

# How to Align Your Faith and Make Your Words Hold Weight in the Spirit

I have never been one to focus on the end of the world, but I can attest that we are living in what are called the last days. Now more than ever, Christians need their voices to be heard. But in order to have a legitimate platform to pray out loud, a person must be a true believer.

Ephesians 2:8–9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one should boast.” The Bible makes it clear that our good works don’t save us, and 2 Corinthians 3:5 tells us that we are not “sufficient in ourselves to take credit for anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.” This means we cannot boast in our own goodness.

The world is changing around us, and the church is facing challenges we’ve never encountered before, but what it means to be a true believer has not changed. True believers still have certain characteristics.

## True Believers Will Face Opposition

Matthew 10:22 says true believers will be hated for Jesus’ name’s sake, but only the one who endures to the end will be saved. I always say we are not saved; we are being saved. Salvation is a continual process of endurance, and true believers never stop reaching toward the mark. Paul made it clear that he could not sit back and be comfortable in his place in God. He had to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14). The word “press” means to “move or cause to move into a position of contact with something by exerting continuous physical force.”

Often this force must be exerted because of opposition.

One of the main signs of true, born-again believers is that they will have opposition. The reason Paul had to press was because there were obstacles and hindrances between him and the mark. These obstacles and barriers are called distractions, and they are demonically set in place to stop us from reaching the mark. Because there's opposition ahead of us as believers, it is very important that we not walk alongside the opposition.

Second Corinthians 6:14 warns us not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. The Word of the Lord goes on to say, "What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"

A yoke is a wooden bar that joins two oxen to each other. It's a connector that can overpower or pull a person in a particular direction. As believers, with all the opposition ahead of us, it will be dangerous to walk side by side with people who can pull us in the wrong direction. I pray this message is getting your attention. Be careful not to connect or yoke up with any person, place or thing that will pull you toward the wrong course. Of course, that begs the question: If you need to avoid relationships in which you are unequally yoked, how can you tell which people, places and things to be yoked to?

### True Believers Have Signs Following Them

Mark 16:17–18 (KJV) says, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." This passage of Scripture tells us who believers are. Believers do not run after signs like the Bible says evil men do; instead, signs follow them! Based on the passage from Mark 16,

Believers cast out devils.

Believers speak with new tongues.

Believers take up serpents.

Believers can drink any deadly thing and it will not hurt them.

Believers lay hands on the sick, and they recover.

I've been saved for over 30 years, and one of the most baffling things to me is that people who call themselves believers don't believe Mark 16:17-18!

True Believers Face Persecution

Consider the following verses.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10).

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Luke 6:22).

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18, MEV).

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim 3:12, KJV).

At the end of this article, I include several Scriptures for you to confess out loud, especially during times of persecution. Whenever you do, also take a minute to praise God, because if you are being persecuted for your faith, God is about to bless your boots off. But this blessing is conditional on you blessing those who attempt to destroy you. (See Rom. 12:14.) As crazy as it may sound, you must begin to take pleasure in the arrows that are shot against your life. I

prophesy over your head that no weapon formed against you will prosper, and because you've been reviled for Christ's sake, you will receive "mega-more" and manifold blessings. Your latter will be greater than your former, and eyes have not seen nor ears heard what God is about to do for you.

It is no secret that believers will be drawn together by the persecution they endure from those who hate Christ. The good news is that favor undergirds persecution. Walk out your persecution and walk in favor. Whether you are being persecuted by family members, your job, your community or even everyday life itself, press toward the mark.

I'm qualified to talk about being persecuted as a believer. During my tenure as an elected official, numerous false allegations were made against me. I had to learn to endure the defamations and accusations my enemies leveled against me back to back. I have never been through an election without my opponents involving me in a manufactured scandal. But as I write this book, I am an overcomer and more than a conqueror as I continue to press toward the mark.

The name of the strongman that continually sets its ugly face against me is religious persecution. Political entities, special interests and those with antichrist agendas have hijacked the mainstream media to work against true believers or anyone who supports or associates with them.

By God's grace and favor, I was able to operate as an elected official for nearly a decade. That favor allowed me to write legislation to put prayer back in school in Florida, have "In God We Trust" conspicuously displayed in all public schools, be the prime sponsor of a huge criminal justice reform bill, get \$2,125,000 for a man wrongfully incarcerated for 43 years and allocate millions of dollars to programs run by everyday people for community outreach in my city. Much more was accomplished, but these are the highlights of my four years as a state representative. They are the fruits of my labor, and

they came with a lot of hard times, hatred, and opposition.

I'm sad to say that if you really love Jesus and are a true believer, you must learn to be hated, but be encouraged. As I mentioned previously, Luke 10:19 says, "Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by no means hurt you." And Romans 16:20 (NKJV) says, "And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly." Hang in there. Your breakthrough is about to come.

### True Believers Are Known by Their Fruit

In addition to being known by the persecution we face, true believers will know one another by the fruit they bear. Matthew 7:16b–20 (MEV) explains this clearly.

"Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit. But a corrupt tree bears evil fruit. A good tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruit you will know them."

Galatians 5 highlights the fruit of the born-again believer as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (vv. 22–23). I would also like to add that there is a kingdom language whereby believers know one another. We can touch and agree because we speak the same tongue and travel on the same circuit. We can walk together in agreement because we are receiving the glory from the same spout. No longer do we walk according to the course of this world and the prince of the power of the air who rules over the careless, rebellious and unbelieving. We are the children of God, who care, obey and believe.

### True Believers Are on Assignment

Another way to know true believers is to look for those on

assignment. Matthew 28:19–20 (KJV) says it best: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” These words are to strengthen you in your calling. God is saying that wherever we go we must take the gospel of Jesus Christ with us.

There is another gospel being preached in the land, one with a different Holy Ghost and a false Christ. There are spirits of seduction in the land, so we must obey the high calling and go forth, speaking truth and walking in discernment. Beware of those who act like believers, look like believers and even try to speak the language of the kingdom. First John 4:1 warns us not to believe every spirit, but to “try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” I like the way The Message puts it: “My dear friends, don’t believe everything you hear. Carefully weigh and examine what people tell you. Not everyone who talks about God comes from God. There are a lot of lying preachers loose in the world.”

Second Timothy 3:5 speaks of those who have a form of godliness but deny the power of God. Timothy teaches that they are not believers, and we must turn away from them. Christianity has split into so many factions that it could be confusing to an everyday person. Acts 11:26 tells us the term “Christian” was coined at Antioch. Christian persecution became so bad that believers had to hide out and use certain symbols to identify one another.

Eventually it was not important whether people called themselves Christians; the question asked to ensure a person was a true believer was, “Do you know the way?” Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6, MEV). As you come to the end of this article, I ask the same question of you: Are you a

Christian in name only, or do you know the way?

Prayer to Affirm Your Identity as a True Believer

Father, in the name of Jesus, I renounce nominal Christianity. I speak the language of the kingdom and no longer walk according to the course of this world under the rulership of the prince of the power of the air. I renounce carelessness, rebellion and unbelief. I am a good tree, and I cannot bear evil fruit. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are my portion. I touch and agree and form a circle with my fellow believers, and together we have power over all the power of the enemy, and the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet shortly. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Confessions for Building Faith in the Midst of Persecution

I am blessed because I'm being persecuted for righteousness' sake; mine is the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:10).

"I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

I know that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. I choose to live godly; therefore, I suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12).

Though the world hates me, I know it hated You before it hated me (John 15:18).

I am blessed when people hate me and when they separate me from their company, reproach me, and cast out my name as evil for the Son of Man's sake (Luke 6:22).

Nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ, not tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword. No, in all these things I am more than a conqueror through Him who loves me. "For I am persuaded that

neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord” (Rom. 8:35–39).

I am blessed when people revile me and persecute me and say all manner of evil against me falsely for the Lord’s sake (Matt. 5:11).

No one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for Christ’s sake and the gospel’s, shall not receive an hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mother and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the world to come, eternal life (Mark 10:29–30).

I will bless those who persecute me; I will bless and curse not (Rom. 12:14).

“My times are in Your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me” (Ps. 31:15, NKJV).

I will be sober and vigilant because my adversary the devil walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8).

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# How to Subdue Spiritual Goliaths

In this season, there are key questions that must be answered: What is God doing in His church? What are the major issues the church faces today? And how is the Holy Spirit leading His church to react to these issues?

To find answers to those questions, I challenge you to read 1 Samuel 17—the famous story of David and Goliath—from a 21st-century perspective. As I read the Scripture for this column, I received a revelation on things I have never seen before. As you meditate on this story, allow the Lord to open your prophetic eyes to see how it relates to today's church.

Goliath and the armies of the Lord were at a standoff. The children of Israel stood dismayed and afraid, helpless as Goliath mocked them and their God. David was not a member of King Saul's army, so he traveled back and forth to tend his father's flock. During a trip to the front lines, David overheard Goliath's mockery and challenged him to battle. Goliath laughed at King Saul's choice for an opponent.

But David's strategy was simple. He knew the battle was the Lord's. David did not come wearing Saul's armor or wielding a sword and spear, but went forth in the name of the Lord, taking only his shepherd's staff and five smooth stones. He confronted Goliath face to face and declared his demise by the hand of the Lord. With only one stone, David slew Goliath and cut off his head with his own sword. When the Philistines saw

that their mighty champion had fallen, they fled.

First of all, take note that Goliath was killed with only one stone. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was one man who caused a civil rights movement, and Martin Luther was the champion of the Reformation. It only takes one person to ignite a movement.

The people of God were in a frozen state of fear until David came on the scene. The Goliaths of the world mock Jesus continually. These enemies of the gospel boldly defy the sanctity of marriage and the value of life as God created it to be. As individual believers, we must not be afraid to stand up for our God-given rights and confront controversial issues. The power of the church is the authority of the believer. Pastors of the largest churches stand on the mountain across from Goliath in silence while certain groups boldly mock our faith. These groups openly criticize the church and people of faith with no hesitation or opposition. When are the people of the church going to stand their ground?

There is a standoff in the Spirit. The Goliaths of the world are loud, prideful and boisterous as the church is docile concerning certain issues. Goliath was a warrior from youth, but by the time he came out to confront the people of God, his agenda had been strengthened and solidified. The anti-Christ agendas that oppose the church have operated behind the scenes for some time. The Bible declares that Goliath cursed David by his gods. It is important to note that there are spirits (gods of idolatry) that operate behind every anti-Christ agenda.

The trophy from the victory between David and Goliath was that the loser had to serve the winner. Whoever lost had to become the slaves of the victors. I release a prophetic warning to my brothers and sisters in Christ: Where we do not take our victory as the church today, we will stand captive and be enslaved tomorrow. We must speak truth in love. This will dismantle darkness and behead the strongman.

We have many issues to deal with in the church, but in ground-level warfare, we must identify and disarm the strongman. Like David, we cannot wear the armor of the world; we must stand in faith and put on the whole armor of God.

Goliath vexed, tormented and taunted the armies of the Lord for 40 days. I prophesy that the church has spiritually stepped into her 40th day. David used Goliath's own sword to kill him. There is a boomerang anointing that will cause the wiles of the devil's kingdom to turn against him and self-destruct.

Everything sent or set against the church and God's people will not prosper. Curses will literally turn into blessings. The latter-day rain of the church will be greater than the former. I smell the coming of the rain! There is a special grace and promotion coming upon those who have been behind the scenes tending the sheep.

As believers, we cannot be afraid to stand in the valley of Elah to meet and confront the issues that will put us into bondage if we do not deal with them first. There is a mighty showdown ahead, and victory is in the air. {eoa}

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# A Prayer for Divine Alignment

**Father God, in the name of Jesus, I thank You for divine alignment in the Spirit.**

I declare that I am vertically and horizontally lined up with the will of God. The blood of the everlasting covenant of Jesus Christ covers me. It has made me perfect in every good work (Heb. 13:21). I am standing on the foundation of Christ. I am laying for myself a good foundation for the future, that I may have eternal life (1 Tim. 6:19).

I will not be pulled to and fro because I am maturing daily in the things of God (Eph. 4:14). I live in the *rhema*, and it is activating signs, wonders and miracles around me on a normal basis. Surely goodness and mercy have my back all the days of my life (Ps. 23:6). Because I have divine sonship, I will abide on the course of the Lord and not be led astray. I stand at the Ascent of Ziz! This is my season and my place of blossom. I am under the divine alignment of the heavenlies. All connections to the second heaven are dismantled. Every prince or ruler operating against my destiny is dethroned. The Lord has commanded the stars to fight the enemies of their path over me (Judg. 5:20). No weapons formed against me will prosper!

Early do I rise! I speak to the morning and command the dayspring to line up with my destiny (Job 38:12). The first light has commanded the will of God for me in the break of day. The soil has been plowed in the Spirit for the seeds of fruition to be planted daily. I purpose to walk in daily destiny, the destiny of each year, and, ultimately, to achieve my eternal destiny.

I come in agreement with my messenger angel and the angel of destiny to go before me to appoint the will of God for my days and to forbid anything that would hinder it. From sunrise to sunset, my required season has been established in the heavenlies and is manifesting in the earth realm. It has come as a result of the process of time and has set the order of God for every divine appointment and heavenly intervention in my days. The place I have been up to now is too small for me, and I am breaking out on every side. I declare that I have room to live (Is. 49:20)!

Lord, bless me indeed. Let there be no question that You are working on my behalf. The anointing of the mega is my portion. Lord, You have brought me a long way, and Your hand is on all that concerns me. I thank You for enlarging my coast. Keep me from evil so that my spirit will not be grieved or my soul pushed out of alignment.

Jesus, I praise You because I can see the place of my tent enlarged. The curtains of my habitation are stretched forth, and I will spare not and will lengthen my cords and strengthen my stakes. I am breaking forth on every side, and my seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make desolate cities inhabited. I have no fear, and I will not be damned, cursed or confounded. The shame of my past and the reproach of my widowhood are cast into the sea of forgetfulness forever. Amen.

*From Prayers That Bring Change by Kimberly Daniels.*

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# The Key to Understanding the Spiritual Realms of Authority

Understanding realms of authority is a safeguard against getting outside of your spiritual coast. Knowing your limitations in the spirit is a must. Understanding realms of authority will also enhance and accent your God-given gifts. It brings correction to our tendencies to rebel. Understanding realms of authority gives us a better foundation in understanding order. It is true there is no male or female in the spirit—but there is always order. You do not have to worry about proving what you can do when you are subject to God's order. God's order always undergirds true authority, and that which He sets in place cannot be moved.

The authority of God will always be challenged. It is simple: The devil hates believers! Whether it is in the natural or the spirit realm, demonic forces always fight against the constituted authority of God's elect. The words *constituted authority* are very important and must be defined. Constituted authority is that which has been appointed, set up and established by God. What God has appointed is anointed and cannot be denied.

Many people try to operate in the spirit and do not understand spiritual realms. In order to understand spiritual realms, we must understand realms of authority. Though there are many kinds of authority, spiritual authority is the greatest. If our authority in Christ is by the Spirit, it cannot relate to whether or not a person is a male or female, Jew or Gentile. There is no distinction between them in the spirit.

Some people would give everything they have for religious authority, political authority or even the authority that comes with fame. Athletes draw from physical authority, while great minds lean on the authority of the intellectual realm.

Rich people glean from their financial authority, and the people of the world cannot help but depend on their natural authority. Although spiritual authority is the greatest, it often takes the back burner in the minds of men for the more obvious realms of authority.

Spiritual authority is the secret weapon of creation. Many people in high positions have tapped into this truth. Witches and those from the dark side crave authority in the spirit realm to the point of knowing that authority, when harnessed and pushed in the right direction, can rule over and affect every other realm that exists.

By making this point, I must note that there are always opposing authorities in the spirit realm—good vs. evil, dark vs. light, the kingdom of our God vs. the kingdom of darkness. There is a battle going on in the spirit, and it is not a natural one. The real battle is not over land, oil, political positions or the keys to the stock market. The real battle is over authority in the spirit. Every human being has the potential inside to rule and have dominion in the earth.

In the Garden of Eden, God gave dominion to all mankind, not just to believers. The problem comes into play when believers do not use their access to the spirit realm that God has given them to represent Jesus in the earth realm. The devil has been recruiting men to operate in the spirit realm (on the dark side) since the fall of mankind. The Holy Spirit is wooing us to walk with God again as Adam did in the cool of the day.

To be effective in the earth realm, we must do two things:

1. Walk with God in a personal relationship and have nothing before Him in our hearts.
2. Walk in the dominion that God has given us in the earth realm.

Doing the things I have listed above will confuse darkness. It causes a level of spiritual authority that overrides the

authority of those on the dark side. I have an armor bearer who was a crack addict for 10 years. He was on crack most of the time while he was in my church. He was also a part of a cult that was involved in the Yorùbá religion form of witchcraft. He was dedicated to the devil and was involved in sacrifices to demons. His wife was studying to become a high priestess in the cult. She was at the church for many years but eventually went back to operating on the dark side. My armor bearer eventually separated from her and was miraculously delivered and is serving the Lord.

He had three children with his ex-wife. After he divorced her, she got into a relationship with another warlock and had two more babies with him. I thought this young man would never be delivered, but today I witness him living for the Lord wholeheartedly.

Recently the warlock that his ex-wife is with flagged him down as he was driving through the neighborhood. My armor bearer was caught off guard, because he knew that this young man was working witchcraft against him. The warlock ran up to him and made amends. He said, "I have fasted seven days for you to die. I have sent spiritual hurricanes and tornadoes to your life, but none of it has affected you." Glory to God! When we walk in power as we walk with God, our spiritual authority overrides all authorities of opposition.

At an early age, I took an interest in mythology. At the time I did not know the Lord and had no interest in reading anything. For some strange reason I became absolutely fascinated with reading stories on mythology. I took classes on the subject in high school and college. After giving my life to the Lord and becoming a deliverance and warfare preacher, I noticed that there was a connection between the spirit realm and mythology.

The importance of what God revealed to me was rooted in the meaning of what a myth actually is. A myth is a legendary

narrative that has been verbally passed through generations but cannot be verified. God showed me that just because things cannot be verified does not mean they do not exist. This is why people do not understand how to maneuver in the spirit. Believers are supposed to walk by faith and not by sight. Unfortunately this is not always the case. Second Corinthians teaches that what we see is temporal, but what we cannot see is eternal (2 Cor. 4:18). I am sure most Christians understand what this passage means when they use the word *eternal*, but we need to investigate deeper into the meaning of *temporal*. The Greek word for *temporal* is *proskairos*, and it relates to that which is only for a season and temporarily exists.

The things of the spirit realm are very real, but they cannot be socially, scientifically or intellectually confirmed. The things of the spirit can only be spiritually discerned. Let's take a look at 1 Corinthians 2:

“But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one” (1 Cor. 2:9–15).

This passage of Scripture is very clear and to the point. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned! Intellect,

science or anything that we can relate to in the natural will only distort a clear view of what is going on in the spirit realm. We discern things spiritually by knowing them through our spirit man and not through our natural man. First Corinthians 2:14 says that the natural man cannot relate to the things of the spirit. {eoa}

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## **7 Weapons to Conquer Your Spiritual Enemies**

It is amazing how God will use natural tools to make a spiritual difference in our lives. Before I was saved, I could not relate to the spiritual, so God used the military to put me on the right track. Enlisting in the service was part of my destiny. And the Lord has blessed me with the experience of an extensive military background. While in the United States Army, I moved through the ranks at an incredible pace.

However, initially, because of my background, my transition from the streets to basic training was quite drastic. When the recruiter picked me up to go to the processing center to be inducted into the Army, I was smoking cocaine. The recruiter

waited in the car as I took my last hit.

Upon my arrival at basic training, the Army's first challenge in turning me into a soldier was making me look like one. New recruits were taken to a big warehouse that had an assembly line. We were given everything we needed to be clothed as a soldier: boots, hats, belts and uniforms.

Before we went to the assembly line, orders were given to us to authorize uniform pickup. In the same way, believers are given spiritual orders in Ephesians 6:11: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (NKJV).

*Holokleros*, the Greek word for *whole*, means "complete in every part, leaving nothing out, or to be perfectly sound." Our warfare cannot be perfectly sound unless we use every part of the armor of God.

Clearly stated, the armor of God gives us the power to stand against the wiles of the enemy in the midst of evil days. The Bible speaks of wiles in both the Old and New Testaments.

The Hebrew word for *wiles* is *nekel*. Among other things, it means treachery, conspiracy, beguilement, trickery and deception (Num. 25:18). To be subject to the wiles of the enemy means to be deceived.

Few people willingly worship the devil. But worship is what the warfare is all about. God desires our worship, but the devil wants to be worshipped as well.

When we accept the things of the world from the devil, it is the highest form of worship, and it opens demonic doors in the spirit realm. Worship is not just what we do but what we abstain from doing. Most believers are trying to serve God, so the enemy has to use deceiving methods to make them worship him instead.

In the New Testament, the word *wiles* is *methodeia* in the Greek. Though it is related to the English word *method*, it actually means “to operate under a traveling cover and to lie in wait.” This is the foundational truth of the wiles of the devil—to lie behind the scenes and watch a person until a vulnerable moment arises. Then through various means, all designed by the satanic kingdom, the man is attacked and deceived.

### **The Whole Armor**

Ephesians 6:10 says, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” This verse indicates the armor of God is for the “brethren”—all those who are saved and blood-bought.

Ephesians 6:12 says, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly place.”

Ephesians 6:14-18 explains every part of the armor and its purpose. The passage begins by telling us to put on the armor in order to stand. This word *stand* is *histemi* in the Greek, and it means “to abide in established covenant.”

When we stand, we abide in the covenant promises of God. Putting on the whole armor of God is a part of this covenant. God’s covenant promise to us is that no matter how mad the devil gets and how evil times get, He will keep and protect us.

Personally, I find it easier to go from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet when I put on my armor. After I am spiritually dressed (head to toe), I take up the sword of the spirit and the shield of faith and go forth equipped for the evil day.

### **Each Part Has a Purpose**

Every individual piece of the armor covers a vital part of the

body, such as the head, heart, loins or feet. The armor also covers our offensive and defensive positions against the enemy in the spirit.

**The helmet.** The word *helmet* in our armor of salvation is *perikephaiaia* in the Greek, and it means “to encircle and protect the head.” When we wear the helmet of salvation, it empowers us for continual renewal of the mind. The mind is a spiritual battlefield, and without the helmet of salvation it is impossible to have a victorious life in Christ Jesus (Eph. 6:17).

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In the military, going outside without a head covering was unheard of. I was brainwashed to believe this was unacceptable. If your head was not covered in wartime, the enemy could easily detect you from above and target you for attack. This is why our caps and helmets were made to fit in with the scenery so that enemy forces flying above us could not identify us.

The prince of the power of the air can easily identify believers who do not wear the helmet of salvation. I am convinced that people who end up in backslidden states took their helmets off at some point.

**The breastplate.** The breastplate of righteousness covers the chest. In the days of the Roman soldiers, true warriors wore a breastplate for battle. This part of the armor is very important because it covers the heart. To be righteous means to be in right standing with God. To do this we must guard our hearts (v. 14).

The word *breastplate* is *thorax* in the Greek. It means “a breastplate or corset consisting of two parts and protecting the body on both sides from the neck to the middle.”

I have a sister who is a police officer in Jacksonville, Fla.

I can easily relate the breastplate to her bulletproof vest. When she is on duty, she is never without it. At any time, she can walk into a dangerous altercation and be under fire.

Because we do not know when the enemy will attack, we should put on the whole armor of God every day. Surely we need the breastplate daily to guard our hearts. Witchcraft flows freely through dirty hearts. A dirty heart is a heart that is not right with God. Dirty hearts create wrong spirits. I have met prayer warriors who were powerful but had wrong spirits. They got off course by allowing the wrong seeds to be planted in their hearts.

David was a great prayer warrior, and he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10).

**The belt.** The Bible says our loins should be girt about with truth (Eph. 6:14). Oh, how we need loin truth in the church today! This word *girt* in the Greek is *perizonnumi*, and it means "to be fastened with a belt."

I do not think that it is by chance that this part of the armor covers our private parts. It is only the truth that can keep even a believer sexually pure. I have met with some of the greatest men and women of God, and they have admitted either to being trapped or almost trapped by seducing spirits.

Let's look at the fall of mankind. The death that Adam and Eve experienced was not natural death. They lived hundreds of years after the fall.

In Genesis 2:25 (before the fall), Adam and Eve were both naked. It is interesting that after they fell, the Bible declares their nakedness as if they never were earlier (Gen. 3:7). Apparently this was a different kind of nakedness.

In *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, the Hebrew word translated *naked* in Genesis 2:25 is *arawm*, and it simply means

“to have no clothes on.” However, in Genesis 3:7, after the fall, the original word for *naked* is *eyrom*, which comes from *awram* but means “to be made bare.” That is, “to be removed from under the covering of God.”

We do not have to be uncovered in the private areas of our lives, especially when it comes to sexual purity. God gave us a way out before the enemy ever laid his snare. If you are a man or a woman bound by sexual impurity, repent and go the other way!

Gird your loins about with truth, and walk out of the enemy’s stronghold. Just as the enemy had a tailor-made trap, God has a tailor-made deliverance for you.

Pray, and then contact someone whom you can trust. You will need support, and God has someone for you. Seek counseling, deliverance and accountability. If you attempt to walk out your deliverance alone, the enemy will snuff you out.

**The shoes.** It is important that our feet are shod with the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15). The steps of a just man are led by the Lord (Ps. 37:23). This is the covenant that we have with God concerning covering our steps. We may make some mistakes, but God ultimately delivers us into victory.

When the book of Ephesians speaks of the gospel of peace, the word *peace* is the Greek word *eirene*. When our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, it prepares a path for our way to be prosperous. There is also a rest released, and we are at one with the will of God for our lives.

**The sword.** Here, the sword is both an offensive and defensive weapon. The word *sword* is *machaira* in the Greek, and it is defined as “an instrument of war for judicial punishment.”

It is related to the Greek word *mache*, and this word is used to convey controversy, fighting and striving. The sword of the

spirit is a weapon used for war.

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Weapons are made to attack and to protect. A sword can be used to stab or to stop a blow. Though this part of the armor is offensive in nature, it also has a defensive operation.

Ephesians 6:17 declares that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. This is the part of the Word of God that judges our enemies. In biblical times, God brought the sword upon the land to judge the enemies of His people. This was the case with Babylon (Ezek. 33:2). We do not use the Word to judge our enemies, but when we carry the sword in obedience, the Word of God automatically judges them.

**The shield.** The shield of faith, or *thureos* in the Greek, is described as a large “door-shaped” shield in the spirit. Based on this, I believe we can say that using the shield of faith closes doors to our enemies. Ephesians 6:16 says that above all, we should take the shield of faith so that the fiery darts of the wicked will be quenched. This is a very important part of our defense in spiritual warfare. A shield covers and protects. Without this part of armor, doors can be opened to ignite the darts of evil in our lives.

**Praying in the Spirit.** Many do not see this as part of the armor of God. Ephesians 6:18 reads, “Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God’s consecrated people)” (AMP).

Praying in the Spirit is the part of the armor that we use offensively, but it becomes a defense to those for whom we stand in the gap. As we release a weapon of prayer, our enemies will be shut down.

We have to pray in every biblical manner, especially praying

in tongues. I believe that those who refuse or neglect the gift of tongues in their lives have a big hole in their armor that causes them to be less effective in the kingdom.

Every person in the body of Christ should be putting on the whole armor of God. God has given each piece to us. No part works alone.

Ephesians 6:13 reminds us that the days will be evil. As a believer, you will be under attack. The whole armor of God helps us to ward off the attacks of the enemy.

These revelations may seem too radical to you if you are in a comfort zone. But those in the household of faith must take a radical position against the wiles of the devil. The motto of the natural army is to be “combat ready.” In other words, every time a training exercise is called, soldiers must be ready to respond as if it is a real war.

God is calling His church to a “real war” mentality. Do not be afraid of what is new to you. Allow these revelations to put a demand on your spirit to go to the next level. I challenge you, plunge into the deeper things of God.

Read a companion devotional.

*Kimberly Daniels is the author of several books and pastor of Spoken Word Ministries.*

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## **10 Characteristics of a Religious Spirit**

Here are a few practical characteristics of religious spirits and how they can be recognized.

**1. Religious spirits have no authority in Jesus Christ.** Jesus hated religious spirits. Jesus was not a religious person, and He did things that shook the religious kingdoms of the earth. Acts 19:13–16 tells the story of seven sons of a man named Sceva. They were referred to as “vagabond Jews and exorcists.” In other words, they were religious. The story reveals that they had no power over unclean spirits.

**2. Religion steals the youthful joy of young people in serving Jesus;** it makes the elders become demonically old. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus forbid His disciples from stopping the little children from coming to Him. I do not believe in an age of spiritual accountability. Everything that has breath must praise and serve the Lord (Ps. 150:6). Children must be raised up in the things of God so that they will not depart.

The Bible only has one account whereby a prophet is called “old.” In the Book of 1 Kings, a man from Judah prophesied against the altar at Bethel. The king ordered that the man from Judah be seized. The king’s arm froze as he pointed to the prophet from Judah, and the king could not pull his arm back to himself. The king asked the man from Judah to pray that his arm would be healed.

He prayed, and the king was healed. Rumors of the authority of the prophet from Judah spread, and he was summoned by an “old prophet.” This prophet was not necessarily old in age but actually washed up. He was spiritually or demonically old! (See 1 Kings 13.)

**3. Religion is an anti-evangelism spirit.** Matthew 23:15 warns the religious sects of the church that they lose more souls than they win. Their converts become doubly as hellish as them.

**4. Religion is antichrist.** Religious people (the Pharisees and the Sadducees) killed Jesus.

**5. Religious people have no joy and, ultimately, no power!**

Nehemiah 8:10 declared that the joy of the Lord is our strength. It denotes that the person who lives in the dwelling place of the Lord (the place of joy—in the presence of the Lord there is fullness of joy) is reinforced with power.

**6. Religious spirits breed bondage and condemnation and block true liberty.** (See Galatians 5:1; Romans 8:1.)

**7. Religion creates a form of godliness through regimen and repetition.** Second Timothy 3:5 warns us to avoid people with forms of godliness.

**8. Religion corrupts and perverts.** It promotes an unrealistic standard that cannot be obtained because of the dictates of the flesh. This is why true worshipers worship in spirit and in truth. The law was a schoolmaster that taught us that in and of our fleshly natures, we cannot obey the commandments of God. This is why we were given a new (and better) covenant. The laws of God are now written in our hearts and not on tablets of stone. Trying to live by the dictates of the tablets of stone alone only opens the doors to corruption and perversion through religious spirits of failure. This is why perversion and corruption are multiplied when men attempt to serve God by their own power and by their guidelines. (See Hebrews 8:7–13.)

**9. Religion stems from the root of spiritual schizophrenia.** One minute the people blessed the name of the Lord and cried, “Hosanna to the Highest!” In another breath they yelled, “Crucify Him!”

**10. Religion hinders positive relationships** by putting a bad taste in the mouths of unbelievers, taking the fire out of marriages, stopping the flow of God in worship fellowships, and making children hate serving God.

To sum it all up, judgment will start at the house of God. Remember, it was religious spirits that nailed Jesus to the cross. Let us not religiously or repetitively serve God.

We must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Selah!

A sought-after conference speaker, preacher and powerful prayer warrior, **Kimberly Daniels** pastors Spoken Word Ministries in Jacksonville, Fla., and Fort Lauderdale, Fla., with her husband, Ardell. She is a recently elected city councilwoman in Jacksonville as well as the author of numerous books, including her book, *Spiritual Housekeeping* (Charisma House), from which this article is adapted.

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## **How Not to Be Weary in Well-Doing**

Paul was one of the greatest soldiers in God's army in the New Testament. At the end of his ministry, he declared that he had "finished my course" (2 Tim. 4:7, KJV)! The only way to finish our course or term of duty is to avoid becoming weary in well-doing.

I have had the pleasure of working with some of the greatest soldiers in God's army. These were people whom I covered and who were a part of my ministry, but they fell off for some reason or the other. They served well and walked in the anointing of God, but they fell prey to the enemy in the midst of their good work. Nehemiah is an example of a soldier who did not become weary in well-doing. While he was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, Sanballat and Tobiah, kings of neighboring tribes of people, asked him five times to come to meet with them. But all five times Nehemiah told Sanballat and Tobiah that he was not coming off the wall because he was "doing a great work and cannot come down"

(Neh. 6:3). Most fallen soldiers fall while doing a “good work.”

It is of paramount importance that as soldiers in the army of God, we finish the work we begin and maintain our good work by avoiding weariness in well-doing. Our Bible is filled with important admonitions about finishing the work God gives us to do. There are three relevant scriptures that refer to not becoming weary in the work of the Lord given below for you to read and internalize in your spirit. Determine to stay the course until you have finished. Let these scriptures be like marrow to your bones to build you up in your commitment to finish your race as Paul did.

### **1. Galatians 6:7–9**

In this first example you will discover that God will not allow Himself to be mocked. Those who attempt to sneer at the sincere efforts of God’s soldiers will be unable to make the saints weary!

Do not be deceived and deluded and misled; God will not allow Himself to be sneered at (scorned, disdained, or mocked by mere pretensions or professions, or by His precepts being set aside.) [He inevitably deludes himself who attempts to delude God.] For whatever a man sows, that and that only is what he will reap. For he who sows to his own flesh (lower nature, sensuality) will from the flesh reap decay and ruin and destruction, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not lose heart and grow weary and faint

in acting nobly and doing right, for in due time and at the appointed season we shall reap, if we do not loosen and relax our courage and faint. –Emphasis added

### **2. 2 Thessalonians 3:10–15**

Paul warned the Thessalonica church that those who refused to work in God’s army should not be given food and necessities they should be earning. He also tells the faithful soldier to

refuse to associate with those who will not work. Lazy brethren who do not want to work cannot make the saints weary!

For while we were yet with you, we gave you this rule and charge: If anyone will not work, neither let him eat. Indeed, we hear that some among you are disorderly [that they are

passing their lives in idleness, neglectful of duty], being busy with other people's affairs instead of their own and doing no work. Now we charge and exhort such persons [as ministers in Him exhorting those] in the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) that they work in quietness and earn their own food and other necessities. And as for you, brethren, do not become weary or lose heart in doing right [but continue in well-doing without weakening]. But if anyone [in the church] refuses to obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but simply admonish and warn him as [being still] a brother. –Emphasis added

### **3. Jeremiah 12:5–6**

Those who are part of God's army but who make idle promises or speak deceitfully to the faithful soldiers in God's army will be unable to make the faithful soldiers weary. Guard against such people.

[But the Lord rebukes Jeremiah's impatience, saying] If you have raced with men on foot and they have tired you out, then how can you compete with horses? And if [you take to flight] in a land of peace where you feel secure, then what will you do [when you tread the tangled maze of jungle haunted by lions] in the swelling and flooding of the Jordan? For even your brethren and the house of your father—even they have dealt treacherously with you; yes, even they are [like a pack of hounds] in full cry after you. Believe them not, though they speak fair words and promise good things to you.

### **God Promises Rest for the Weary**

In other examples God's Word teaches us that our Commander will be faithful to provide times of rest and refreshing to His faithful soldiers. Job 3:17 speaks of a place in the spirit where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary will have rest. In Isaiah 28:12

the word of the Lord spoke to God's people concerning a rest that causes the weary to rest and a refreshing from the Lord, but they would not hear.

We are taught in the Bible to share in the sufferings and hardships of others, and we have learned that a good soldier is always looking out for the needs of his fellow soldiers. Isaiah

50:4 teaches that we should know how to speak a word in season to the weary.

Our Commander will never overlook the needs of the faithful soldier who is doing the work assigned to him or her. Jeremiah 31:25 teaches us that God will satisfy every weary soul and replenish every sorrowful person. In Jeremiah 51:58 we discover that our Commander will thwart the efforts of our enemies, and that instead of being able to make us weary with their warfare tactics, they will be made weary by God our Commander.

Hear the Word of the Lord, saints in America; be not weary in well-doing, but rest and be refreshed! God will reward your faithfulness to the work of the kingdom. Stay focused on your mission and be faithful in your prayers. The efforts of your enemies will not be able to hinder your faithfulness in prayer. The apostles in the Bible were warned by the false religious leaders not to pray in Jesus's name. Daniel was told not to pray at all. In each instance the men of God obeyed Him and remained faithful in their prayer lives, even while under attack and great threat. The power of prayer is unlimited in the midst of persecution. Be the voice that will cry out in the wilderness. Open your window, face Jerusalem, and pray in Jesus's name alone. He is God, and He is with us! May

the anointing of Emmanuel be with you as you join us in prayer to get on our faces, on the walls, in the gates, and in the gaps of America! God bless!

A sought-after conference speaker, preacher and powerful prayer warrior, **Kimberly Daniels** pastors Spoken Word Ministries in Jacksonville, Fla., and Fort Lauderdale, Fla., with her husband, Ardell. She is a recently elected city councilwoman in Jacksonville as well as the author of numerous books, including her book, *Spiritual Bootcamp* (Charisma House), from which this article is adapted.

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## **10 Ways to Spot Religious Spirits**

Here are 10 practical characteristics of religion that will help you recognize religious spirits and their demonic activity:

1. Religious spirits have no authority in Jesus Christ. Jesus hated religious spirits. Jesus was not a religious person, and He did things that shook the religious kingdoms of the earth. Acts 19:13–16 tells the story of seven sons of a man named Sceva who were “exorcists” (religious men) but had no power over unclean spirits.

2. Religion steals the youthful joy of serving Jesus. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus forbid His disciples from stopping the little children from coming to Him because everything that has breath must praise and serve the Lord (Ps. 150:6). Religion also causes the elders to become demonically old. The Bible only has one account in which a prophet is ever called “old” (see 1 Kings 13). This prophet was not necessarily old in age;

he was actually washed up. He was spiritually, or demonically, old!

3. Religion is an anti-evangelism spirit. Matthew 23:15 warns the religious sects of the church that they lose more souls than they win. Their converts become doubly as hellish as them.

4. Religion is anti-Christ. It was the religious people (Pharisees and the Sadducees) who killed Jesus.

5. Religious people have no joy—and no power. Nehemiah 8:10 declares that the joy of the Lord is our strength. It denotes that the person who lives in the presence of the Lord (where there is fullness of joy) is reinforced with power.

6. Religious spirits breed bondage. It produces condemnation and blocks true liberty (see Gal. 5:1; Rom. 8:1.)

7. Religion creates only a form of godliness. This comes through regimen and repetition, not grace. We are to avoid people with forms of godliness (2 Tim. 3:5).

8. Religion corrupts and perverts. It holds up an unrealistic standard that cannot be attained because of the flesh. The laws of God are now written in our hearts and not on tablets of stone. Trying to live by the dictates of the tablets of stone alone only opens the doors to corruption and perversion through religious spirits of failure. This is why perversion and corruption are multiplied when men attempt to serve God by their own power and guidelines (see Heb. 8:7–13).

9. Religion stems from the root of spiritual schizophrenia. One minute the people cried, “Hosanna to the highest!” In another breath they yelled, “Crucify Him!”


10. Religion hinders positive relationships. It puts a bad taste for God in the mouths of unbelievers, it takes the fire out of marriages, it stops the flow of God in worship and it

makes children hate serving God.

To sum it all up, it was religious spirits that nailed Jesus to the cross. Let us not religiously or repetitively serve God. Let us worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

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## A First in Florida

*Could a 450-year milestone establish new order in the “First Coast” state?* 

Florida has been a key state in recent national election seasons, yet it’s also been the focal point of many prophetic words regarding the apostolic spirit resting upon it. The word *apostolic* relates to being “first in order or that which sets order,” and indeed, prophetic statements have defined Florida as a pioneering state that sets the standard for the nation and for revival.

Because Jacksonville, Fla., is my hometown, I take note whenever people offer such words concerning Florida. Lately, though, I’ve noticed the prophetic words spoken over my state are manifesting in a three-fold nature in 2012: in the natural, spiritual and historical.

In the natural, you don’t have to be a prophet to know that during the year of the presidential election all eyes will be on Florida. But it’s the spiritual and historical elements that have brought new revelation to why this is called the “First Coast” state.

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# How to Rid Yourself of Religious Spirits

*How to recognize and get rid of religious spirits in your life*

A family once brought a woman to our church on Steele Street and Blue Avenue in Jacksonville, Florida, who needed deliverance. We did not have deliverance teams in the church at that time; only my husband, Ardell, and I did the ministry.

This woman had come from a mental hospital in South Florida. As God is my witness, when I pulled up to the church, she was sitting in a car—and it literally was rocking. As she stepped out, the demons spoke through her.

“Kim cannot cast me out!” they shouted. “Benny Hinn cannot even cast me out! You have never met this demon!”

We took her downstairs to the basement of the church, where the woman paced back and forth, speaking in demonic voices and declaring that we had no power to cast the demon out. “You cannot cast me out!” she yelled. “I pray in tongues just like you! I quote scriptures like the Son of God!”

Then she uttered these words that I will never forget: “I am the *religious* spirit!”

“My God—*religious* spirit?” I thought. I had never heard of this demon.

Though her words baffled my intellect, the devil had been set up. That was the worst thing this stupid spirit could have ever done. He revealed his identity and blew his cover in the church!

At the time, my natural mind could not relate religion to a demon. As the years passed, I have reached a better understanding of this devil and how it operates. It is a major

spirit that initiates attacks against the church but does not come from occult darkness or operate through incantations, voodoo or rituals. It works boldly and upfront in the church on a daily basis.

Because of the intensity of what Ardell and I were experiencing with this woman, we began by faith to call out some of the manifestations of religion. Here are just a few of them:

- The spirit that gives offerings to be seen or looks for something in return
- The spirit that dresses up the demonic with church clothes (long dresses, veils, head coverings)
- The Scripture-quoting demon
- The spirit of condemnation
- The church-splitting demon
- The spirit that oppresses the youth and turns them from God
- The spirit of charismatic witchcraft that cloaks the anointing in men's gifts
- The spirit of false revival

The good news is, the religious spirit was cast out of that woman. And since that day years ago, we have cast out more of the same spirits than we can count. The bad news is, many believers are in the same place of ignorance about this that I once was in. They cannot relate *religion* to a "demon" or *charismatic* to "witchcraft."

The key thing to remember is that there is no power in creation that did not originate through the Creator.

Powers of darkness are merely twisted and perverted forms of the original power of our God. This is why all witches and others from the dark side use Scripture, religious books and religious symbolism when doing their dirty deeds.

A scary thing to me is that the religious spirit cloaks itself

under the guise of true spirituality in Christ. Most believers cannot discern it.

It is my prayer that this article will remove scales and veils from the eyes of God's people. The enemy is launching an inside attack against the church. He will use praise, prophecy, the gifts or even the Word of God against us. Remember this: For everything God created, the devil designed a counterfeit.

### **What Does the Bible Say?**

✘ The Word of God has something to say about religion. In Acts 25-26, we see that Jewish religious leaders wanted Paul put to death and had petitioned the Roman authorities to have him executed. In Acts 26:4-11, as Paul defends himself before the Roman ruler Agrippa, he confirms that since the beginning of the church the enemy has been using believers to persecute one another.

He states: "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me from the first ... that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

"And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. For this hope's sake ... I am accused by the Jews.

"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities."

One of the main ways to recognize the work of religious

spirits is this: Under the disguise of religion, they persecute the righteous and faithful.

Paul makes a clear distinction between his time growing up as a leader under the religious law and his born-again experience after he met Christ on the road to Damascus. The road to Damascus represents more than the dramatic conversion of Paul's life. It also reveals the plot of the enemy to persecute and trouble God's elect from within the church. Paul told the Galatians:

"For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:13-14).

Through his own testimony, Paul reveals that the *traditions of men* are the strongholds of religion. Jesus highlighted this as "vain" worship in Mark 7:7-8: "In vain (fruitlessly and without profit) do they worship Me, ordering and teaching [to be obeyed] as doctrines the commandments and precepts of men. You disregard and give up and ask to depart from you the commandment of God and cling to the tradition of men [keeping it carefully and faithfully]" (AMP).

Vain worship is like a person going to the gym seven days a week and working out with no results. God says vain worship produces no results. This is why many people accept defeat in God and backslide. But the Word tells us *there is no failure in Christ!* This victory can be manifested in our lives if we give high regard to the commandments of the Lord and take our attention off the traditions of men.

The traditions of men flow through *generational* religious spirits. People literally pick up religious habits that have nothing to do with the commandments of the Lord and are more faithful to them than to the Word of God.

Colossians 2:6-23 teaches on freedom from human regulations through a new birth in Christ. It warns us of man-made traditions and speaks of the cancellation of “the written code” and its regulations.

This code worked against the believer in Christ, not for him. It made people set unattainable goals that gave birth to the fruits of failure, defeat and misery. It literally opposed the abundant freedom in Christ that was meant to be.

Galatians 5:1 commands that we stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free. It adds we should not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. The Greek meanings of words Paul used are important to understanding the verse:

» “Stand fast” (*steko*): To stand firm in faith and duty; to have a constant flow that causes one to persevere.

» “Liberty” (*eleutheria*): To be blessed with generosity and independence that is bestowed upon a person as a result of the economy of God’s grace, which was not made available under the law of the Old Testament. To also have independence from religious regulation that is rooted in the legal restrictions of man. James 2:10-14 teaches on “the perfect” law of liberty in Christ: “For whosoever keeps the Law [as a] whole but stumbles and offends in one [single instance] has become guilty of [breaking] all of it. For He Who said, You shall not commit adultery, also said, You shall not kill. If you do not commit adultery but do kill, you have become guilty of transgressing the [whole] Law.

“So speak and so act as [people should] who are to be judged under the law of liberty [the moral instruction given by Christ, especially about love]. For to him who has shown no mercy the judgment [will be] merciless, but mercy [full of glad confidence] exults victoriously over judgment. What is the use (profit), my brethren, for anyone to profess to have faith if he has no [good] works [to show for it]? Can [such]

faith save [his soul]? (AMP).

» “Entangled” (*enecho*): To be held subject to or be under the control of. To struggle over or to quarrel with.

» “Yoke” (*zygos*): Something that attaches two things together. It couples things and causes them to be connected by a burden that’s hard to bear.

» “Bondage” (*douleia*): Servitude that promotes dependence upon a person, place or thing; the state of a man that prevents him from freely possessing abundant life and enjoying it.

Based on the Greek definitions, anything that causes a believer to struggle or be double-minded about something to the point that he becomes attached to a burdensome load and cannot enjoy abundant life in Christ is devilish. It is not of God. To sum it up: The spirit of religious bondage is demonic.

Many believers are stuck in ruts whereby they are not experiencing new growth in Christ. When there is new birth, it must be confirmed with new growth. With the genuine new birth, old things are cut off and pass away. Once the old is pruned, the new can grow.

If a believer continues to return to the old yoke of bondage, he will be bound by spiritually arrested development. He will not experience the level-to-level, glory-to-glory promised him in the Word.

He will be condemned to a form of godliness, which makes a person appear to be victorious in Jesus on the outside. But actually they shut down the power on the inside of them that is greater than what is coming against them in life. There is no victory in the life of the believer who succumbs to the regimens, rudiments and habits of religious forms.

*A sought-after conference speaker, preacher and powerful prayer warrior, **Kimberly Daniels** pastors Spoken Word*

*Ministries in Jacksonville, Fla., and Fort Lauderdale, Fla., with her husband, Ardell. She is a recently elected city councilwoman in Jacksonville as well as the author of numerous books, including The Demon Dictionary, Delivered to Destiny and Spiritual Housekeeping (Charisma House), from which this article is adapted.*