

Obedience to the Truth

- *Often Christians think about spiritual warfare in terms of casting out demons, rebuking devils, or binding spirits. However, in reality spiritual warfare is a battle for truth. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).*
- *Spiritual warfare is meant to “pull down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” Spiritual warfare takes place in our hearts and minds. It is where we identify lies that we have believed, tear down wrong beliefs that we have held, and remove every wrong concept and false image of God. Then we consciously and deliberately replace the lies with the truths found in God’s Word.*
- *The spiritual warfare described in 2 Corinthians, Chapter ten sounds more like the process of demolishing a building then fighting a war. “pull down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high structure.” These strongholds and arguments exalt themselves against the truth of who God is and how He operates. These wrong beliefs, if left unchallenged in our hearts and minds will produce fear, frustration, and open a door where the enemy can come in and sow confusion, strife, and doubts into our lives.*
- *Spiritual warfare is less like evicting a trespasser and more like locking the door so that the trespasser is not able to regain access. If we leave the door open then we will spend all our time chasing the trespassers out instead of enjoying peace of mind in the security of our own homes.*
- *Some Christians spend more time rebuking the devil than they do talking and listening to God. Some Christians even act as if the devil has more power than God.*
- *“You cannot keep birds from flying over your head but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair.” (Martin Luther)*
- *“If you have a hot stove burner the flies don’t land.” (Reinhard Bonnke)*
- *Be filled with Holy Spirit. When we are on fire for God the devil will not land.*
- *Spiritual warfare is where we “bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,” so our minds are submitted to the mind of Christ and our thoughts are in complete harmony with God’s Word and His will. The word “captivity” can describe a successful military campaign where prisoners are captured and are now under our control. However, these captives are not demons, but our own thoughts and reasoning.*

- *We can determine if our spiritual warfare has been successful when our minds are filled with God's unsurpassed peace. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7). When those strongholds and arguments have been torn down and replaced with truth then our hearts and minds will be captivated by God's love and peace!*
- *For the power of the truth to be released in our lives we must fully develop a relationship with the truth.*
- *We must be willing:*
 - *1. To hear the truth*
 - *2. To believe the truth*
 - *3. To know the truth*
 - *4. To love the truth*
 - *5. To obey the truth*
 - *6. To speak the truth*
- *1. First, we must be willing to hear the truth.*

John 18:37-38 (NKJV)

³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

³⁸ Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all."

- *When Jesus confronted Pilate with the truth, "I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth," his response was one of cynicism. "What is truth?" Pilate, as the prefect of the Roman Empire for the region of Judaea, representing "justice" saw through the façade to all the hypocrisy, intrigue, and corruption not only in the judiciary of the Roman Empire but also in the Jewish religious leaders of the Sanhedrin. He no longer believed there was truth or true justice but simply corrupt selfish human beings oppressing other corrupt selfish human beings.*
- *Pilate saw part of the picture depicting the condition of lost and sinful man. Paul said, "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:10-12; 15-18).*

- *Although Pilate accurately diagnosed the condition of sinful man, he mocked the concept of truth because he failed to factor in the reality of God. “**But God**, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” (Ephesians 2:4-5). It is the “**but God**” that changes everything! The reality of God assures us that truth and justice not only exist but that they will ultimately prevail! Just read the back of the book—we win!*
- *Self-interest corrupts one’s ability to recognize or even hear truth. Jesus said, “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” However, sinful man is not of the truth and is not able to hear the truth. Therefore, Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal the truth to mankind. “For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.”*
- *When Stephen, the first martyr in the New Testament, testified against the hardness of heart and the sins of the religious leaders and the people, they refused to hear the truth and literally covered their ears as they turned on him to stone him to death. “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.” “Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him.” (Acts 7:51, 57-58a).*
- *2. We must be willing to believe the truth.*
- *We must be willing not only to hear the truth but to believe the truth. “For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.” (Hebrews 4:2). The Greek word for “mixed” means, “to commingle, unite, combine, assimilate.”*
- *There needs to be a conscious effort on the part of the hearers of the truth to take the truth that is being preached and mix it with the faith the Holy Spirit is imparting. Believing is not a passive experience. We must actively cooperate and respond to the Holy Spirit when He speaks to our hearts.*
- *When we actively begin to believe the truth, it brings the truth alive to us so it impacts our lives. “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13). When we actively choose to believe the truth, then joy and peace are released in our hearts.*
- *When I begin to confess and proclaim the truth over my life it produces peace and joy in my heart.*
- *The source of all truth is Jesus Christ. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:14, 17).*

- *Jesus is not only the source of all the truth, He is the truth!* “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”” (John 14:6).
- *Our response to Jesus Christ as the truth is true worship.* “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24). *When we really believe the truth it will produce an overflow of thanksgiving and worship in our lives.*
- *We rob ourselves of believing the truth when we do not choose to respond to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, but place Him in a secondary position of importance in our lives. Then we wonder why we lack the peace, joy, and fulfillment that God’s Word promises.*

3. *We must know the truth.*

- *God’s truth will produce freedom and victory in our lives.* “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32). *For the truth to impact our lives we must “know” the truth. This Greek word is “ginosko” which refers to knowledge that is acquired through experience or relationship. One of the ways we develop a relationship with truth is by spending time studying God’s Word since His Word is truth. “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” (John 17:17).*
- *Truth and knowledge are not the same thing. Truth may contain knowledge but knowledge in itself may be devoid of truth.*
- *Truth has the power to bring us freedom and victory. Knowledge by itself does not have the power to bring us freedom. It can actually stir up the flesh and produce pride.* “We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.” (1 Corinthians 8:1b).
- *Truth produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives while knowledge, if devoid of truth, produces the works of the flesh. That is why someone can have a lot of Bible knowledge but have failed to grasp the truth of the Bible. The result is that they are always angry and arguing with others about the Bible.*
- *4. We must love the truth.*
- *After Jesus’ resurrection but before His disciples understood He had risen from the dead, He covertly spoke with two of His followers who were very disheartened as they travelled down the road to Emmaus. As Jesus expounded the Scriptures to them their hearts were set ablaze within them. “And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”” (Luke 24:32). As they heard the truth of Scripture and the*

revelation of the Messiah of which Jesus had spoken, their love for the truth came alive!

- *The Bible refers to those who do not receive Christ as unbelievers “because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2 Thessalonians 2:10b). Therefore God gave them over to the delusions they had chosen, “And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).*
- *In contrast to the unbelievers who rejected the truth, are those who put their faith in Christ. “God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thessalonians 2:13b-14).*
- *We cultivate our love for the truth by spending time reading, meditating, and studying the Word of God. “And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment.” (Philippians 1:9, HCSB).*
- *Our love for God’s Word and His truth will also grow in our hearts as we turn to His Word for comfort in times of need. “This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.” (Psalm 119:50). The sweetness of God’s Word grows as we travel life’s journey with God’s Word as our constant companion.*
- *Our love for God’s Word and His truth will grow in our hearts as He opens our eyes to the treasures in His Word. “Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.” (Psalm 119:18).*
- *The way we learn to love His Word and His truth is the same way we fall in love with anyone. We spend time with them and get to know them on a very personal and intimate level.*
- *5. We must obey the truth.*
- *The first four steps prepare us for the fifth step of obedience. We need to first hear the truth, believe the truth, know the truth, and love the truth. Then we are ready to obey the truth because “this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:3). When we see in our lives the wonderful results of living God’s way, we will be more likely to continue to obey His Word.*
- *Obedience is the key to seeing the power of the truth released in our lives.*
- *The Greek word for “obey” is ὑπακούω (hypakouō) and it means “to obey on the basis of having paid attention to; to obey what is heard; to listen attentively and by*

implication to heed or conform to a command or authority; to hearken.” The word obey could be rendered, “to do what one says, to carry out someone’s orders.”

- *The word ὑπακούω (hypakouō) comes from two Greek words, ὑπό (hypo) which means “under; a position below another position or object,” and the word ἀκούω (akouō) which means, “to hear, listen.” Thus ὑπακούω (hypakouō) “obey” could be rendered literally “under hearing,” in other words listening to what it is being said and then submitting to it and responding by being fully compliant.*
- *Salvation is the result of responding to the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9-10).*
- *When someone hears the gospel preached and faith rises up in their heart and they respond by calling on the name of the Lord, salvation results. Their obedient act of believing releases God’s grace resulting in salvation. “For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”” (Romans 10:11-13).*
- *First the truth is heard through the preaching of the gospel. Next the people are touched by the Holy Spirit so they understand and believe the truth. Then they are stirred by God’s love for them through the presentation of the gospel. Finally, they respond to the gospel by submitting to God and calling on Him for salvation. “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14).*
- *Hearing the gospel is not sufficient for salvation, one must obey the gospel and respond with faith to what they have heard preached and confess Christ as their Lord and Saviour. “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?”” (Romans 10:16).*
- *“in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Men are condemned to eternal damnation not by their many sins but by their rejection of the truth. “Hell is not a choice of God, it is a choice of man who wants to reject God. The Good News is that we don't have to have man's choice we can have God's choice. The privilege we have is telling people that they don't have to have their choice but that they can have God's choice.” Ravi Zacharias*
- *On the day of Pentecost, Peter presented the Jews in Jerusalem with the truth through the preaching of the gospel. “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through*

Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” (Acts 2:22-24).

- *When the people heard Peter’s words, grief and sorrow filled their hearts and they understood their own guilt. They also understood that God’s mercy was being extended to them. They responded to the truth by asking what they needed to do to be saved. “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”” (Acts 2:37-38).*
- *The people responded to the truth by obeying Peter’s words, “Men of Israel, hear these words,” hearing, repenting, and putting their faith in Jesus Christ. “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” (Acts 2:41). Responding to the truth replaced sorrow with joy.*
- *Obedience to the truth through faith is not only the key to our salvation but it is also the key to our sanctification, so we can experience freedom from the power of sin and be free and from all the defilement and destruction sin produces. “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.” (1 Peter 1:22).*
- *A life of obedience to the truth will produce a pure and fruitful life for the glory of God. “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” (Philippians 2:12-15).*
- *6. We must speak the truth in love.*
- *Once we have learned to be obedient to the truth we can begin speaking the truth in love with one another which will produce healthy and real relationships free from deception and intrigue. This will result in bringing forth the Church in maturity to the glory of Christ. “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.” (Ephesians 4:14-15).*
- *Jesus promised in His Word that through the truth He will both sanctify us and set us free from every form of bondage, torment, and oppression. “Sanctify them by Your*

truth. Your word is truth.” (*John 17:17*). “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (*John 8:31b-32*).

- *One of the ways God sets us free through the truth is by girding our loins with truth. “Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth.” (Ephesians 6:14a).*
- *The Greek word for “waist” or “loins” is that region below the ribs and in or above the area of the hips. It is also used to describe the procreative part of the body. Of the eight times that this Greek word is used in the New Testament, three times it refers to the procreative part of the body as in Hebrews 7:10. “for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.”*
- *The Greek word “to gird” speaks about fastening articles of clothing; of shortening the undergarment especially in the case of a women putting on a girdle.*
- *So how does “girding up the loins with truth” function in terms of spiritual warfare?*
- *The center of gravity of the human body is located just below the bellybutton, in the area of the loins, which is the location for maximum stability. If someone disturbs a person’s center of gravity they could easily lose their balance and fall over.*
- *One of the tactics the enemy uses to try to get us to lose our spiritual balance is through shame. Satan is described as “the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night.” (Revelation 12:10b). The enemy cannot attack us with shame when our loins are girded with truth.*
- *One constant among people worldwide is their natural sense regarding the shame of nakedness. If someone would walk in on someone when they were naked, they would immediately and instinctively cover up their private parts. Even natives in tropical areas who traditionally wear very little clothing still wear loincloths. Only when perversion becomes rampant is the shame of nakedness lost.*
- *People don’t cover up for the sake of modestly but for the sake of shame.*
- *When Adam and Eve sinned they immediately tried to cover up the shame of their nakedness. “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” (Genesis 3:10). Adam and Eve didn’t reach for something to cover their faces but fig leaves to cover their loin area.*
- *When people try to cover up the shame of their sins and struggle with lies, denial, or blame, the enemy has a heyday by tormenting them with shame. Lies, denial, and blame are like the fig leaves Adam and Eve tried to use but instead of covering up the shame of their nakedness it made them more conscious of their shame.*

- *We cover up our shame by girding our loins with truth. The way we apply the truth is by confessing our sins, failures, and struggles to God and to trusted friends who will pray and support us. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1John 1:9). “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16a).*
- *The amazing thing is that when we confess our sins to one another, shame immediately loses its power. The best way to overcome a blackmailer is to openly acknowledge whatever he is trying to shame you with. The devil is the most skilled blackmailer in creation, but once we have acknowledged our sins he is powerless.*
- *Why don’t some Christians, especially those in ministry, get help when they are struggling? Because of shame. The enemy keeps them in the grip of shame and they are unable to stand up and face their own sins and failures so they can be dealt with because the shame is too great. However, all they have to do is gird their loins with truth by acknowledging their sin and faults and they are no longer under the thumb of the enemy’s tactic of shame.*
- *The gospel message not only promises us freedom from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and the presence of sin, it promises we can be freed from the torment and control of shame! “For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”” (Romans 10:11; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:6).*
- *The devil is the father of all lies and he cannot stand in the presence of the truth and he cannot stand against us when our loins are girded with truth. (John 8:44).*
- *The world lives in darkness and under the dark shadow of shame because they do not want their sins exposed. “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” (John 3:19-20). Unconfessed sin kept in darkness has power, but when exposed to the light it loses its power. Confession is good for the soul!*
- *However, God has called us to live in the light of Christ where shame and fear cannot operate. “But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (John 3:21). We are to live in the light. We are to live in the place of accountability which is both a place of protection and peace.*
- *God has called us to gird up the loins of our minds with truth so there is no place of darkness or shame where the enemy can build a stronghold of lies. “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:13).*

