonbelievers*
 - b. Consider starting an on-site prayer meeting
 - c. Fellow Christians might want to pray together before, after, or during breaks at work
- F. Be willing to attempt great things for God**
- a. God sized tasks are larger than any one believer or congregation. Such tasks cannot be accomplished apart from prayer.
 - b. **Henry Blackaby** wrote the following in **“Experiencing God”** – *“If the assignment I sense God is giving me is something that I know I can handle, I know it probably is not from God. The kind of assignments God gives in the Bible are always God-sized. They are always beyond what people can do.*

What about “Warfare Prayer?”

- A. ***Be careful here...***
- B. Some contemporary spiritual warfare leaders teach a system of “warfare prayer” that is, praying against high-ranking demons that rule over particular regions or territories.
 - a. Daniel 10:10-21 is used to support this concept. Daniel had prayed but a supernatural force known as the “prince of Persia” delayed the response. Only after the angel Michael intervened did Daniel receive his answer.
 - b. Do not assume too much from this...
- C. We are given no mandate to name powers or pray against them. Daniel knew nothing about the spiritual battle until after Michael had intervened. This text cannot be read as a “prescription for doing spiritual warfare in this fashion.”

- D.** *Some prayer warriors focus so much on discerning the Enemy that they unintentionally miss what God is doing.*
- E. Daniel 10:10-21 was given to comfort Daniel.
- F. The spiritual battle was real, but God did what was necessary to accomplish His will.
- G.** *Be careful not to become so enamored of the Enemy's ways that you miss God's hand.*

CHAPTER EIGHT *Disciplined Warriors - Encouraging One Another* **(Acts 2:42,46)**

Qt: Satan works to create disunity in which God's foot soldiers shoot their own comrades in the back. An army at war within offers little danger to its Enemy.

Our Calling to Encourage Through Fellowship:

- A. "The Bible tells us not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25)
- B. ***Without biblical teaching, most of us are confused about the nature and purpose of true Christian fellowship.***
- C. *Fellowship to support one another*
 - a. Early Christians were devoted to teaching & fellowship (Acts 2:42-27)
 - b. True fellowship is in evidence when all believers rejoice that one member is honored...
 - c. Moreover, the same can be said when all believers suffer if one member is hurting... (1 Corinthians 12:26)
 - d. *Believers truly bear one another's burdens* (Galatians 6:2)
 - e. ***Qt: When true fellowship is in place, biblical unity is at a healthy level, solidifying the fact that no individual is insignificant – and no individual faces spiritual battles alone.***
 - f. Knowing we have the support of other believers ought to give us courage.
- D. *Build up one another*
 - a. ***Qt: In genuine fellowship, believers strive to build one another up!***
 - b. Read the following verses: (Romans 14:19; 15:2; Ephesians 4:15-16, 29; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)
 - c. *Believers who are affirmed, encouraged, loved, and supported are much more likely to march forward in Christian faithfulness when the Enemy strikes.* (Colossians 1:28)
 - d. However... genuine fellowship does not imply the church should never take disciplinary sanction against wayward members. Sometimes the most edifying (and loving) action for the entire body (as well as the individual(s) involved) is *judgment intended to lead a member toward restoration.* (1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11)
 - i. ***Effective (biblical) disciplinary steps can strengthen a church's fellowship rather than disrupt it.***
 - ii. (There is no love shown in a "head in the sand" approach to difficult situations" – JDP)
- E. *Encourage love & good deeds*
 - a. Early Christians encouraged each other toward faithful Christian living (Hebrews 10:32-39; 12:4), especially in the face of persecution
 - b. ***True fellowship is about exhorting brothers & sisters to persevere in faith!***

Strategies of the Enemy

- A. ***Qt: Fellowship is about relationships. Consequently, most strategies the Enemy uses against genuine Christian fellowship strike directly at our interpersonal connections.***
- B. *The Enemy distorts relationships*
 - a. Distorted love hinders our prayers (see previous chapter on prayer)
 - b. Conversely, healthy relationships help us to understand the nature of God's love
- C. ***The Enemy divides believers***
 - a. The Church is diverse, made up of many distinct people, each with their own set of gifts & passions – yet all are to be united in purpose & mission (1 Corinthians 12:14)
 - b. ***True Christian unity (the kind only God can produce) is a witness to a world that is chaotic & disjointed.***
 - c. Jesus prayed 3X for His followers to be united (John 17:20-23)

- d. In contrast, Satan promotes division, an indication of brokenness.
 - e. **Qt: *The church's witness is often weak because members spend more time battling (whether publicly or privately, whether verbally or in attitude) one another than they do standing firm (evidenced by the battle) against the Enemy.***
- D. The Enemy divides churches with no vision
- a. Disunity often surfaces where & when the church has no unifying vision or direction.
 - b. **Qt: *When there is no known great cause driving the church forward, people tend to become inwardly focused & susceptible to division.***
 - c. A church in this condition is a “reactionary” (vs. “expectant”) church – the best they can do is react to whatever comes their way. On the other hand, an “expectant” church is healthy and united around a vision, prayerfully expecting God to do His work through their church. (see Exhibit 8-2)
- E. ***The Enemy takes advantage of bitterness***
- a. *Take the Matthew 6:14-15 challenge...*
 - b. Jesus told us that we cannot receive the Father's forgiveness for our sins unless we have forgiven those who have harmed or offended us.
 - c. If you hang on to bitterness, God is not pleased with you – period.
 - d. Many people have difficult pasts that have left some significant scars & pain. Often, these people have never been helped to deal with the past.
 - e. **Qt:** In addition, our “victim” culture prefers to blame someone else for our own failures. If I forgive... then I must take responsibility for my actions. It's easier & more ego lifting to stay angry & unforgiving – and weak.
 - f. **Qt: *Unforgiving members ultimately weaken the entire church. Their bitter spirit is evident in the suspicion & hostility with which they react to those around them. The Enemy's seeds of division have already been planted in a church where members hold on to bitterness.***
- F. The Enemy encourages “koinonitis” (fellowship)
- a. **Qt: *Satan can accomplish his goals when there is “too much” fellowship.***
 - b. *Churches that “over-fellowship” are so happy with their family atmosphere that outsiders are seldom welcome (evidenced either directly & overtly via cold or insensitive attitudes toward visitors – or indirectly via inflexibility toward changes that are designed to enhance visitor retention).*
 - c. Christian “cocooning” occurs when members no longer know any (or no longer care the way Jesus did about) unchurched people.
 - d. **Qt:** In contrast to God's command to interact with a lost world (Galatians 4:4-5; Acts 1:8), cocooned believers retreat to the fortress.
 - e. **Qt:** *If you do not know at least 10 non-believers with whom you feel comfortable enough to share the gospel, you're probably cocooning.*
 - f. **Qt: *When the church is obsessed with its time together, the Enemy watches without much concern.***
 - g. See Exhibit 8-2 (Expectant vs. Reactionary Churches)

The Healthy Church Stands Armed:

- A. *The healthy, biblical church that wins spiritual battles has a support system. Genuine fellowship edifies & strengthens for the battle!*
- B. Promote love & good works
 - a. Fellowship events promote love & good works (Hebrews 10:24)
 - b. Just being together having fun allows us to enjoy our faith.
 - c. Have fun with believers and invite the unchurched...

- C. Promote unity
 - a. ***The Devil is no match for a group of God's people who join forces!***
 - b. No wonder Paul warned us to work together & to beware of divisive people (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Titus 3:10)
 - c. **Qt: *The healthy, biblical church overcomes the Enemy by battling from a united front. (Ephesians 2:11-22; 4:1-16)***
- D. Lead members to forgive
 - a. **Qt: Unresolved anger gives the Devil an opportunity to spread his influence, even when the anger remains hidden.**
 - b. Genuine Christian fellowship does not occur if church members are holding on to yesterday's pain.
 - c. **Qt: Forgiving others is seldom easy, but it is necessary if we want to grow churches that honor God & overcome the Enemy.**
 - d. **Qt: *Discipled warriors are forgiving warriors!***
 - e. See Exhibit 8-3 (The Challenge to Forgive)
- E. Promote reconciliation & unity in the community
- F. Nurture healthy relationships
 - a. The church has not done a good job of teaching biblical principles for relating to each other (See the following sample verses: Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 17:17; 27:10; 1 Corinthians 7:3; Ephesians 5:25; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:20; 4:1)
 - b. **Qt: *People who have not learned to relate to others struggle with the relationships in church life.***
 - c. **Qt: *Healthy, biblical churches teach, promote, & model love...***
 - i. Equip couples to be good spouses
 - ii. Train parents to be good parents
 - iii. Challenge young people to be respectful & obedient
 - iv. Show neighbors how to be good neighbors
 - v. Teach friends how to be true friends.
- G. ***Get outside the church walls***
 - a. Preach the truth about God's command for us to focus outward
 - b. Create a specific strategy for doing so!
 - c. Show why the congregation **MUST** move beyond itself
 - d. Then equip the members to do so!
 - e. Provide "hands-on" opportunities for member involvement
 - f. Break the cocoons and raise up disciplined warriors to take the light of the gospel into the darkness!

The stresses of daily life (and ministry) can hurt relationships. Sadly, relationships are sometimes the casualties of the spiritual warfare we're fighting. The healthy, biblical church must intentionally develop strong Christian connections to ward off the Enemy's attacks.

CHAPTER NINE

Leading in Change Without Losing the Battle

In times of military conflict, leaders are essential. If no one leads, or if the assumed leader has no plan, the troops are vulnerable to defeat. Battles in the spiritual realm are no different, especially for churches that want to grow disciplined warriors.

Qt: Effective leaders who wear the full armor of God and equip members will lead the church to victory.

Pray and enlist others to pray:

- A. *The prayer life of most pastors & lay leaders isn't alarming the Enemy*
- B. ***Pastors tend to allow themselves to become too busy***, they spend so much time visiting, counseling, ministering, & preaching that prayer gets little attention.
- C. Some leaders just don't have the discipline to pray consistently
- D. *Too many leaders think they can "handle it on their own" – per the Devil.*
- E. ***Pride begets prayerlessness***, which says: "I don't need God."
- F. Three steps to help you stand firm in prayer:
 - a. Ask God if give you a prayer partner to be 100% open with...
 - b. ***Ask God to make you "needy" (2 Corinthians 12:7); ask God to make you "weak" rather than strong...***
 - c. Ask God to give you an accountability partner... no holds barred!
- G. *The obedience of prayer itself weakens the Enemy's influence*
- H. ***Lead from your knees if you want to grow a church of disciplined warriors***

Be sure to wear the armor:

- A. We wear the armor when we walk in obedience to God's Word
- B. *Secret sin is destroying many leader's lives!*
- C. Some leaders are living in a state of "unintended neglect" regarding spiritual disciplines.
 - a. Bible study is inconsistent at best
 - b. *Prayer is sporadic and self-centered*
 - c. Evangelism is non-existent
 - d. **Qt: *These leaders are often still busy doing ministry, but their busyness has crowded out spiritual growth.***
- D. **Qt: Undisciplined leaders don't produce disciplined warriors.**
- E. See Exhibit 9-1 (Putting on the Armor)
- F. Turn from any wrong so that the Enemy has no place to get a foothold.
- G. **Qt: Become a leader whose obedience is a witness!**

Follow basic principles for leading:

- A. *Change almost always produces conflict...the Enemy often capitalizes on the stresses brought by change.*
 - a. ***Our responses to change are not always positive***
 - b. ***Satan lurks about, seeking to capitalize on those who react negatively***
 - c. ***Satan waits to devour people who are struggling to adjust.***
- B. Many leaders want to lead through change, but they haven't thought through the intricate process for doing so successfully.
- C. *Leaders who attempt to change without thinking take foolish and unnecessary risks*
- D. Some members feel threatened by rapid changes, while others feel ignored

- E. To counter the Enemy's attacks, follow these *principles for facilitating change*:
- a. *Start by evaluating the risks associated with the change* very carefully
 - i. Ask: "How much change to I have in my pocket?"
 1. Do I have the support necessary to lead through this change
 2. Does the church trust my leadership enough to follow me
 - ii. Ask: "What's the worst thing that can happen if the change doesn't work?"
 - iii. Ask: "Who else has done this?"
 1. What can we learn from their learning curve?
 2. How can we avoid their mistakes?
 - iv. Ask: "Is there anyone we need to get onboard?"
 - v. Ask: "What is my strategy for 'selling' the change?"
 - vi. Ask: "How clearly has God spoken?"
 1. ***Leaders who aren't convinced of God's direction won't stay focused during opposition***
 2. ***(When God has spoken, everything else is secondary)***
 - b. Be willing to eat the elephant one bite at a time
 - i. Tackling too much at one time leads to frustration & defeat
 - ii. Beginning incrementally & respecting the readiness of the members are keys to successfully implementing lasting change
 - iii. Good leaders commit the time necessary for the change to be promoted, understood, & adopted by the members

Get some troops on board:

- A. How do you lead to victory when it seems easier to retreat to the cave?
 - a. First, hear God's response... (*you're not alone*) (1 Kings 19:18)
 - i. ***Qt: As you lead toward growth, know that there will be times when it appears that the fort is about to fall.***
 - ii. When those times come, ask God to remind you that you're not alone.
 - iii. Raise the Christian flag high and press on.
 - b. Second, remember that change takes place one life at a time.
 - i. Jesus changed His world by changing individual lives
 - ii. God typically uses us to change congregations – one at a time
 - iii. ***Qt: Equip a few warriors & challenge them to equip a few...***
 - iv. Make the investments necessary to get the influential leaders on board.
 - v. Take the Enemy's land little by little, one by one.
 - vi. ***Qt: A few well trained warriors are better than many troops who haven't really been prepared for the battle. Discipled warriors aren't intimidated by the size of the opposition.***
 - c. Rally the prayer warriors & other troops around God's mission
 - i. Get the prayer warriors praying for persistence...
 - ii. Challenge the people to march on to fulfill the Great Commission
 - iii. ***Qt: God can change a congregation with a few people committed to overcoming the Enemy.***

Pray for discontent with the status quo:

- A. The problem with most churches is they don't see any need to change
- B. ***Sadly, most churches get comfortable, settling into inwardly focused routines (Revelation 3:14-22) ["because you are lukewarm, and neither hot or cold, I will spit you out of My mouth"]***
- C. People tend not to accept change until they see/feel the need for it...

- D. **Qt:** *A wise leader guides toward discomfort! Good leaders never allow people to be entirely happy with where they are because the Enemy wants to see them comfortable with the status quo.*
- E. Secular quote from Pastor Jeff's old business days:
 - a. *"Maintaining the status quo is the most eloquent form of suicide. The ironic thing is that you feel good as you die."*
- F. Good leaders challenge the status quo!
 - a. *"If it's not broke... break it!"* - secular business quote

Ask God for His plan:

- A. **Qt:** We best overcome the Enemy's schemes not by reacting to him but by preparing for him.
- B. By making disciples, we arm believers against the Enemy
- C. Disciplemaking does not happen without planning.
- D. **Healthy churches establish & implement intentional discipleship plans that prepare members to stand when the Enemy attacks**
- E. Too many leaders won't engage the reality of spiritual warfare with a biblical plan to win the battles
- F. The danger is that the church faces an enemy who does have a plan! He devours churches whose troops have no battle plan in place (1 Peter 5:8)
- G. Lead the church to pray & read God's Word for direction
- H. **Qt:** *General planning seldom leads to action. Determine to be intentional and specific in planning, including timelines, personal accountability, etc.*
- I. The Enemy is not alarmed by general plans that never lead to specific accomplishments.
- J. **Qt:** *Satan wants us to think we are accomplishing something, while we never actually enter the battle. Don't confuse activity with accomplishment.*
- K. The Enemy strategically attacks every facet and purpose of the church.
- L. **Qt:** *To prepare for and ward off attacks from Satan, an overall strategy should address each component/purpose of the church.*
- M. A vigorous prayer focus is vital to ministry!
- N. What are we teaching people about what the Bible says about prayer?
- O. *What are we doing to guide people to pray?*
- P. Systems should be developed that include planning sheets for each purpose of the church (See Exhibit 9-4)
- Q. **Qt:** *Dreaming, planning, (experimenting - JDP), implementing, evaluating, & improving should become part of the church's DNA.*
- R. Strategizing & planning are hard work, but both serve as God's tools for winning the battles of spiritual warfare.
- S. **Qt:** *Not to strategize & plan is to give the Devil an open door.*

Lead as a servant:

- A. **The Devil would be alarmed if more leaders had a servant's heart.**
- B. *Jesus modeled servant leadership*
- C. Servant leaders are committed to Jesus, live like Jesus lived, and lead like Jesus led (Mark 9:35)
- D. **Qt:** *The Devil and humble servanthood seldom stay in the same room for very long.*

Christian leaders must stand firm for God's cause. Be the leader that God has called you to be – stand for Him as you grow disciplined warriors in your church, family, and sphere of influence.

CHAPTER TEN

A Concluding Challenge

Not all stories of spiritual warfare in the Bible are stories of victorious warriors. Some were incredibly ineffective. Those who want to produce/become disciplined warriors should learn from these failures.

Don't fight today's battles in yesterday's strength:

- A. Jesus' disciples came to Him at one point confused why they were unable to cast out a demonic spirit...
 - a. Jesus answered: ""This kind can come out only by prayer..." (Mark 9:29)
 - b. The disciples had recently cast out demons (Mark 6:7-13)
 - c. Apparently, what they did earlier (pray) they did not do this time...
 - d. **Qt:** *The disciples learned the hard way that they couldn't fight spiritual battles today on the basis of yesterday's victories.*
 - e. *This lesson is important to learn if you want to lead an armed church that wins spiritual battles*
 - f. **Qt:** *The Enemy fires new arrows every day, so daily we must put on the full armor of God afresh.*
- B. A fit church will quickly become unfit without prayer.
 - a. *Pray without ceasing! (1 Thessalonians 5:17)*
 - b. Produce disciplined warriors who do the same.
- C. **Qt:** *The mountaintop experiences are great, but we can't stay up there when needy people wait at the foot of the mountain. God replenishes us on the heights so that we can better face the battles in the valley.*
- D. **Reality Check:** **Qt:** *the battles will be intense if your church actually takes the gospel into the darkness.*
- E. Sometimes we'll need to retreat from the valley & head back to the mountain to be renewed & refreshed – especially when our prayer life needs strengthening.
- F. **Qt:** *Our goal should be balance between the mountaintop & the valley.*

Don't take on the Enemy unarmed:

- A. Acts 19:11-17 is a second account of failed spiritual warfare...
 - a. Seven false converts tried to use Christian power...
 - b. The demon being addressed said: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? (v.15)
 - c. The evil spirit did more than disobey/ignore the brothers...
 - d. In a fit of defiance, the spirit led the possessed man to beat the brothers
 - e. *The brothers used the "words" and "acted the part" of Christians, yet nothing happened because they did not have an authentic, faith-based, real-deal saving relationship with Jesus Christ.*
 - f. *They lacked authority and the protective armor of God.*
- B. Christian obedience (vs. ritual & formulas) shakes the foundations of hell.
- C. **Qt:** *In the end, disciplined warriors are the people whose names the Enemy recognizes – and fears!*