

# **Spiritual Warfare: Sowing**

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# Introduction



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## I: Introduction

We wrestle against the spiritual forces of evil. This includes everyone: man, woman, and child. This isn't just believers. It includes people who are not believers and do not become believers.

Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds? He said to them, '**An enemy has done this.**' ... The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. (Matthew 13:27-28, 38-39)

The enemy, Satan, sows to produce people who disobey and work in opposition to God. This is part of the war that is fought against those people. Satan fights against everyone in an effort to make people to work for him and against God.

The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, **so that they may not believe and be saved.** (Luke 8:12)

God sows good seed into the hearts of all people. When God's Word is sown, Satan comes immediately to take away the Word God has sown. This includes people who hear the Word, but are not believers.

As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when **tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word**, immediately he falls away. (Matthew 13:20-21)

Whether a person believes God's Word, or not, Satan wars against them to prevent the Word from conceiving and bearing fruit in them. This is a part of the spiritual war that every person fights.

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. (Matthew 7:13-14)

Unfortunately, most people lose this spiritual war and end their lives on the path that leads to destruction.

God knows that we are in a spiritual battle and what we need to survive and to overcome. One resource he gives us to protect us is spiritual armor. It is vital that we always put on God's armor – especially as we start to learn about spiritual warfare.

Be furnished with the capacity for strength through your union with the Lord and the fullness of his immeasurable strength. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, having shod your feet with the sure footing of the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, (Ephesians 6:10-18)

So, following God's instructions, given through Paul, we put on God's armor.

Father, we thank you in the name of Jesus for your armor and we put on your armor: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation and the sword of your Spirit.

One of Satan's favorite means of fighting against us is to lead us onto the path of leaning to our own understanding. Indeed, he uses this way to fight against all things that pertain to life and godliness.

In answer to Jesus' prayer, the Father has sent the Spirit of Truth to guide us into all the truth – onto the path where we trust in God to guide us and order our steps.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, (John 16:13)

If we ask God, he will send the Spirit of Truth to guide us into all the truth.

Father, we thank you in the name of Jesus that you send forth your Spirit of Truth to guide us into all the truth. We ask that you send your Spirit of Truth to guide us into all the truth and show us things to come. Fill us with the knowledge of your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so we live a life worthy of you, fully pleasing to you, and bearing fruit in every good work.

## **A: Revealing the Hidden War**

We are at a significant disadvantage fighting a spiritual war against a spiritual enemy. We usually align our lives by what we perceive through our physical senses. Our physical senses are useless in a spiritual war.

Jesus, the Word of God, and the Spirit of Truth reveal the spiritual war to us. They tell us how the enemy fights against us and how to resist and overcome him. Their teaching is essential to help us win the spiritual war and walk the path that leads to life.

We are part of this war. *Spiritual Warfare: Sowing* will examine the details of God's teaching on the sowing aspect of spiritual war. These details will help us align our lives with God's sowing of his Word into our hearts. They will also help us align our lives resisting Satan's sowing of his seed into our hearts and his attacks against the Word God sows into our hearts.

### **1: Seeds of Life and Seeds of Death**

True seed has creative and life-giving power<sup>1</sup>. God's seed is true seed – it has creative and life-giving power. Satan's seed is false seed – it has destructive power and brings forth death.

Sowing God's seed is the path that leads to life. Sowing Satan's seed leads to death.

Whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8)

Understanding this highlights the value of the seed of God's Word. This helps us properly align our lives with sowing God's seed and resisting Satan's.

### **2: Where the seed is sown**

To align our lives with God's sowing and against Satan's attacks we need to know where God sows his seed, where Satan sows his seed, and where Satan's attacks against the seed God sows occur.

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<sup>1</sup> Kittel, Gerhard. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 7. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976. 537. 10 vols. Print.

**3: What the seed is**

We need to work with God and against Satan. To resist Satan's seed we need to know what it is. Knowing what the seed is that God sows will help us work with him to increase the fruitfulness of the seed he sows.

**4: Who sows the seed**

It is helpful to know and be able to recognize who is sowing God's seed that helps us and who is sowing Satan's corrupt seed that works to destroy us.

**5: How and when the seed is sown**

Recognizing the seed and the sowers is a start. We can better align our lives in the sowing war when we know how God's seed is sown and how Satan's seed is sown. This is important for our fight in this war in our own lives. It is also important in helping those around us in the sowing war.

We need to receive God's Word when it is sown and resist Satan's seed when it is sown. Knowing when God's seed is sown also helps us guard it against Satan's attacks against it.

**6: Why the seed is sown**

God produces results – his kingdom come and his will (shalom) done – in earth by sowing his seed. We contribute to producing those results by receiving his seed and bearing the fruit it produces. We can be more effective at doing this when we know why God sows his seed.

Satan seeks to produce results – steal, kill, destroy, choke the Word, division, etc. by sowing his seed. Knowing why he sows can help us recognize his sowing and his seed. This helps us resist and overcome his sowing fight against us.

**7: How we fight the sowing war**

Finally, we need to know how we fight a spiritual war that is fought by sowing seeds.

# **Part One: Seeds of Life and Seeds of Death**



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## I: Seeds of Life and Seeds of Death

God created man a living eternal soul (psuche) with a mortal, physical body (soma). He also created us with a heart that is designed to receive spiritual seed and provide a place for it to grow.

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been **sown in his heart**. (Matthew 13:19)

Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word **from their heart**, (Luke 8:12)

Our heart is designed to be a spiritual garden. Spiritual seed is sown into this garden and we – our spirit, soul, and body – are nourished by the fruit it produces.

Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. (Proverbs 4:23)

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. (Matthew 12:34-35)

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. (Proverbs 18:21)

Both God and Satan sow seeds into man's heart. God's seeds are true seeds – they are creative and life-giving. God's seeds are seeds of life – incorruptible seeds of eternal (zoe) life. Satan's seeds are false seeds. They are anti-seeds. They are corrupt, destructive and bring forth death.

### A: Seeds of Death

Satan approached Adam and Eve with seeds of death and attempted to sow them into their hearts. Unfortunately, they failed to guard their hearts and allowed the seeds to conceive in their hearts. When the seeds conceived they brought corruption and death to their lives and being.

When corrupt desire has conceived it gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:15)

Satan attempts to sow his seed. If we fail to resist his seed it causes corrupt desire to conceive. This gives birth to sin and death. When this happened to Adam and Eve they passed from life to death. Their bodies (soma) did not die. Their souls (psuche) did not die. Their hearts did not die. Their hearts did, however, receive corrupt spiritual seed and provide a place for it to grow. The production of death in their hearts separated them from the eternal (zoe) life of God.

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, **excluded from the (eternal – zoe) life of God** because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; (Ephesians 4:17-18)

Another thing happens when spiritual seed is sown into our hearts: we become partakers of the nature of the seed. When Adam and Eve received Satan's seed into their hearts they became partakers of its nature: corrupt, evil, sin, and dead.

When children are born, they receive the spiritual nature of their father. Adam became a partaker of the nature of Satan's seed and passed this nature to his children. As a result, the nature of sin and the result of death passed to all people. Through Adam all people were constituted with the nature of Satan's spiritual seed. They were made sinners, evil.

Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men. (Romans 5:12)

By the one man's disobedience the many were made (constituted) sinners. (Romans 5:19)

Satan continues to attempt to sow his seeds of death into our hearts to work to bring forth more sin and death.

## **B: Seeds of Life**

God approaches man and attempts to sow his seed into our hearts. Since God's seed is true seed it works to give us life – eternal (zoe) life. When God's seed is sown into our hearts and conceives, we reap the fruit of that seed and become partakers of its nature.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may

become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (1 Peter 1:3-4)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was (of the very same nature as) God. ... In him was life (zoe – eternal life) (John 1:1,4)

You have been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides for ever. (1 Peter 1:23)

### **C: We Need God's Seed to Have Eternal Life**

Man is not born with the eternal type of life. The problem of eternal life isn't one of extending the life we are born with forever. We must receive the eternal type of life from another source – and there is only one source.

God gave us eternal life, and this life (zoe – eternal life) is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life (zoe – eternal life); whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life (zoe – eternal life). I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:11-13)

The only source of eternal life is Jesus, the Son of God. As the Son of God Jesus is God's Seed. Jesus is the Word of God and as the Word of God Jesus is God's seed. God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Seed (Son, Word). Whoever has the Seed (Son, Word) has eternal life; whoever does not have the Seed (Son, Word) of God does not have eternal life.

The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life (zoe – eternal life). (John 6:63)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was (of the very nature of) God ... In him was life (zoe – eternal life)... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 4, 14)

The name by which he (Jesus) is called is The Word of God. (Revelation 19:13)

Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God. (Luke 8:11)

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. (1 Peter 1:23)

My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, (Proverbs 4:20-22)

We receive eternal life through God's Word sown and implanted in our hearts. We cannot receive it any other way. No amount of good works will add the eternal type of life to our being. No legalistic observance of do's and don'ts can add eternal life to our being. Only God's Word can add eternal life to our being.

To have eternal life our nature must be changed. We must add the eternal type of life to our being and protect it from all of the enemy's attacks against it and us. We must also remove the corrupt, death-producing nature from our being.

If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire. (Matthew 18:8-9)

Truly, truly, I say to you, the one hearing my word and believing him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. (John 5:24)

We know that we have passed out of death into life (zoe – eternal life), because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. (1 John 3:14)

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

We pass from death to eternal life in this temporal life. We do this when we add the eternal type of life to our being and remove the corrupt, death-producing nature from our being. The seed that produces eternal life produces the fruit of love. By this fruit we can measure whether we have the eternal type of life abiding in us, or whether we still abide in death.

## **Part Two: Where the Seed Is Sown**



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## I: Where the Seed Is Sown

God and Satan both sow their seed in the same place: the heart.

### A: God Sows His Word into the Heart of Man.

When anyone hears **the word** of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what **has been sown in his heart**. (Matthew 13:19)

Satan immediately comes and takes away **the word that is sown in them**. (Mark 4:15)

The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and **takes away the word from their hearts**, so that they may not believe and be saved. (Luke 8:12)

Putting his Word into our hearts is a key part of the new covenant God has made with man.

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: **I will put my laws on their hearts**, and write them on their minds, (Hebrews 10:16)

### B: Satan Also Sows His Seed into the Heart of Man.

The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things **enter in and choke the word**, and it proves unfruitful. (Mark 4:19)

Satan sows the seed of cares of the world, trust in false riches, and the desires for other things into the heart of man to try to choke the Word of God.

**The devil** had already **put it into the heart** of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, (John 13:2)

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has **Satan filled your heart** to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? (Acts 5:3)

### **C: Biblical Understanding of the Heart**

When the Bible is talking about our heart it is not talking about the bodily organ that pumps our blood. It is talking about the innermost part of our being.

For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (Matthew 15:18-19)

With our hearts we believe (Romans 10:10). Some doubt in their hearts. (Mark 11:23)

What comes out of our mouth does not proceed from the bodily organ that pumps our blood. Thoughts and intentions, faith and doubt, do not come from our bodily heart.

#### **1: Heart with Satan's Seed**

A heart that has received Satan's seed is a corrupt, evil heart. The Bible calls this corrupt heart "the flesh." (See Appendix B on page 117 for a more detailed discussion of what the Bible calls "the flesh.")

When Satan sows his seed into our hearts it causes corrupt desire to conceive which brings forth sin and death.

Then (corrupt) desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:15)

Corrupt desire is a key characteristic of what the Bible calls "the flesh."

You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the **desires of the flesh** and its thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (Ephesians 2:1-3)

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified **the flesh with its passions and desires**. (Galatians 5:24)

For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual **passions (desires) of the flesh** those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. (2 Peter 2:18)

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the **passions of the flesh**, which wage war against your soul. (1 Peter 2:11)

The works of the “the flesh” are of the same nature as the things Jesus says come from the heart and cause a person to sin. In fact, some of the works of the flesh are included in those things Jesus says come from the heart.

The works of the flesh are evident: **sexual immorality**, impurity, **sensuality**, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, **envy**, drunkenness, orgies, **and things like these**. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, **sexual immorality**, theft, false witness, slander. (Matthew 15:18)

Out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, **sexual immorality**, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, **sensuality**, **envy**, slander, pride, foolishness. (Mark 7:21-22)

Satan sows his seed into the hearts of men. He doesn't sow it into the body. The heart that has received his seed is called “the flesh.” Our problem in spiritual warfare is not our bodies, it is our hearts. Jesus says that only the heart can produce sin and corruption in our lives.

Whatever goes into a person from outside cannot cause him to sin, since it enters not his heart. (Mark 7:18-19)

Satan's seed, entering into our hearts, is what produces sin and corruption.

Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. (Proverbs 4:23)

## 2: Heart with God's Seed

The Bible frequently contrasts “the flesh” with “the Spirit,” or “the spirit.” (See Appendix B on page 117 for a more detailed discussion of the Bible's contrast of “the flesh” and “the spirit.”) The original Greek text does not distinguish between uppercase and lowercase letters. With words like “spirit” the translator must decide if the reference is to

God's Spirit and must be capitalized. The Bible clearly uses "the flesh" to refer to a heart that is corrupted with Satan's seed. The contrast to such a heart is one that is filled with God's seed. This book follows the contrast of "the flesh" and "the spirit" and uses the lowercase "spirit" to refer to a heart filled with God's seed.

A heart that is filled with the seed God sows (God's Word) is called "the spirit."

Walk by the spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. (Galatians 5:16-17)

The one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:8)

## **Part Three: What the Seed Is**



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## I: What the Seed Is

Seed sown in spiritual warfare is in three different forms: words and two different manifestations of spirit – fruit and works.

### A: Word Seeds

**The seed is the word of God.** (Luke 8:11)

**The sower sows the word.** (Mark 4:14)

Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears **the word of the kingdom** and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. (Matthew 13:18-19)

You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; (1 Peter 1:23)

Jesus declares that God uses words as seeds.

What are words?

Word: a unit of language, consisting of one or more spoken sounds or their written representation, that functions as a principal carrier of meaning.<sup>2</sup>

We use words to communicate imaginary things, but the primary use of words is to communicate our perception and understanding of reality. So we can say:

**Words are units of language, spoken or written, that function as a representation of reality.**

Spoken words may be audible that we hear with the ears of our bodies, or they may be spiritual that we hear as thoughts with the ears of our inner man.

Understanding reality and representations of reality help us understand the way words are used and how they function as seeds.

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<sup>2</sup> "word." The American Heritage® Dictionary of Idioms by Christine Ammer. Houghton Mifflin Company. 05 Jul. 2015. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/word>>

### Reality:

- is all that was, is, or will be
- includes all beings, places, and things
- includes all events, processes (ways), relationships, powers, and authorities
- includes the state, or status, of things
- is completely objective: not relative or subjective
- is eternal and unchanging

### A representation of reality is:

- an image or likeness, including mental image
- an account, statement, assertion, testimony, message, instruction, declaration, teaching, doctrine

Note that accounts, statements, assertions, testimonies, messages, instructions, declarations, teachings, and doctrines are made primarily with words.

God tells us something else about words, fruit, and works: they all come from the heart.

For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for **out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks**. (Luke 6:43-45)

Words, fruit, and works are a representation of the contents and nature of the heart of a person. Just as a tree produces leaves, fruit, and seeds according to the nature of the life within the tree, so people speak words, bring forth fruit, and do works according to the nature of the life of the seed planted in their hearts. Like the seeds of a tree, words carry the nature of the life within them and cause that life to grow and multiply.

As a representation of the content of our hearts, our words represent:

- what we hold to be true
- what we hold to be false
- what we hold to be of value
- how we perceive and measure truth
  - whether we seek and follow the guiding of the Spirit of Truth

- whether we trust in and lean to our own understanding
- whether we trust in and lean to the understanding of other people
- how we direct and order our steps
  - whether we seek and follow the guiding of the Spirit
  - whether we order our steps according to our desires and understanding

## **B: Fruit Seeds**

Fruit contains seed in it according to the nature of the life producing the fruit.

Then God said, "Let the land sprout with vegetation – every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And that is what happened. (Genesis 1:11)

When God's seeds are sown, mature, and then bring forth fruit; the fruit they bring forth contains more of God's seed. This is an important way God's seed is sown in the earth.

When Satan's seeds are sown, mature, and then bring forth fruit; the fruit they bring forth contains more of Satan's seed. This is the primary way Satan's seed is sown in the earth.

You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. (Matthew 7:16-18)

## **C: Work Seeds**

The works we do also sow seed. They show forth the nature of the life within us.

The testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish – **the very works that I do – testify about Me**, that the Father has sent Me. (John 5:36)

The Jewish leaders demanded that Jesus tell them if he was the Messiah. Jesus answered them that he had used spoken words and they didn't believe his words. He went on to declare that the works he did also "spoke" and testified that he was the Messiah.

If you're the Messiah, tell us so plainly.”

Jesus answered them, “I have told you, but you don't believe it. The actions that I do in my Father's name testify on my behalf, (John 10:24-25)

James tells disciples that their works show their faith.

Show me your faith without any actions, and I will show you my faith by my actions.  
(James 2:18)

#### **D: God's Seed**

God sows his seed through written and spoken words, through the fruit of the Spirit, and through works of the Spirit. God's words are different from all other words in a very important way: God's words are a representation of reality made by someone who perceives and understands reality accurately and completely. His words are truth in a way that no one else's can be.

God first sowed his seed by speaking his word to man. Man repeated these words to his children and they repeated them to their children. After some time, man began making a written record of the words God had spoken to them. Eventually, at least some of these written records were compiled into a collection we know as the Bible.

The Bible contains more than the words God spoke to man. God inspired man to also make a record of key things related to what he had spoken. These include a history of people and events that work to demonstrate that the words God speaks are true and reliable and that God is loving, faithful, just, and merciful.

God continued sowing by spoken word during the time the written word of the Bible was being recorded. He continued speaking during the temporal-life ministry of his Son, Jesus, the Messiah. He continued speaking after Jesus' temporal-life ministry was finished. The Bible tells us that God would continue to sow spoken words.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:27)

I have other sheep (Gentiles) that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. (John 10:16)

The book of Hebrews warns us not to harden our hearts – today – when we hear his voice.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. (Hebrews 3:7-8, 3:15, 4:7)

Jesus asked the Father to send the Spirit of Truth to guide us into all the truth. The Spirit does this by speaking to us in different ways.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (John 16:13)

Jesus tells the people in the assemblies in the book of Revelation to hear what the Spirit says.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. (Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22)

#### **E: Satan's Seed**

Satan sows his seed through written and spoken words, through fruit, and through works.

Satan first sowed his seed by speaking his word to man (Adam and Eve). Some who received his words repeated them to their children and they repeated them to their children. At some point, man began communicating to other men using written words. Some of these words were inspired by Satan and are his seed.

Consider the words Satan spoke to Eve.

It is not true that you will surely die. (Genesis 3:4) (Implying that God is not to be trusted.)

Consider the words Satan inspired the king of Assyria **to say** to the people of Jerusalem in 2 Kings 18.

Don't let Hezekiah deceive you. (29) And don't let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord. (30) Where is the god of any country that has saved its country from my power, so that the Lord might be able to save Jerusalem from my power? (35)

Consider the words the king of Assyria **wrote** in a message to Hezekiah (2 Kings 19).

Hezekiah took the letter from the messengers' hands and read it. (14) Don't let your God in whom you trust deceive you. (10)

## **F: Discerning the Seed**

God or Satan may speak words to us, or inspire others to speak them to us. God or Satan may inspire others to write words we read. We must discern which seed we are to accept and which seed we are to reject. In other words, we must discern which seed is God's seed and which is Satan's. There are some key differences that, with the guiding of the Spirit of Truth, will help us.

### **1: Truth vs Deception**

God's words are all truth. Satan is a deceiver and his words are filled with deception, error, and distortion. Some of his words are misapplications of truth.

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you,' and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" (Matthew 4:5-6)

Satan quoted the truth of scripture, but was tempting Jesus to misapply it.

### **2: How We Measure**

God's words always direct us to measure reality and truth by God's words and Spirit. They direct us to perceive truth by God's Word and Spirit and to compare representations of reality to God's Word as the only reliable standard of truth.

Satan will attempt to have us measure reality and truth by our own understanding, or by other people. He will also attempt to have us compare representations of reality to things other than God's Word.

Satan tempted the leaders of Israel to measure the truth of the long journey declared by the Gibeonites by the false evidence they brought with them. They relied on their own understanding and did not ask God to guide them into the truth.

Here is our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey on the day we set out to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and crumbly. These wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they have burst. And these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey.” So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the LORD. (Joshua 9:12-14)

Satan tried to get Jerusalem to measure reality by what Assyria had done to other nations and not to trust in God to deliver them.

Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. (2 Kings 19:11)

Satan may also attempt to cause us to compare representations of reality to a misunderstanding of God’s Word.

### **3: Trust**

God’s words always lead in the direction of trusting God, his Word, his Spirit, and his power for all things we need.

Satan’s words lead us to trust in other things for what we need. To our own understanding for measuring truth and reality. To our own power, knowledge, ability (including technology), and store of things for our material needs. His words lead away from moving closer to, and relying more completely on, God.

### **4: Aionios vs Bios**

Aionios is of the eternal age (reality). It is the word John used in 1 John 1:2 to describe the life that appeared to man in Jesus. Bios is the physical life and the material things needed to sustain physical life: food, clothing, and shelter (or money to acquire those things).

God’s words speak of God’s eternal kingdom and righteousness. They speak of love, faith, and hope. Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Repentance and forgiveness. Things of and related to aionios.

Satan’s words speak of bios. They speak of our need for bios and trust in an accumulated store of bios.

Do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-33)

As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. (Matthew 13:22)

The bios cares of this world and trust in accumulated bios chokes the word.

The young man said to him, “... What do I still lack (to obtain eternal life)?” Jesus said to him, “If you would be complete, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Matthew 19:20-21)

Jesus told the young man to sell his accumulated bios and he would have treasure in heaven. God's words speak of his kingdom. Satan's speak of the bios of this world.

## **5: Shalom vs Self-pleasing**

Shalom is peace, tranquility, safety, well-being, welfare, health, contentment, success, comfort, wholeness and integrity, truth, prosperity, right relationships between ourselves, God, our neighbors, and creation. We can only experience shalom by being in right relationships with God, our neighbors, and creation. We cannot be self-pleasing and be in right relationships with God, our neighbors, and creation.

God's words are words of shalom and lead us to walk in shalom. Love, joy, peace, gentleness are essential elements of shalom. Loving one another as Jesus loves us. Laying down our lives to contribute to shalom.

Satan's words are words of selfishness – seeking to satisfy and please ourselves. They lead to distrust and discord. Satan's words lead us to trust ourselves, our knowledge, our ability, our bios, and not others. They work to cause us not to share with others and contribute to their shalom.

## 6: Diligence vs Haste

When God speaks to us he gives us time to be diligent in discerning his word and seeking him for confirmation, better understanding, or further instruction. This time is essential for shalom in discerning his word.

Satan tries to press us to act on his words without taking the time necessary to discern them. He frequently will try to make it appear that the situation requires us to respond so quickly that there isn't time to be diligent about discerning the seed. This urgency is contrary to the peacefulness of shalom.

## 7: Correction vs Condemnation

God instructs us, corrects us, and gives us warnings. The fruit of his instruction, correction, and warning is faith, joy, and thankfulness.

Satan accuses, condemns, and threatens. The result of his words are discouragement, defeat, guilt, and fear.

## 8: Possible vs Impossible

God says all things are possible and his word will also lead us in that direction.

**All things are possible** for one who believes. (Mark 9:23)

If you have faith ... **nothing will be impossible** for you. (Matthew 17:20)

Satan will try to convince us that things God commands us to do – results God says will occur, and promises God makes – are not possible. Satan will try to persuade us that things we don't know how to do are impossible; things we don't understand are impossible; things we've never seen done are impossible; things others have told us can't be done are impossible. Satan will attempt to use misunderstandings of scripture to try to convince us that we cannot do something God commands us to do.

God says lay hands on the sick and they will recover. Satan says this is impossible. God says be healed. Satan says this is impossible. God says to be holy as I am holy. Satan says this is impossible. God says be perfect (spiritually mature) as I am perfect (spiritually mature). Satan says this is impossible. God says to go and sin no more. Satan says this is impossible.

Anything God commands us to do he provides us with the power to do and he plainly declares that nothing is impossible to those who believe.

### **9: Fruit of God's Word vs Works**

God's Word leads us to rely on the fruit produced by his Word sown in our hearts for the things we need pertaining to life and godliness. God commands us to do things that require the fruit produced by his Word in our hearts.

Satan tries to get us to depend on everything but the fruit of God's Word sown in our hearts. He will try to lead us to depend on our efforts so we work harder to try to produce greater results. He will try to lead us to depend on others: family, church, and government. He will even try to lead us to depend on works of the Holy Spirit to produce in us what can only be produced by the fruit of the Word of God sown in our hearts.

### **10: Zoe Life**

God's Words, and only God's Words, contain zoe life. Only God's Words can produce the fruit of zoe life. Sometimes it is evident when we hear a word that it contains zoe life and will produce its fruit. More often, we discern that word using other means, receive it by faith, and it produces the fruit of zoe life later.

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Only seed containing zoe life can produce this fruit. Only God's seed – containing the nature of the life of God within it – produces love, joy, peace, patience (steadfast faith), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self- control.

## **Part Four: Who Sows the Seed?**



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## I: Who Sows the Seed?

Seeing what the seed sown in spiritual warfare is helps us perceive who sows the seed.

Seeds sown in spiritual warfare are spoken words, written words, spiritual fruit, and works. The sowing process is completed when spoken words are heard, written words are read, and spiritual fruit and works are witnessed.

One who sows spiritual seed is anyone who:

- speaks words audibly
- speaks words spiritually
- writes words
- brings forth fruit from seed sown in their heart
- does works according to the nature of the seed sown in their heart
- inspires others to speak or write words, and do works

Those who do these things are:

- God, His Son, His Spirit of Truth, His angels
- Satan and his demons
- Man

### A: God

As we look through scripture we see that there are times that God himself speaks directly with man. Here are two examples:

The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17)

We don't know if God spoke to Adam audibly or spiritually. In Exodus 20 God speaks audibly.

God spoke all these words, saying, (Exodus 20:1)

Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? (Deuteronomy 4:33)

God spoke to Solomon spiritually.

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, (1 Kings 3:5)

God has written words.

He (God) gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. (Exodus 31:18)

God has also sown seed through works and the fruit of his Spirit. He has inspired people to sow his seed through spoken and written words.

### **B: Jesus, God's Son**

During the time of his temporal-life ministry, Jesus – God's Son – also sowed God's seed through words, works, and the fruit of the Spirit.

In these last days he (God) has **spoken to us by his Son** (Hebrews 1:2)

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears **my word** and believes him who sent me has eternal life. (John 5:24)

**The words that I (Jesus) have spoken** to you are spirit and life. (John 6:63)

After his temporal-life ministry Jesus continued to speak using audible and spiritual words.

He (Saul) heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. (Acts 9:4-7)

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, (Acts 9:10)

### **C: The Spirit of Truth**

The Spirit of Truth is also a sower. He sows God's seed through words, works, and fruit. He inspires others to speak, write, and do works.

When the Spirit of truth comes, **he will guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears **he will speak**, and **he will declare to you** the things that are to come. (John 16:13)

The Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. (Acts 20:23)

Thus says the Holy Spirit (Acts 21:11)

Hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)

### **D: God's Angels**

God's angels speak words audibly and spiritually, do works, and inspire others to speak and write.

I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." (Daniel 8:16)

While I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening offering. He instructed me, and talked with me, and said, Daniel, I am now come forth to give you wisdom and understanding. (Daniel 9:21-22)

The message declared by angels proved to be reliable. (Hebrews 2:2)

Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. (1 John 4:1-3)

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John. (Revelation 1:1)

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches.  
(Revelation 22:16)

### **E: Satan**

Satan is another sower of spiritual seed. He speaks audibly and spiritually, He brings forth fruit of his nature, does works, and inspires others to speak, write, or do works that sow his seed.

It is not true that you will surely die. (Genesis 3:4)

**The devil** had already **put it into the heart** of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, (John 13:2)

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has **Satan filled your heart** to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? (Acts 5:3)

### **F: Demons**

Demons also sow seed by speaking words audibly and spiritually. They bring forth fruit of their nature, do works, and inspire others to speak, write, or do works that sow Satan's seed.

We were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." (Acts 16:16-17)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. (1 Timothy 4:1)

Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. (1 John 4:1-3)

## **G: Man**

Man is a sower of spiritual seed. We sow outwardly when we speak audible words, write words, bring forth fruit, and do works. We sow inwardly when we hear audible words, read written words, and witness fruit and works.

Whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8)

Sow for yourselves righteousness (Hosea 10:12)

There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and **one who sows discord** among brothers. (Proverbs 6:16-19)

We speak spiritual words.

Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. (1 Samuel 1:13)

Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, (Luke 7:39)

Some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, (Matthew 9:3-4)

## **H: Discerning the Sower**

One way we control the seed sown into our hearts is by discerning the nature of the seed sown. Another way is by discerning the nature of the one sowing the seed. It is necessary to use both ways.

### **1: Ask the spirit to confess Jesus is come in the flesh (1 John 4:1-3)**

Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. (1 John 4:1-3)

As you hear the spirit in your thoughts, you can ask it to confess in your thoughts. In your thoughts ask, "Is Jesus Christ come in the flesh?" God has told us how his Spirit will answer and how an evil spirit will answer.

On a web blog, one pastor reported using this test. A woman called him on the phone and told him that she had a word of the Lord for him. As she proceeded to tell him how great a work God was going to do through him, he interrupted and asked, "Is Jesus Christ come in the flesh?" The answer was very revealing: "She believes that."

See Discerning the Sower on Page 91 in Real-Life Examples for an example when I first learned to discern the sower.

## **2: Ask the spirit to confess Jesus is Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3)**

God tells us another confession that can only be made by the Spirit.

No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3)

Just as in the previous confession, ask the spirit speaking to you to confess that "Jesus is Lord."

## **3: Listen for the fruit of the Spirit (Matthew 7:15-18, Galatians 5:22-23)**

Jesus tells us that we recognize true and false prophets (including spirits) by their fruits.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; (Galatians 5:22-23)

When the Spirit speaks he will do so in a way that expresses the fruit of the Spirit. An evil spirit will not. An evil spirit will frequently be accusing, condemning, harsh, etc..

Listen for the fruit of the Spirit when asking the spirit to confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh or that Jesus is Lord. An evil spirit may try to confess Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, but does so in a way that is bitter, snotty, grudging, etc..

For more detail see Hearing and Discerning the Spirit of God in Appendix A on page 97.

## **Part Five: How and When the Seed Is Sown**



## **I: How and When the Seed Is Sown**

Spiritual seed is sown outwardly – from a sower, or inwardly – into our hearts.

### **A: Spiritual Seed Sown Outwardly**

Spiritual seed is sown by speaking words audibly or spiritually. Words we speak out loud are sown as spiritual seed. Words in the thoughts that come from our heart are also spiritual seed. These thought-words may be heard by others and sown into their hearts.

Some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?” (Matthew 9:3-4)

Spiritual seed is sown by writing words, by doing works, and by inspiring others to speak, to write, or to do works.

Spiritual seed is sown whenever a sower does one of these things. This includes all situations where words are spoken or works / actions are performed: conversations, teaching, preaching, music, movies, television, etc.. It also includes words and actions in dreams.

Words sown spiritually may be sown from our thoughts at any time. They may be sown when we are by ourselves in private places. Seed sown spiritually is not hindered by walls and doors.

### **B: Spiritual Seed Sown Inwardly**

Spiritual seed is sown into our hearts whenever we hear words that are spoken audibly or spiritually. It is sown into our hearts when we read words that were written or observe works and spiritual fruit. This includes what we hear and observe in our dreams.

### **C: When God Sows His Seed**

God sows the seed of his word at a certain level continually. There are times, however, when he increases his seed sown. Appendix A: Hearing and Discerning the Spirit of

God on page 97 includes some times when God increases his seed sown in response to things we do.

**D: When Satan Sows His Seed**

Satan also sows his seed at a certain level continually. There are also times when he will sow his seed in a greater measure. Basically, every time God increases the sowing of his seed, Satan increases the sowing of his seed in an attempt to choke God's seed that has been sown.

## **Part Six: Why Spiritual Seed Is Sown**



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## I: Why Spiritual Seed Is Sown

Eternal life is eternal shalom-life. Spiritual warfare is a war for and against shalom-life. God works to keep and increase shalom and to help us be contributors to it. Satan works to take shalom away and to destroy it. He works to make us destroyers of shalom.

The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call shalom. We call it peace, but it means far more than mere peace of mind or a cease-fire between enemies. In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight – a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed.<sup>3</sup>

An essential characteristic of shalom is right relationships – between man and God, between man and man, between man and creation. Right relationships require trust and love. It should be no surprise that the two battle lines in the spiritual war are over trust versus distrust / misplaced trust and over love versus selfishness.

If we walk in selfishness we contribute to the enemy's work to take away and destroy shalom. Selfishness is incompatible and mutually exclusive with shalom.

Trust requires truth. When we walk in truth we contribute to trust and shalom. If we do not walk in truth we destroy trust and shalom.

God sows his seed through his written word to reveal truth to us and increase our trust. He also sows his seed through his spoken word by sending his Spirit of Truth to guide us into all the truth.

Accuser. Deceiver. Liar, Father of lies. (Zechariah 3:1, Revelation 12:9, 10, John 8:44) These names of our enemy tells us that it is Satan's nature to attack shalom by undermining trust by causing us to leave the path of truth. Deception and error is how he snares us and keeps us captive to do his will.

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<sup>3</sup> Plantinga, Jr., Cornelius. Not the Way It's Supposed to Be. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995. 10. Print.

**A: The Battle For Trust and Shalom**

**Truth is the accurate and complete representation of reality.**

**Reality:**

- is all that was, is, or will be
- includes all beings, places, and things
- includes all events, processes, relationships, powers, and authorities
- includes the state, or status of things

Shalom is the state of things when they are healthy and prosperous. They are participants in healthy and prosperous processes and relationships. They experience healthy and prosperous events. God's will is shalom. We are in the state of shalom when we are experiencing shalom – which includes our continuous contributing to shalom for others.

There is truth that represents the reality of shalom. It represents the state of shalom, the relationships and processes that contribute to it, and the relationships and processes that destroy it.

Through seeking the truth, aligning our lives with the relationships and processes that contribute to shalom, and aligning our lives away from the relationships and processes that destroy it; we experience and contribute to it. This is God's will and he sows his seed to help us align our lives.

We relate to truth through a process that includes perception of evidence, measuring of evidence, comparing evidence to a standard, and aligning ourselves through trust. We either trust our perception and measuring (lean to our own understanding), or we trust a guide who we measure to be better at perceiving truth than we measure ourselves to be. God sows his seed to help us perceive and measure correctly.

Satan opposes this truth and fights against it, our perception of it, and our alignment with it with every means possible. When we think of Satan as a liar and deceiver we think of his attacking through the presentation of evidence that misrepresents reality.

God reveals truth to us and Satan misrepresents:

- what is, was, and will be
- beings, places, and things

- events, processes, relationships, powers, and authorities
- the state of things (in particular trustworthiness and righteousness)
- what is and is not the will of God
- what is and is not possible
- ways that will produce results and ways that will not
- what is required to produce results or have a certain state of being (in particular results in prayer, the state of righteousness and eternal life)
- the outcome of paths.

For evidence they use primarily declarations, messages, testimonies, teachings, and doctrine. They may also use dreams and visions.

One of the things Satan does is sow his seed in an attempt to suppress the truth. He sows seeds of misrepresented reality in abundance in an effort to make it more difficult for us to perceive and understand the truth. This is especially true for critical truth like eternal life and what is required to enter into eternal life, God's will, etc..

### **1: Make Us Untrustworthy**

Shalom relationships require trustworthy participants in those relationships. One of Satan's attacks, and the one we have primary responsibility to overcome, is to sow his seed to make us untrustworthy. Trustworthiness requires accurate and complete perception of reality, accurate measurement of what is perceived, and faithfulness to the other participants in the relationships. Satan sows his seed to cause us to misperceive reality, to measure incorrectly – using faulty comparisons or corrupt standards, and to cause us to be selfish and not faithful.

God sows his seed into our hearts to cause us to perceive and measure correctly and to be faithful to others instead of selfish.

### **2: Make Others Untrustworthy**

Satan sows his seed into those around us in an attempt to hinder our relationships with them by making them untrustworthy. He also attempts to sow his seed in us to make the trustworthiness or untrustworthiness of those around us a factor in our relationships with them.

God sows his seed into those around us to work to make them trustworthy. He also sows his seed in us to cause us to trust him and love those around us regardless of their trustworthiness.

### **3: Accuse Others of Being Untrustworthy**

Satan will sow his seed in an attempt to destroy relationships by accusing others of being untrustworthy. He does this by first trying to get us to place our trust in others rather than God and then misrepresenting the reality of the trustworthiness of those around us.

God sows his seed to cause us to trust him and love those around us.

### **4: Present Untrustworthy as Trustworthy and Trustworthy as Untrustworthy**

Satan will sow his seed to try to cause us to measure what is untrustworthy as trustworthy and what is trustworthy as untrustworthy. Material riches is an example. Material riches are untrustworthy. Satan sows his seed to try to cause us to trust in material riches for the provision of our needs. Satan also sows his seed to try to cause us to consider God and his ways as untrustworthy. This is what he did with Adam and Eve.

God sows his seed to reveal the truth to us regarding what is trustworthy and what is not.

### **B: The Battle for God's Will to Be Done**

God's seed works in us to will and to do God's will. Satan sows his seed to try to cause us not to will and not to do God's will. It seems to us like we are doing our will and seeking to satisfy our needs and desires, but we are really doing Satan's will.

God's sows his spiritual seed in us to cause us to pray to produce results of God's will. Satan's seed works in us to cause us not to pray and not to pray in a way that will produce the results of God's will. His seed works to create fear and doubt to hinder our prayers. His seed also works to cause us to believe that the results of prayer are not possible.

God's seed doesn't just work in us to give us the will to do God's will. It also works in us to give us power to do his will. This another key reason God sows his seed into our hearts: to fill us with power to do his will. God sows his seed to fill us with power to cause his will – good – to come to pass: to heal, to restore, and to give life.

God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, (Ephesians 3:20)

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. (Matthew 12:34-35)

Satan sows his seed to fill people with power to cause evil to come to pass: to kill, to steal, and to destroy. To hinder God's kingdom from coming and his will from being done.

### **C: The Battle for Active Sowers**

Perhaps the simplest reason for God or Satan to sow their seed is to produce more active sowers who will sow still more seed. God sows his seed into our hearts to fill it with fruit that will produce more of his seed. His seed also works in us to impel us to sow according to the nature of the seed he has sown in us.

Satan sows his seed into our hearts to fill it with fruit that will produce more of his seed. His seed also works in us to impel us to sow according to the nature of the seed he has sown in us.



# **Part Seven: How We Fight the Sowing War**



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## **I: How We Fight the Sowing War**

We fight the sowing war by aligning ourselves with God sowing his spiritual seed and aligning ourselves against Satan sowing his spiritual seed.

### **A: Put On the Armor of God**

God has given us his armor to equip us for fighting all manner of spiritual warfare.

Be furnished with the capacity for strength through your union with the Lord and the fullness of his immeasurable strength. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, having shod your feet with the sure footing of the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, (Ephesians 6:10-18)

So, following God's instructions, given through Paul, we put on God's armor.

Father, we thank you in the name of Jesus for your armor and we put on your armor: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation and the sword of your Spirit.

### **B: Be Led By the Spirit of Truth**

God has sent the Spirit of Truth to guide us into all the truth – onto the path where we trust God to guide us and order our steps.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, (John 16:13)

If we ask God, he will send the Spirit of Truth to guide us into all the truth.

Father, we thank you in the name of Jesus that you send forth your Spirit of Truth to guide us into all the truth. We ask that you send your Spirit of Truth to guide us into all the truth and show us things to come. Fill us with the knowledge of your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so we live a life worthy of you, fully pleasing to you, and bearing fruit in every good work.

### **C: Fear of the Lord**

One of the things we need in fighting the sowing war is the will to sow God's seed into our hearts in abundance, the will to resist Satan's seed, and the will to remove from our hearts all seed Satan has already planted. Fear of the Lord is key in giving us the ongoing will to do these things.

Fear is the belief that, under certain conditions, loss or suffering is occurring or will occur. As a result, fear motivates us to

- flee from or avoid those conditions and seek other conditions.
- seek a source or means to overcome the source or means of loss or suffering
- seek a source of refuge or protection from loss or suffering
  - a source that will not be overcome by the source of loss or suffering
  - a source that can keep us from loss and suffering
- seek the means, strength, and will to minimize and endure the anticipated loss or suffering

The belief that, under certain conditions, loss or suffering will occur may come from the testimony of the Spirit of truth. This is fear of (or from) the Lord. It always points to God as the only reliable source and God's means as the only reliable means to protect from and to overcome loss. In the case of spiritual seed it points to sowing God's seed into our hearts and rejecting Satan's seed as the only reliable means to protect from loss.

### **D: Sow God's Seed (Word) Into Our Hearts**

We know from our previous discussion that God's seeds are words he has written or spoken. They are also words he has inspired people to write or speak.

The Bible is our primary source of God's spiritual seed. Spiritual seeds sown as written words are sown into our hearts when we read them. The single most important thing we can do in fighting the sowing war is to sow God's written words into our hearts. As we do this it is important to keep in mind the nature of God's seed. As it grows and bears fruit,

God's words work in us to cause us to hear and perceive which in turn causes us to trust both God and his words. It takes some time for the word we have sown to grow and produce its fruit. We need to continue sowing and trust that it will produce results. The more we sow the more it will produce and we need it to produce as much as is possible.

God's Word sown in our hearts produces more effectively in those who align their lives with it by doing it. This is another key step in fighting the sowing war.

Another way we sow God's spiritual seed into our hearts is by hearing and aligning our lives with the words God speaks to us today through his Spirit of Truth, his ministering spirits, and people who are sowing his word. We must be diligent to discern the seed and the sower when we do this, but the words God speaks to us today can increase our success in the spiritual war.

Father, in the name of Jesus, I ask you to send your ministering spirits to minister to me today: holiness, righteousness, prayer, love, faith, patience, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, revelation, prophecy, submission, humility, fear of the Lord, joy, and truth.

## **E: Guard God's Seed Sown In Our Hearts**

Jesus warns us that Satan will work to take away and choke God's spiritual seed that is sown in our hearts. We must guard God's seed so it will bear fruit in us. This is a key part of the sowing war.

Trusting God, his guiding us, and his power is key to overcoming Satan's attacks against God's Word being sown in our hearts. This trust comes from God's Word itself, so overcoming the attacks is more difficult when we first start sowing. It gets much less difficult after we have sown more Word into our hearts and do it so that produces the trust we need.

### **1: Satan comes immediately to take away the Word**

The first thing Satan will do is to come immediately to try to take away the Word sown in our hearts.

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. (Matthew 13:19)

When they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. (Mark 4:15)

The devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. (Luke 8:12)

Satan cannot just come and take the seed from the heart of a person who does not let him do so. He takes it away by causing the person to reject the word. This works for those who reject the things they hear that they don't understand.

The Word of God produces understanding. When we first hear it we are not going to understand it. It must be spiritually discerned and it produces spiritual discernment. We keep it from being taken away by not rejecting what we don't understand and giving the Word time to produce the understanding we need. We must trust that the Word will produce the understanding that we need.

## **2: Cares of this world, desires for other things, pleasures of this life, trust in false riches**

As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. (Matthew 13:22)

The ones sown among thorns are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. (Mark 4:18-19)

The ones sown among thorns are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. (Luke 8:14)

Satan doesn't give up if he fails to cause us to reject the Word on his first attempt. He will attack in a new way attempting to cause us to turn our focus, time, and energy into other things. This works to cause us not to hear and do the Word so it does not grow and bear fruit in us.

One such attack is the cares of this world. These are typically bios related things: food, clothing, shelter. He works to cause a problem that shouts for our attention: something that needs cared for. These things work to occupy our thoughts so we don't think about the Word. They can be things that are broken and need fixed – typically urgently, like a

furnace not working on a very cold winter night. It can be something that needs protecting. It may be a temptation to worry about whether something was not taken care of properly: door not locked, oven not turned off, lights left on, window left open, cat not fed, etc.. Things that pester our thoughts and keep our focus off the Word.

To overcome these attacks we must put the Word first and fight to keep our thoughts focused on the Word and hearing the Word. We must put what we can in order before we focus on hearing the Word and then trust God to take care of the things that need to be cared for as we focus on his Word.

Another attack is the desire for other things. These are typically things beyond what we need like food, clothing, and shelter. They may be better tasting food, nicer clothes, or a more comfortable shelter. It may be money that we plan on using to buy other things. The basic attack is the same as the cares of this world: turn our focus, time, and energy away from the Word and towards other things.

We overcome this attack by trusting God and being content with what he provides us.

A third attack is the pleasures of this life. These may be sensual, emotional, or intellectual pleasures. Indulging in fine tasting food or drink, sexual pleasure, listening to things that are pleasing to hear, or seeing things that are pleasing to see. It may be experiencing something we want to experience. Again the attack is designed to turn our attention away from God's Word to other things.

This attack is overcome by trusting God and being content with what he provides us. It is also overcome by taking joy and satisfaction in doing God's will and having his Word bear fruit in us. Pleasures of this life are very temporary. The Word of God bears fruit in us that far exceeds the pleasures of this life and lasts far longer too.

The final attack designed to choke the Word is trust in false riches. This attack may be combined with the cares of this world or desires for other things. Problems with false riches that we trust in become cares of this world. A perceived shortage of false riches that we trust in is a care of this world and leads to a desire for increasing our supply.

We overcome this attack by holding onto the truth that all of our provision comes from God. We have nothing that we have not received from him. Riches will not profit us in many situations, but being pleasing to God will.

Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.  
(Proverbs 11:4)

### 3: Tribulation and Persecution

Satan may also attempt to turn us away from the Word by attacking us with tribulation and persecution. This may be physical or spiritual in nature.

As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. (Matthew 13:20-21)

The ones sown on rocky ground are the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. (Mark 4:16-17)

We tend to think of tribulation and persecution as physical attack or the threat of physical attack. We think of Paul being attacked, stoned, and threatened. Tribulation or persecution may also be spiritual in nature. Paul said that, because of the Word of God coming to him, Satan sent an evil spirit to harass, buffet, or torment him. (2 Corinthians 12:7)

Satan is the accuser. Tribulation that is spiritual in nature may be accusing attacks we hear in our thoughts. Thoughts that continuing to sow God's Word into our hearts is causing us to lose our minds. Thoughts that we are going too far and other people will reject us.

Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane." (Acts 26:24)

The attack of tribulation or persecution works against those who do not have root in themselves: they lack steadfastness and love.

We overcome this attack by rejoicing in tribulation or persecution, knowing that tribulation works patience, endurance, steadfastness; and patience produces character, and character produces hope. (Romans 5:3-4, James 1:2-3)

A word of caution is in order here. A lot of people imagine that they are suffering tribulation and persecution when others reject their corrupt behavior. Of course they don't think their behavior is corrupt. The Pharisees could easily have claimed that Jesus was persecuting them and held up his criticism of them as evidence. Jesus' criticism of

them was correct. It was not persecution. If others are rejecting our behavior and criticizing us, we need to seek the truth. Asking God to send his Spirit of Truth to guide us into the truth of our behavior, criticism of our behavior, and how we are to proceed is a good thing to do.

### **F: Sow God's Seed From Our Hearts**

We may sow God's seed from our hearts in any of the ways seed is sown: speaking words audibly or spiritually, writing words, doing works, or manifesting fruit of God's seed. The key in sowing God's seed from our hearts is sowing it when and how God has us sow it.

The Word of God – God's seed – takes some time to grow, mature, and bring forth fruit in our hearts. The seed we sow and how we sow it needs to contribute to truth and shalom. If we attempt to sow God's seed before his seed in our hearts is bringing forth seed ready to be sown, we may end up working against truth and shalom. For example: A good contribution to truth is one that is sufficiently accurate and complete. A contribution that is not sufficiently accurate and complete, but is received as one that is, works against truth and shalom. This contributes to hearers who accept and hold a flawed version of the truth and resist more accurate and complete seed.

It also takes some time for God's Word to work in us to strengthen us, mature us, and equip us to discern the attacks of the enemy. Our sowing of God's seed is an attack against the enemy and it will be met with a counterattack. We need to be sufficiently strengthened and equipped so that, when the attacks come, we are not offended and fall away.

### **G: Stop Sowing Satan's Seed Into Our Hearts**

God warns us to take heed what and how we hear.

Pay attention to what you hear. (Mark 4:24)

Pay attention to how you hear. (Luke 8:18)

He also tells us to test what we hear, not to believe every sower who speaks to us, and to test the sowers to discern which ones are sowing God's seed and which ones are sowing Satan's seed.

Test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil.  
(1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God (1 John 4:1)

Once we have discerned the sower and the seed we are to receive that which is from God and reject that which is from Satan. This is the key to stop sowing Satan's seed into our hearts. We must become active in testing and discerning what we read, hear, and observe: and in rejecting corrupt seed.

Here is how it works.

Let's say that we are trying to keep from using profanity. In times past we may hear other people using profanity and take no heed to our hearing it. We may read things containing profane words or witness people using profane gestures. The profane words and gestures sow into our hearts and work to cause us to use profane words or gestures too.

We must actively discern what we are hearing and reject corrupt seed. This includes dreams and those things we hear spiritually.

Reject the seed with a silent prayer like this:

In the name of Jesus, No. I reject that seed and refuse to accept it as part of my being.

Praying to reject the seed is one step. God tells us that we should stay away from evil. In this case we have the option of attempting to silence the sower through another silent prayer.

In the name of Jesus, I do not permit the spirit causing this corrupt seed to speak or cause others to speak.

If the person is speaking from seed already sown and accepted into their hearts, this prayer may not cause them to stop. If that happens, then – if we are able to do so – we should leave the area where the sower is speaking. If we are not able to leave, but are able to block our hearing of the seed – by headphones, earplugs, etc., then that is another option.

We should take the same steps when we discern other types of corrupt seed being sown: fear, doubt, corrupt desires, etc..

## **H: Stop Sowing Satan's Seed Out From Our Hearts**

Unfortunately, by the time we learn about the sowing war, corrupt seed has already been sown into our hearts. If we are to avoid sowing the fruit of these corrupt seeds from our hearts, we must uproot and remove them.

When corrupt seeds are sown into our hearts they cause corrupt desires to conceive. All corrupt desires have a common element: what I want.

- What I want to have.
- What I want to do.
- What I want to consume.
- What I want to be.
- What I want others to think I am.
- I want to live my life to please myself, to direct and order my steps to satisfy my desires.
- I want to live my life according to my own understanding.
- I want to determine for myself what is real, true, good; what to desire, what to believe.

We remove the corrupt seed by uprooting and removing the corrupt desire and by sowing God's seed that is opposite to the corrupt desire into our hearts.

If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this sycamine tree, Be plucked up by the root and be planted in the sea; and it will obey you. (Luke 17:6)



## **Part Eight: Summary**



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## I: Summary

There is a spiritual war being fought primarily with spiritual seeds: words spoken audibly, words spoken spiritually, words written, and actions that demonstrate fruit or works.

There are two principal combatants in the sowing war: God and Satan. The spiritual seed they sow contains the nature of their beings within it.

The hearts of each man, woman, and child are created to be a spiritual garden to receive spiritual seed and provide a place for it to grow. Spiritual seed is sown into our hearts and we – our spirit, soul, and body – are nourished by the fruit it produces. We become partakers of its nature.

We accept spiritual seed into our hearts when we hear or read the words, witness the actions, accept the representation of the reality they make as true and to be desired, and align our lives – our desires, beliefs, thoughts, words, and actions – to them.

Both God and Satan sow seeds into man's heart. God's seeds are true seeds – they are creative and life-giving. God's seeds are seeds of life – incorruptible seeds of eternal (zoe) life. Satan's seeds are false seeds. They are anti-seeds. They are corrupt, destructive and bring forth death.

Satan approached Adam and Eve with seeds of death and attempted to sow them into their hearts. Unfortunately, they failed to guard their hearts and allowed the seeds to conceive in their hearts. When the seeds conceived they brought corruption and death to their lives and being. When this happened to Adam and Eve they passed from life to death. Their hearts received corrupt spiritual seed and provided a place for it to grow. The production of death in their hearts separated them from the eternal (zoe) life of God. Adam became a partaker of the nature of Satan's seed and passed this nature to his children. As a result, the nature of sin and the result of death passed to all people. Through Adam all people were constituted with the nature of Satan's spiritual seed.

God approaches us and attempts to sow his seed into our hearts. Since God's seed is true seed it works to give us life – eternal (zoe) life. When God's seed is sown into our hearts and conceives, we are nourished by the fruit it produces and become partakers of its – God's – nature and life.

Every man, woman, and child participates in the sowing war. The only question is the nature of their participation: as a victim and combatant sowing Satan's seed, or as a combatant partaking of God's nature and sowing God's seed.

Because Adam accepted Satan's seed, became partaker of its nature, and passed that nature down to us; we come to the knowledge of the sowing war as victim combatants sowing Satan's seed. We need to remove Satan's spiritual seed that we have accepted into our hearts and we need to sow God's spiritual seed into our hearts in order to become a combatant partaking of God's life and nature and sowing his seed.

We fight in the sowing war by sowing God's seed into our hearts in abundance, guarding it, giving it time to grow and bear fruit, then sowing God's seed from our hearts. We must accept God's seed - accept the representation of the reality it makes as true and to be desired, and align our lives – our desires, beliefs, thoughts, words, and actions – to it.

We also must become active hearers and discerners of words we read and hear, and actions we observe. We must actively reject all of Satan's seed – reject the representation of reality it makes as false and not to be desired, and align our lives – our desires, beliefs, thoughts, words, and actions away from it.

## **Part Nine: Real-Life Examples**



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## I: Real-Life Examples

It is frequently helpful to see how things like a sowing war take place in real life. I am including some examples from what I have witnessed.

### A: First Time Discerning the Sower

After answering my prayer for fear of the Lord, God showed me to put on his armor, then he showed me to use the test of 1 John 4 to recognize the Spirit. While getting ready for work the next day I got my first chance to use it. I heard a thought saying, "Eat some bread and drink some water." Innocent enough, but when I asked it to confess that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh I got no reply. I asked two more times and still no reply. I said, "I am trusting in the Word of God that tells me that the Spirit of Truth will confess Jesus is come in the flesh. I am not eating." I was still getting ready for work when I heard another thought saying "Eat some bread and drink some water." I could tell no difference between that one and the first one, except that this time when I asked it to confess that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh I heard a positive, joyful, praising, "Yes!" I asked twice more with the same response. Because this spirit confessed according to what the scripture says, I ate.

### B: Armor of God

One day at work I realized that I was experiencing a lot more frequent and more intense temptation. I realized that I had forgotten to pray and put on the armor of God for the past several days. As I prayed to put on God's armor I had this thought, "You are doing it wrong. You are trusting in the armor instead of trusting in God."

This was a particularly dangerous attack. If I was to draw back and abandon the armor I would lose its benefits. If I actually trusted in it rather than God that would cause a different problem.

"No. I trust God. He said to put on the armor so that is what I'm doing. He told me to put on the armor because it works. I'm putting it on because he said to and I trust him."

### **C: You Are Imagining Things**

On December 8, 1983 I was watching the evening news cover the landing of the STS-9 space shuttle landing. As the news announcer went on and on about how well this mission had gone and how much man knew about space flight I heard this thought,

“I will judge them for glorying in their own knowledge. I will bring it down.”

I recognized that this was God speaking. He had been showing me things about judgment. I began using some of what he had shown me and interceded for the crew of the space shuttle.

Then I heard another thought, “You are imagining things. Nothing is happening.” This I recognized as Satan.

“It is not over yet. I will cause it to explode and burn.” This was God's reply.

I continued to intercede and the shuttle landed, seemingly without incident.

A few days later I was watching the evening news again and thinking about some people I was praying for. I had expected some spiritual movement by some of them and had not seen anything happen. I heard this thought, “You are imagining things again. What you think will happen isn't happening. And then there was this thing with the space shuttle the other night. Nothing happened then too.” Another attack trying to undermine trusting in God's leading through words spoken spiritually.

“I don't know that nothing happened (with regards to the space shuttle). I only know what I saw during the newscast. I don't know what happened afterwards.”

Just then the news announcer starting talking about how puzzled the NASA scientists were. He said that the space shuttle had “exploded and burned” during the landing. There had been a hydrazine leak that had damaged two of the three auxiliary power units needed to land the shuttle. Had it burned through the third it would have crashed. (Cited on Wikipedia at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/STS-9>).

Ironically, I was mishearing God regarding the people I was praying for. My desires were too intense with respect to those people and that caused me to hear incorrectly.

### **D: Cares of This World**

I was reading scripture on the coldest night of our Michigan winter when the fan on my furnace started squealing. I wasn't sure what I should do. I had deliberately set aside that time to read scripture. Should I stop and work on the furnace or keep on reading. I decided that the scripture was more important and kept reading.

After a while I got tired. The fan on the furnace was still squealing as I asked God if I should sleep. "Yes." I checked again as I wanted to make sure I was truly submitted about sleeping. "Yes. I want you to be so at peace trusting me that the world can be in turmoil around you can you can still sleep." So I slept.

When I awoke in the morning the fan was still squealing. I remembered that my brother's furnace fan squealed once and he fixed it by simply cleaning it. I felt like I should have cleaned mine before going to sleep. "No. You were right to sleep."

I turned my furnace off and cleaned the fan. When I put it back in the furnace and turned it back on the fan froze. Now my furnace didn't work at all. "What would you have done if this had happened last night?" I would have gotten very cold, that is what would have happened. Now the sun was shining and my mobile home was actually getting warmer - even with the furnace not working.

I looked in the phone book and called a furnace repair place. Since I lived way out in the country the place was going to add a charge for the travel time. I told them I would have to think about it.

"Lord, I need to get my furnace fixed. I need someone close."

I heard the sound of a vehicle running and went to my front window. There was a furnace repair van at my neighbor's house. Now that was close! Because they were already there they didn't charge me for travel time.

Another bonus: while I waited for the repair to be completed I was able to spend still more time reading the Bible.

### **E: Temptation to Doubt**

I was working with God to learn how to pray. I would pray a prayer and then have the thought, "I wonder if it will work this time?" When I had this thought I would conclude that I was doubting and that because of doubting my prayer would not work. So I would

work to increase my faith. One time when I had that thought I recognized it as a temptation to doubt rather than a doubt coming from my heart. It didn't mean my prayer would not work. I had a responsibility to reject the temptation to doubt the same as I would a temptation to sin and if I did that my prayer would still be on track. The temptation is a key attack Satan uses against prayer.

### **F: You've Gone Too Far**

I was praying for a wife. While praying the prayer the way God was instructing me to pray it I had this thought,

“You’ve gone too far. You will never find someone who believes what you believe.”

The too far comment referred to my having decided to leave the church I was attending because of unbelief coming from the pulpit. I had sought God and felt that I could not grow in faith there. I needed to go deeper in God than I could go there. I recognized the source of the thought and understood it was an attack and a lie.

“Thank you. Your attack tells me two things. That is a lie - that means that there is someone who believes what I believe. You would not attack me like this if I wasn't getting close to something. I'm going to keep going. Even if what you said is true and I never find someone who believes what I believe, I'm going deeper in God.”

The next day I came back to my desk at work and there was a young lady asking about Bible teaching tapes. She is now my wife.

### **G: Hearing Seed Spoken Spiritually**

A few years ago I had an experience where I heard someone speaking spiritually.

I was at work when I realized that I was getting angry. It was particularly noteworthy because I no reason to be angry. Somehow I realized that someone else was angry at me and I was perceiving their anger. This person was in the same building I was in, but in a room in a different part of the building. I was experiencing a temptation to be angry. They were sowing spiritual seeds of anger spiritually, not audibly. Those seeds were attempting to spread to me, conceive, and bring forth more anger. I cast down the temptation and came to peace. A short while later the angry person came into my office and expressed their anger using audible words. Fortunately, since I had become aware of the spiritual attack I remained calm and did not respond with anger. When I reflected

on this experience I could see a number of other times where a similar thing had occurred – times when I didn't realize what was happening, I accepted the corrupt seed, it conceived, and I became angry. In those situations, I became a sower of the seed of anger.

### **H: Seeing the Sowing War**

Hearing seed spoken spiritually really opened my eyes to the sowing war. I could see instances in the past where different seed had been sown in a different manner. I had asked God to guide me into the truth of the identities of the scroll and horsemen in the book of Revelation. After he guided me to the truth of their identities I did some searching in the Calvin College library to see what others had written. There are almost as many different proposed identities as there are authors. Clearly there are many incorrect ones. This is an example where Satan has sown a lot of deception in an attempt to suppress the truth. Something similar can be seen regarding the understanding of the seventh chapter of Romans.



# **Appendix A: Hearing and Discerning the Spirit of God**



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## I: Hearing and Discerning the Spirit of God

The following material is from my *The Guiding Into Truth Work of the Holy Spirit* book.

### A: Perceiving the Spirit of Truth

Jesus tells us to take heed what and how we hear. He is speaking of what we hear spiritually more than he is speaking of what we hear with our ears. He also goes on to tell us that God will measure things to us according to the measure we use in measuring. One application of this principle is in giving. Another is in how we measure truth.

We perceive the Spirit of Truth through the various ways he guides us:

- Witnesses with testimony
- Messengers with messages
- Teachers teaching
- The Word of God
  - Witnesses or messengers
  - Teachers teaching
- Dreams, visions, prophecy, signs and wonders

We may hear the words of witnesses or messengers with our ears, but we hear what the Spirit of Truth is saying in their testimony and messages in our thoughts. Our thoughts is the area where we need to take heed what and how we hear – and how we measure.

The biggest problem is how do we know what is the Spirit of Truth and what is not? Fortunately, God has given us instructions. He has also described how the Spirit of Truth works compared to how evil spirits work. So, we recognize the Spirit of Truth by using the ways the Scriptures tell us to use and we measure the words and fruit of the spirit speaking and compare them to the standard of the Word of God.

### B: Necessary safety precautions

As one might imagine, some very bad things could happen if one mistakenly follows what is spoken by an evil spirit. Bad things could also happen if one mistakenly rejects the guiding of the Spirit. Not attempting to hear and be guided by the Spirit rejects his guiding. The consequences of this is living on the fruit of our own way.

There are two main safety precautions we should take to reduce the risk of not correctly discerning the truth in our hearing. The first is putting on the armor of God.

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, (Ephesians 6:10-17)

The prayer is simple, but very effective.

Father, we thank you in the name of Jesus for your armor and we put on your armor: truth, righteousness, the preparation of the gospel of peace, faith, salvation and the sword of your Spirit.

The second is to submit our desires, beliefs, will, words, and thoughts – those things that work to cause bias in our hearing.

### **C: Discerning (measuring) the Spirit of Truth**

When we hear a spirit speak to us, we determine if it is the Spirit of Truth by looking at corroborating evidence: the evidence that the Scriptures instruct us to use. The burden of proof of truth is on the spirit speaking, not on us. We ask the spirit to provide evidence of the truthfulness of what it is saying. We ask the Spirit of Truth to give us evidence of the source of what the spirit is saying. We may not, however, be like the Pharisees and demand more evidence than is necessary to trust.

Our responsibility is to hear the evidence given, trust and obey the Spirit of Truth. Corroborating evidence may come from any of the ways the Spirit of Truth guides us.

- Witnesses with testimony
- Messengers with messages
- Teachers teaching
- The Word of God

- Witnesses or messengers
- Teachers teaching
- Dreams, visions, prophecy, signs and wonders
- We perceive the Spirit of Truth speaking to us in our thoughts

**1: Ask the spirit to confess Jesus is come in the flesh (1 John 4:1-3)**

The first thing to do is ask the spirit to confess that Jesus is come in the flesh. The Spirit of Truth will not be offended. After all, he inspired John to tell us to do this.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. (1 John 4:1-3)

As you hear the spirit in your thoughts, you can ask it to confess in your thoughts. In your thoughts ask, "Is Jesus Christ come in the flesh?" God has told us how his Spirit will answer and how an evil spirit will answer.

See Discerning the Sower on Page 91 in Real-Life Examples for an example when I first learned to discern the sower.

**2: Ask the spirit to confess Jesus is Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3)**

God tells us another confession that can only be made by the Spirit.

No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3)

Just as in the previous confession, ask the spirit speaking to you to confess that "Jesus is Lord."

**3: Listen for the fruit of the Spirit (Matthew 7:15-18, Galatians 5:22-23)**

Jesus tells us that we recognize true and false prophets (including spirits) by their fruits.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; (Galatians 5:22-23)

When the Spirit speaks he will do so in a way that expresses the fruit of the Spirit. An evil spirit will not. An evil spirit will frequently be accusing, condemning, harsh, etc..

Listen for the fruit of the Spirit when asking the spirit to confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh or that Jesus is Lord. An evil spirit may try to confess Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, but does so in a way that is bitter, snotty, grudging, etc..

#### **4: Listen for the viewpoint expressed (1 John 4:5)**

The Spirit will speak from God's viewpoint concerning things of God and his kingdom. An evil spirit speaks from the world's viewpoint concerning this of this world.

They (spirits of antichrist) are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, (1 John 4:5)

An evil spirit typically speaks of cares of this world, lust of other things, pleasures of this life, trust in false riches, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, what others think of us.

The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. (Mark 4:19)

For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life (how we want others to think of us)—is not from the Father but is from the world. (1 John 2:16)

#### **5: Listen to how the spirit listens to you (1 John 4:6)**

The Spirit of God is courteous and respectful. He is sent to help us so he is sensitive to our needs.

Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (1 John 4:6)

#### **6: Ask for confirming scripture (2 Corinthians 13:1)**

Compare what the spirit says to the standard of truth: God's word. Ask the spirit to give you confirming scripture. You may hear the scripture directly, see it when you read the Bible, or hear it spoken by someone else.

Your word is truth. (John 17:17)

They (the Jews in Berea) received the word (preached by Paul and Silas) with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. (Acts 17:11)

Typically, when the message from the spirit of God fits scripture, it does so simply, plainly, and powerfully.

They (the words of wisdom from God) are all straight to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge. (Proverbs 8:9)

The message from God also tends to fit more spiritually rather than carnally.

It is important to have the spirit demonstrate how what it is saying fits with scripture and not measure by how we think it fits.

#### **7: Does what the spirit says “raise the bar”**

What God speaks to us typically directs us to a higher level of life: frequently a level beyond our ability to reach – a level that requires us to submit to God's power.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Some examples where God “raises the bar:”

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (John 13:34)

A person who claims to be continuing in union with Jesus ought to conduct his life the way Jesus did. (1 John 2:6)

Go and sin no more. (John 5:14, 8:11)

#### **8: Is what the spirit says consistent with God being sole source of truth?**

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4-5)

Satan was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:6-9)

**9: Does it convict of sin, righteousness, judgment? (John 16:8)**

When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

**10: Does what the spirit says glorify Jesus? (John 16:13-14)**

The Spirit of Truth will glorify me,

**11: Is it consistent with intentions and character of God (2 Tim 3:14-17)**

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

**12: Do others led by God have a confirming witness? (1 Corinthians 14:29)**

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.

Let the spirit provide the confirming witnesses. The burden of evidence is on the spirit, not us. Soliciting the witness of others carries some risks: are they measuring correctly, without bias, etc..

Hearing a spirit with a message in a public meeting presents a special case. In that case, it is more appropriate to seek out a confirming witness from one appointed to such a role in the meeting.

**13: Confirmation in objectively verifiable events or facts? (Deuteronomy 18:21-22)**

'How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken? '— when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; (Deuteronomy 18:21-22)

**14: Does what the spirit says work to produce the fruit of the Spirit? (Matthew 7:15-18, Galatians 5:22-23)**

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. (Matthew 7:15-18)

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self- control; (Galatians 5:22-23)

**15: Does what the spirit says work in the direction of sanctification? (John 17:17)**

Sanctify them in the truth;

**16: Does what the spirit says work in the direction of freedom from sin and bondage? (John 8:31-36)**

"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

**17: Is what the spirit says true in creation?**

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. (Romans 1:20)

Jesus used examples from creation as evidence of truth in his teaching.

Every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Matthew 7:17-19)

**18: Does what the spirit says change or waver?**

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:14)

**D: Discerning (measuring) the Spirit of Truth versus your own thoughts**

The risk of mistaking our thoughts for the Spirit is greatly reduced if we ask the spirit speaking to provide the evidence of the truth of what is being said and ask the Spirit of Truth of the source. The risk is greatest when we take on the task of providing the evidence.

**1: Ask the Spirit of Truth to guide you into the truth of discerning**

The Spirit will work to help us discern our thoughts.

**2: Listen for viewpoint expressed (1 John 4:5)**

They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world's viewpoint, (1 John 4:5)

Just as the world speaks from the world's viewpoint, our thoughts will tend to speak from our viewpoint. Is the thought speaking from God's viewpoint – how things relate to God and his will, or is the thought speaking from our viewpoint – how things relate to and affect us? Whose resources, skills, and ways are involved – ours' or God's?

**3: Is what the spirit says consistent with our thought patterns and desires?**

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

God is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20)

Our thoughts are typically consistent with our previous thoughts and our desires. Our desires and beliefs work to create a bias in what we think, do, and say. God may speak to us along lines that do work to provide things we desire. When he does so, the burden of proof of the source of what is said is on him.

Note: One desire to be especially alert for is the desire to be seen by ourselves or others as right. Self-righteousness is a very strong deceiving force.

**E: How to hear the Spirit of Truth more consistently**

The Spirit of Truth speaks to those to whom God sends him. God sends him to those who meet the necessary conditions. When the Spirit speaks to us we need to hear him. We can hear more consistently by training our ear to hear and recognize him when he speaks.

**1: Obey / align**

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper (John 14:14-16)

God sends the Spirit to speak to those who obey him.

Whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. (1 John 3:22)

If you turn at my (wisdom's) reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you. (Proverbs 1:23)

Those who keep God's commandments receive from him when they ask God to send the Spirit to guide them into truth.

God gives to those who give.

Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you. (Luke 6:37-38)

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

The Spirit testifies about Jesus and glorifies him. When we praise God and give him thanks, the Spirit will frequently join our praise with testimony that glorifies Jesus. (Note: The entire book of Revelation is a revelation of Jesus (testimony that glorifies Jesus) that God gave to Jesus to show his servants.)

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about Jesus. (John 15:26)

He will glorify me (John 16:14)

The Spirit helps us pray – especially when we are praying for others.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

The Spirit also helps us testify of Jesus.

Do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. (Matthew 10:19-20)

## **2: Ask**

God is faithful to send the Spirit to guide those who ask.

You do not have, because you do not ask. (James 4:2)

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who

knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (Luke 11:9-12)

We must trust God to send the Spirit when we ask. Doubting will hinder hearing.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; (James 1:5-7)

Asking for wrong reasons will also hinder hearing.

You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. (James 4:3)

God sends the Spirit to those who ask for truth to glorify Jesus, to become more fruitful, and to know God better.

### **3: Forgive**

Whenever you stand praying, forgive. (Mark 11:25)

We have what we ask in prayer when we obey God and do what is pleasing in his sight (by his measuring). Forgiving is pleasing in his sight. Not forgiving is not pleasing to him.

"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:37-38)

### **4: Value the guiding of the Spirit**

If you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. (Proverbs 2:1-5)

I rejoice in the way of your instruction more than in any kind of wealth. (Psalms 119:14)

The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces. (Psalms 119:72)

We hear the Spirit according to the value we place on what he says to us. If we consider what he says to be of great value, he will speak more to us. If we consider what he says to be worth little, he will speak little to us.

Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded, Because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you, when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. (Proverbs 1:24-28)

"Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you.

Value what the Spirit tells you enough to do what he tells you to do and record truth he reveals to you: index cards, audio recording, computer file, etc..

## **5: Be spiritually minded**

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Philippians 4:8)

The Spirit speaks of spiritual things. When we think of spiritual things we are more in tune with what he speaks.

We should work to avoid thinking about tares – the cares of this world, pleasures of this life, false riches, and desires for other things. (Matthew 13:22, 11-13, Mark 4:18-19, Luke 8:14)

As Jesus says:

“Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father

knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:31-33)

#### **6: Sow the Word of God into your heart (Matthew 13:18-23)**

Sowing the Word of God into our hearts serves at least two purposes. First, it works to build within us a standard of truth for measuring truth. Second, it produces fruit within us that helps us hear.

"Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." (Matthew 13:18-23)

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

#### **7: Sow the book of Proverbs into your heart (Proverbs 1:1-6)**

All scripture is profitable for building a standard and working to help us hear. The book of Proverbs, however, is written in a condensed way to be particularly effective in building a standard of truth within us and helping us perceive truth.

The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth — Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. (Proverbs 1:1-6)

The Word of God sown into our heart works to replace our experience as the standard we compare to when we measure what we perceive. The book of Proverbs is inspired specifically for concentrated standard building.

The standard we compare to is a critical foundation for aligning with truth. It is necessary to correctly measure what is, what is possible, processes, paths, the state of our being, and how we change.

### **8: Ask God for fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1:23-25, 28-31)**

Our desires and our reasoning are pretty powerful and pervasive forces. Fear of the Lord works to overcome these and helps us trust in God to guide us.

If you turn at my correction, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you. Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded, because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my correction, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you, when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. **Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord**, would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices. For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them; but whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster." (Proverbs 1:23-33)

There is a fear of the Lord which is a reverence for a holy God whose very being is so intense that it destroys that which is unclean. There is another fear of the Lord which is a revelation of truth from him that there are certain circumstances which will destroy us: circumstances that we are unable to avoid without his guidance and are unable to overcome without his help. The key to being trapped by these circumstances is to trust in our own perception of truth to select our path and order our steps. The key to avoiding these circumstances and overcoming them is to trust in God for our perception of truth and to trust in him to select our path and order our steps. Ironically, fear of the Lord leads to great confidence and boldness because we have the certainty that, if we trust in God and let him direct our path, we are absolutely as safe as we can possibly be.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. (Proverbs 3:5-7)



## **Appendix B: The Flesh and the Spirit**



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## I: The Flesh and The Spirit

Scripture tells us that sowing to the flesh will lead to destruction and sowing to the spirit will lead to eternal life. But what is the flesh? Do we sow to the spirit or Spirit? If we sow to the spirit, what is it?

The person sowing to his own flesh, of the flesh shall reap corruption; and he who is sowing to the spirit, of the spirit shall reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:8)

The desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. (Galatians 5:17)

Here is a really good place not to lean to our own understanding, but follow the Spirit of Truth who God has sent to guide us into all the truth.

Father, in the name of Jesus, please send your Spirit of Truth to guide me and lead me into the truth of “the flesh” and “the spirit.”

### A: The Flesh

The word translated “flesh” in the Old Testament comes from the word basar. In the New Testament it comes primarily from the word sarx. In both the Old and New Testaments the word “flesh” is used with a number of different meanings. We must look at the context of how it is used to determine the meaning.

It is used to mean “mankind” in Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17, Isaiah 66:23, and Genesis 6:12. It is used to mean “all living things” in Genesis 6:17. In Genesis 37:27 and Romans 11:14 it is used to mean “kinsman.” In Romans 4:1 it means “genealogy or lineage. It means “body tissue” in Genesis 2:21 and Luke 24:39. In Genesis 9:4 and Revelation 19:18 it means “meat.”

One of the ways the New Testament uses the term “flesh” is to contrast “the flesh” with “the spirit.” This usage is a little more complicated than the other uses of the term “flesh.” We need to be diligent about looking at how it is used and not lean to our own understanding in order to correctly perceive what “the flesh” is.

Here are some examples from the New Testament.

The desires of the flesh are against the desires of the spirit. (Galatians 5:17)

You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, **gratifying the desires of our flesh** and following its will and thoughts. (Ephesians 2:1-3)

Beloved, I urge you as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from the **desires of the flesh**, which war against your soul. (1 Peter 2:11)

Thoughts and desires are attributed to “the flesh.” They are, however, also attributed to the heart.

The flesh is also said to have works.

The works of the flesh are evident: **sexual immorality**, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, **envy**, drunkenness, orgies, **and things like these**. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Jesus attributes works like these to the heart and says only the heart brings forth sin.

What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, **sexual immorality**, theft, false witness, slander. (Matthew 15:18-19)

From within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, **sexual immorality**, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, **envy**, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person. (Mark 7:21-23)

When the New Testament uses the term “the flesh” in connection with corrupt desires, corrupt works, and sin; and in comparison to “the spirit” it is using it to refer to the portion of man's heart that has taken Satan's corrupt seed into its being. It is the evil treasure of an evil person's heart. It is the portion of the heart with corrupt trees bringing forth corrupt fruit.

## **B: The Spirit**

The original New Testament Greek was written in uncials – all capital letters. Translators used the context to determine when some words – like spirit – should be capitalized as a title, or not. In many of the comparisons between “the flesh” and “the spirit,” the comparison better fits the spirit of man, rather than the Spirit of God.

For the desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other. (Galatians 5:17)

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22)

Some of the fruit of the spirit is associated with the heart.

Put on hearts of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. (Colossians 3:12)

“The spirit,” in contrast with “the flesh,” is the portion of a man's heart that has not accepted Satan's corrupt seed into its being. It has accepted the Word of God into its being. It is the good treasure of a good man's heart. It is the portion of the heart with good trees bringing forth good fruit.