

Lesson 8 -- An Explanatory Context for an Understanding of Faith, Love and Hope

Introduction

A. The Biblical exhortations to exercise faith, love and hope are often very difficult to implement in our daily life. One reason for this, beyond the fact that we often do not want to obey God, is due to the inner confusion we experience when we attempt to trust, love and hope.

B. Once the believer is led into an understanding of this confusion and how to evaluate his inner experience then it is much easier to make the decisions of faith, love and hope which are so essential to the successful Christian life.

I. The Principles Related to Creation.

				Thinking
		W		
Person		I		Emotions
		L		
		L		Bodily Desires

A. God created us as a person and He was central in our daily life and the source of all authority. Genesis 1:26; 2:16-25

B. God created us with the capacity to receive His revelation. This came to us primarily through our ability to think. Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10

C. In our original creation all our functions were under our control. Our inner experience was one of unity and harmony. Genesis 1:31; 2:7,16-25

D. It is important that we recognize the difference between our persons and our functions. Romans 1:21-32; 6:16-22; I Cor. 9:27; Eph. 4:21-32

II. The Principles Related to the Fall.

A. In the Fall we transferred the authority for life from God to ourselves. We became the controlling factor at the center of life and our own authority.

B. We also transferred the source of authority from our thinking to our emotions. As sinners we became more controlled by our emotions than what we knew to be true or to be false. Romans 1:21-32; Eph. 4:17-19

C. We lost control of our functions in the Fall. We became vulnerable to manipulation and control from the fleshly patterns of sin, from the world culture about us, from people, and from Satan. Eph. 2:2,3; Gal. 5:16-21

D. Our inner consciousness of ourselves became confused. We lost the certainty of right and wrong, in misunderstanding the goals of life we became obsessed with false goals and priorities and were frustrated and disappointed because of the lack of fulfillment. Eph. 2:12; 4:17-19; Phil. 3:19; Col. 1:21

III. The Principles Related to Redemption.

A. Through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, and the new birth, the bondage of sin was broken in our lives and were legally reinstated in a relationship with God where He was central in our daily life and our final authority.

- B. In this new relationship we can again receive a knowledge of the truth through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures. Through all of this we can regain control of our functions. I Cor. 2:9-16; 9:27; II Cor. 10:4,5
- C. However, unless we are taught and live Biblically, the practical experience of this relationship, with all its freedom, joy, assurance, certainty, power and fruitfulness may be greatly limited. Romans 7:11-25; I Cor. 3:1-4
- D. Even though we know the truths of redemption it is possible to regress to giving our functions, and primarily our emotions, a place of authority in our daily life. This results in conflict, doubt, fear, anxiety, frustration, disappointment and confusion. The pattern of thought and action which we once had before salvation, or living as an immature Christian, may cause us a great deal of difficulty. II Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph. 1:21-32; Col. 3:5-10

IV. The Principles Related to Sanctification.

- A. To live correctly means to grow in the experience and application of what it means to have Jesus Christ at the center of one's life and to understand how He is our authority in all the areas of life. All of this is implemented in decisions of faith, love and hope. I Peter 2:2; II Peter 1:3-9
- B. The following eight suggestions may be helpful.
 1. Recognize the Biblical basis for faith, love and hope to be in God and His Word. This is the only foundation for life. Rom. 4:17-24; II Tim. 3:16,17
 2. Recognize that you are a person - that you have, as a believer, the ability to make choices, and you need not do so on the basis of the demands from your functions or from the "outside". II Cor. 7:1; Romans 8:14-17
 3. Recognize the distinction between yourself and your functions. Thoughts, feelings and desires may or may not indicate the kind of a person you are. Genesis 3:1-6; Matthew 4:1-11; II Cor. 10:4,5
 4. Recognize that you can "take charge" of your functions and thereby of your life. You have the ability to say "yes" or "no" to your functions. Galatians. 5:22,23
 5. Recognize the key in all of this is your use of the will in choosing in harmony with the blueprint of the Bible. You can make a genuine choice of faith, love and hope even though your feelings may seem to contradict your decision. Romans 1:17-21; Psalm 56:3; Psalm 13:5-11
 6. Recognize the absolute necessity of rejecting whatever is contradictory to the Bible - in your thinking, emotions and bodily desires. All non-Biblical patterns of actions must be broken. Eph. 1:22; Col. 3:5-9; Titus 2:11,12
 7. Recognize the absolute necessity of choosing to respond to God in decisions of faith, love and hope - by daily obedience. Learn to think and act on the basis of the Bible in spite of how you think, feel, or desire. Acts 27:25
 8. Recognize that practicing the truth will result in freedom. This will bring cleansing, a re-patterning of your functions, and the fruit of the Spirit. John 8:32; Titus 2:11-14; Phil. 2:12-16

Victor M. Matthews

Lesson 8 -- A Biblical Key to Success: "Take Charge."

Introduction

A. God has promised the believer, through a knowledge and practice of the truth, spiritual freedom.

Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. John 8:32

B. The freedom, most needed by the Christian, is found within. It has to do with the spiritual control of our thoughts, emotions, and body.

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. Proverbs 25:28

I. The Biblical Basis for this Key.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. II Corinthians 7:1

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. II Corinthians 10:4,5

But the fruit of the Spirit is . . . temperance (self-control). Gal. 5:23

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true . . . honest . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report . . . think on these things. Phil. 4:8

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (without reward). I Corinthians 9:27

- Observations:
1. The believer has the ability to "take charge of his thinking, emotions, bodily desires, and daily life.
 2. It is important to recognize that we are not always responsible for the presence of a thought, emotion, or desire -- we are under no obligation to reject all that is wrong in these areas. To accept and act on a wrong thought, etc., is sinful.

II. The Biblical Explanation of this Key.

A. The believer is exhorted to "take charge" of this thinking.

1. There are three possible sources of wrong thoughts.

a. The sin principle of the "flesh".

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries . . . and defile the man. Mark 7:21,22

b. The sinful world system.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. I John 2:16

c. Satanic suggestion or accusation. (Note Rev. 12:9-11)

. . . Yea, hath God said. Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?
. . . Ye shall not surely die . . . ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. Genesis 3:1-5

And when the tempter came to Him, he said. If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread. Matthew 4:3

2. We are exhorted to "take charge" of our thinking, refuse those thoughts that are wrong and aggressively choose to think on correct thoughts.

Wherefore putting away lying . . . Eph. 4:25 But now ye also put off all these, anger, wrath . . . Col. 3:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love . . . I Thess. 5:8 Put on the whole armour of God . . . Eph. 6:11 . . . Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. II Cor. 10:5

Suggested method: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I take charge of thinking. I refuse to accept that thought of _____. In full dependence on the true and living God I bring all my thinking into subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ."

B. The believer is exhorted to "take charge" of his emotions.

1. The same explanation, Scripture, and method given above would apply here.
2. It is Just as wrong, if not more so, to accept wrong emotions - such as the feeling of hopelessness - and to act on it, as it would be to accept a wrong bodily desire. The believer has no reason to be hopeless and should not accept and practice error. Reject all such emotions, accept the truth of Romans 15:13, and then carefully practice it - by faith.

C. The believer is exhorted to "take charge" of his bodily desires.

1. The same Scripture, explanation, and method given above would also apply here. Study the following verses: Rom. 6:1-18; 12:1,2; I Cor. 9:25-27; Eph. 4:22-32; Colossians 3:1-14
2. The very first step of practical obedience is so often described as a spiritual control of our body.

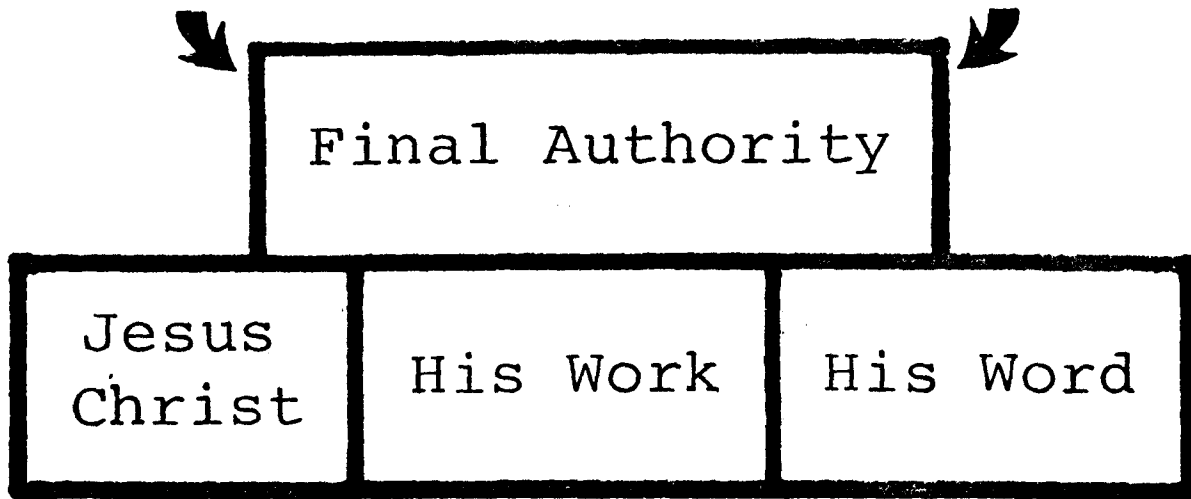
Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God . . . Romans 6:11-13

Conclusion: God can only deliver us through our practice of the truth. We must be aggressive, choose to deny ourselves (Mark 8:34) and "take charge" so we may glorify Him.

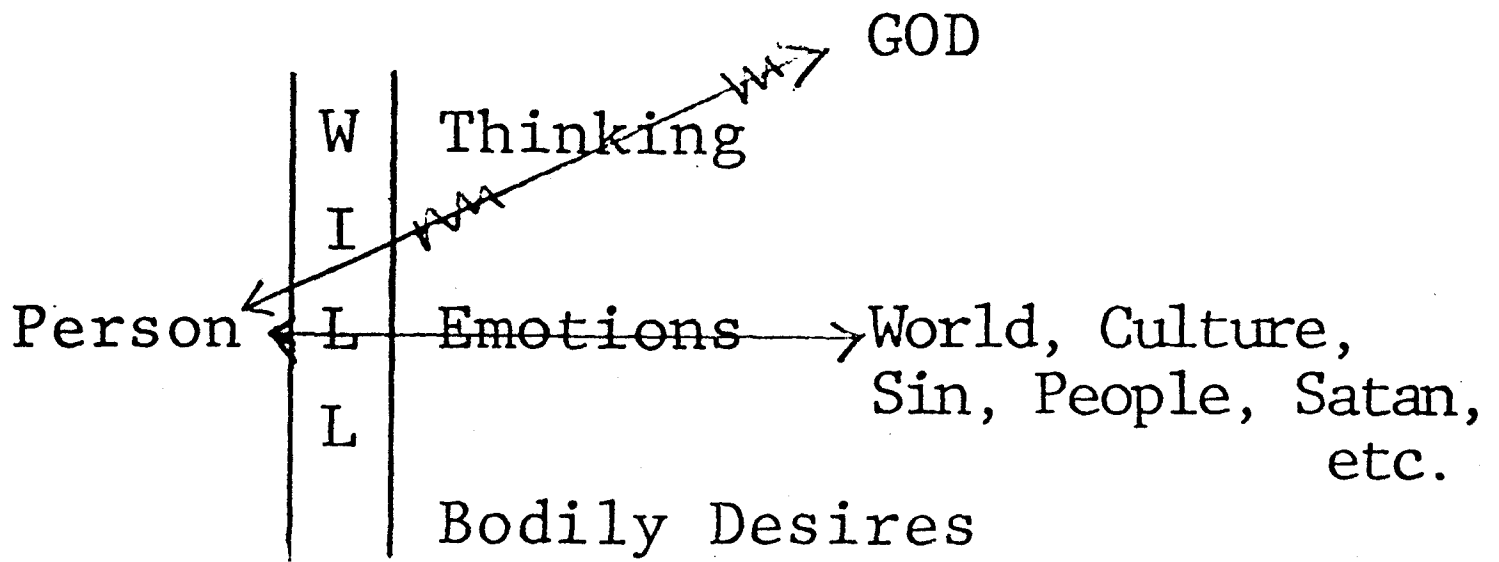
Victor M. Matthews

DISOBEDIENCE
RESULTS IN
SLAVERY
John 8:34

OBEDIENCE
RESULTS IN
FREEDOM
John 8:32



(Romans 1:1-4; I Corinthians 15:1-4)



THE "FLESH" IN THE BELIEVER

1. Defilement
2. Enslavement
3. Resistance
4. Spiritual Infection
5. Satanic Vulnerability

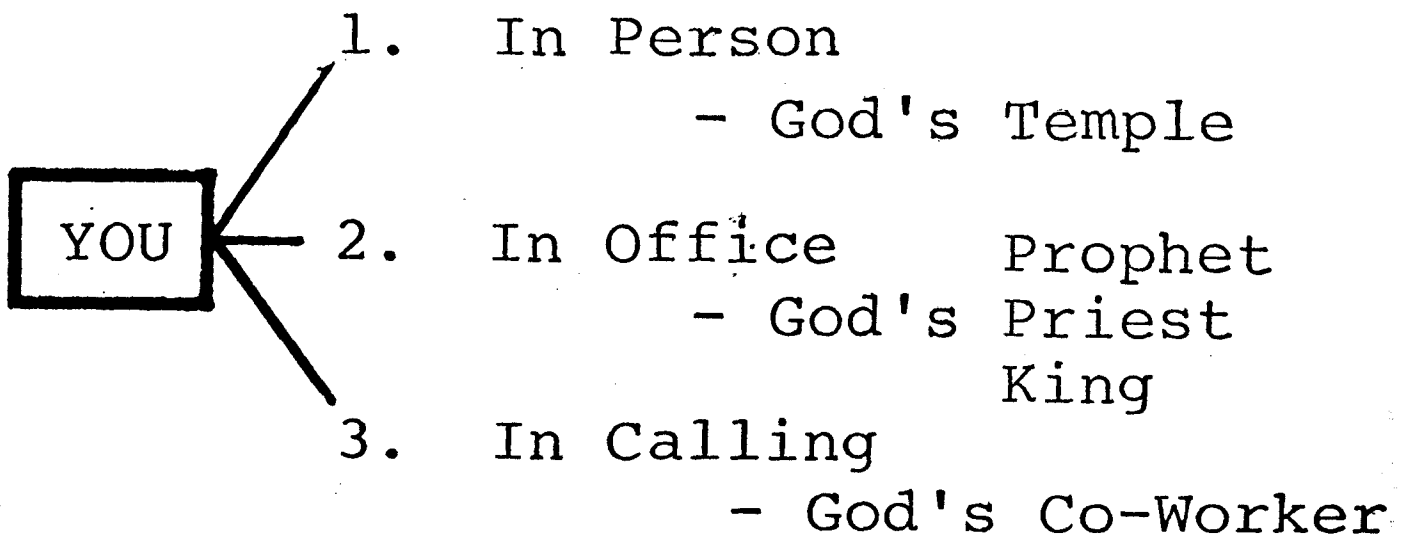
REJECT THE FLESH

Selfishness
Despair
Anxiety
Hopelessness
Lust
Pretense
Pride

CHOOSE THE SPIRIT

Love
Joy
Peace
Hope
Purity
Honesty
Humility

THE BELIEVER



THE FALL

1. Transferred authority from God to ourselves.
2. Transferred the source of authority from the intellect to the emotions.
3. We became vulnerable to external control

WARFARE PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before You. I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to You. I take a stand against all the workings of Satan that would hinder me in my prayer life. I address myself only to the True and Living God and refuse any involvement of Satan in my prayer.

In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command all wicked spirits to leave my presence with all of your work. I bring the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ between us.

Heavenly Father, I worship You and give You praise. I recognize that You are worthy to receive all glory and honor and praise. I renew my allegiance to You and pray that the Blessed Holy Spirit would enable me in this time of prayer. I am thankful, Heavenly Father, that You have loved me from past eternity and that You sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to die as my substitute. I am thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ came as my representative and through Him You have completely forgiven me; You have adopted me into Your family; You have assumed all responsibility for me; You have given me eternal life; You have given me the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ so I am now justified. I am thankful that in Him You have made me complete, and that You have offered Yourself to me to be my daily help and strength.

Heavenly Father, open my eyes that I might see how great You are and how complete Your provision is for this day. I am thankful that the victory the Lord Jesus Christ won for me on the Cross and in His Resurrection has been given to me and that I am seated with the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenlies. I take my place with Him in the heavenlies and recognize by faith that all wicked spirits and Satan himself are under my feet. I declare, therefore, that Satan and his wicked spirits are subject to me in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am thankful for the Armor You have provided. I put on the Girdle of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Sandals of Peace and the Helmet of Salvation. I lift up the Shield of Faith against all the fiery darts of the enemy; and I take in my hand the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. I choose to use Your Word against all the forces of evil in my life. I put on this Armor and live and pray in complete dependence upon You, Blessed Holy Spirit.

I am grateful, Heavenly Father, that the Lord Jesus Christ spoiled all principalities and powers and made a show of them openly and triumphed over them in Himself. I claim all that victory for my life today. I reject all the insinuations, and accusations, and the temptations of Satan. I affirm that the Word of God is true and I choose to live today in the light of God's Word. I choose, Heavenly Father, to live in obedience to You and in fellowship with You. Open my eyes and show me the areas of my life that do not please You. Work in me to cleanse me from all ground that would give Satan a foothold against me. I do in every way stand into all that it means to be Your adopted child and I welcome all the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

By faith and in dependence upon You I put off the old man and chose to receive all the victory of the Crucifixion where the Lord Jesus Christ provided cleansing from the old nature. I put on the new man and choose to receive all the victory of the Resurrection and the provision He has made for me to live above sin.

Therefore, today I put off the old nature with its selfishness and I put on the new nature with its love. I put off the old nature with its weakness and I put on the new nature with its strength. I put off the old nature with all its deceitful lusts and I put on the new nature with its righteousness, purity, and honesty.

In every way I receive by faith the victory of the Ascension and Glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby all the principalities and powers were made subject to Him. I take my place in Christ as victorious with him over all the enemies of my soul. Blessed Holy Spirit, I pray that You would fill me with Yourself. Come into my life with all Your gifts, break down every idol and cast out every foe.

I am thankful, Heavenly Father, for the expression of Your will for my daily life as You have shown me in Your Word. I therefore, claim all the will of God for today. I am thankful that You have blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I am thankful that You have begotten me unto a living hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I am thankful that You have made a provision so that today I can live filled with the Spirit of God with love and joy and peace, with long-suffering, gentleness and goodness, with meekness, faithfulness and self-control in my life. I recognize that this is Your will for me and I therefore reject and resist all the endeavors of Satan and his wicked spirits to rob me of the will of God. I refuse in this day to believe my feelings and I hold up the Shield of Faith against all the accusations and distortions and insinuations that Satan would put into my mind. I claim the fullness of the will of God for my life today.

In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ I completely surrender myself to You Heavenly Father, as a living sacrifice. I choose not to be conformed to this world. I choose to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, and I pray that You would show me Your will and enable me to walk in all the fullness of Your will today.

I am thankful, Heavenly Father, that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, to the casting down of imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought into obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, in my own life today I tear down the strongholds of Satan against my mind, and I surrender my mind to You, Blessed Holy Spirit. I affirm, Heavenly Father, that You have not given me the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind. I break and smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my emotions today and I give my emotions to You. I smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my will today, I give my will to You, and choose to make the right decisions of faith. I smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my body today, I give my body to You recognizing that I am Your temple. I rejoice in Your mercy and goodness.

Heavenly Father, I pray that now and through this day You would strengthen and enlighten me, show me the way Satan is hindering and tempting and lying and distorting the truth in my life. Enable me to be the kind of person that would please You. Enable me to be aggressive in prayer and faith. Enable me to be aggressive mentally, to think about and practice Your Word, and to give You Your rightful place in my life.

Again I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and pray that You, Blessed Holy Spirit, would bring all the work of the Crucifixion, all the work of the Resurrection, all the work of the Ascension, and all the work of Pentecost into my life today. I surrender myself to You. I refuse to be discouraged. You are the God of all hope. You have proven Your power by resurrecting Jesus Christ from the dead, and I claim in every way this victory over all Satanic forces in my life. I pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ with thanksgiving. Amen.

Victor Matthews

Topics for Discussion

1. Reality VS Fantasy

The meaning of these concepts
The influence of modern life
How to distinguish between them
Protection from fantasy

2. Priorities

What is the order - God, family, work, church?
How to maintain correct priorities?
How to do this without becoming a legalist or ascetic

3. Daily Discipline

What is the meaning of "spiritual" discipline?
Does discipline also apply to the mind, emotions, will, body,
family and work?
How to maintain Biblical discipline

4. The Reality of the Spiritual Battle

To what degree can the enemy influence us?
How is this accomplished?
What must we do to "resist" this?

5. The Importance of Daily Devotions

How is this related to priorities, discipline and family devotions?
How can we have a vital and enjoyable devotional life?

6. How to be at Peace where You Are

What does it mean to accept life and still be aggressive
How to avoid both passivity and coveting

7. Good and Bad Habits

The relationship of good and bad habits to priorities
How to maintain good habits and break bad habits

8. Family Communication

The meaning of "persons" in a family
When do you "listen" and when do you "speak"?

9. The Chain of Authority

What is this in the family and why has it been established?
What is this in other areas of life - particularly the spiritual?

10. Personal Relationships

How to lead without manipulating or intimidating
How to avoid being manipulated and or intimidated
How to use discernment in these relationships
What are we to do with those who "waste" our time?

11. Health Problems

How to have wisdom and yet avoid being obsessed with food, health,
and the body
What spiritual principles apply to the body and health?