Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter.
Francis Chan

Man looks to Man for answers. Disciples of Christ know better. They look to the WORD of GOD and the leading of the Holy Spirit.
Jonas Clark

Spiritual Warfare and Deliverance
Prayer Study #553L
LESSON TWELVE

We are now at the midpoint of this course. In this lesson I will be discussing some miscellaneous topics, which I believe relate to spiritual warfare in one way or another. AFTER this lesson, most of the rest of the course will concentrate on such topics as the many weapons the Lord has given us to fight the kingdom of darkness, the symptoms of demonization, keys to getting free and staying free, some practical suggestions for the deliverance ministry session, why some are not delivered, self-deliverance, ministry to children, and ethical and legal questions pertaining to deliverance ministry. So, you see, we have a long way to go, and I hope you will hang in there with us!

A ROOT OF BITTERNESS

A root of bitterness is a common problem in churches and ministries and yet hardly ever addressed from the pulpit. What is it and why am I throwing it into the middle

of a course on spiritual warfare? These are the questions I hope to answer in this section.

The "go to" scripture on a root of bitterness is found in Hebrews 12:14-15: *Pursue peace with all people and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble and by this many become defiled.*

There are generally two points of view about a root of bitterness. I personally subscribe to the point of view which is held by the ministry, *Love Worth Finding*. This position says that a root of bitterness is bitterness in a heart that harbors hostility and old hurts. People with this root of bitterness look for things to criticize, find faults in others, are hypersensitive, ungrateful, and insincere. They hold grudges and have mood swings and have great difficulty forgiving people. This root of bitterness so overwhelms their personalities that, although they call themselves Christians, God is not real to them, and they falsely feel abandoned by the Lord.

In this viewpoint, the root of bitterness is about relationships between brothers and sisters in Christ or even more tragically about the relationship between a person and the Lord. For example, some parents become bitter towards the Lord because they have had a child to die. They blame God and open themselves over to a root of bitterness. Blaming God for what satan does has always puzzled me. The Lord came to give life, but the enemy came to steal, kill and destroy, and he has the legal right, as prince of this world, because of mankind's sin (John 10:10: ***"The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to***

destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"). (John 14:30: ***"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me"***).

J. Vernon McGee, supporting this first position, comments on the root of bitterness: "One critical, ugly saint in a church can stir up more trouble that you can possibly imagine, just like one rotten apple in a barrel spoils all the others. We need to ask God for grace to endure whatever we are going through, and not become bitter toward any one or toward any circumstances."

The second theological position on the root of bitterness is a little more complicated. The people who take this second position do not see a root of bitterness as being about relationships with individuals. One who has a root of bitterness has a problem with the whole Body of Christ. He or she has been defiled by false doctrines. This person once genuinely believed but was lead astray by false teachers and false teachings. This individual is deceived, comes against the unity of a congregation of believers, and is against the entire body of believers.

We find scriptural warnings that back this second theological view. In the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 29:16-18, for example, reads: *.....for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by, and you saw their abominations and their idols which were among them-wood and stone and silver and gold: so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and*

serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood….

In the New Testament, Hebrew 3:12-15 reads: *"Beware, brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'TODAY,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of CHRIST, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: 'TODAY, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.'"*

The following fruits of the root of bitterness came from Reverend Lev Humphries of Faith Independent Baptist Church in Niceville, Florida in a 2008 message:

Now here are a few of the fruits of the root of bitterness:

1. Defilement. Heb. 12:15 Our hearts and lives are contaminated before God. We become unclean before God. Sin abides in our hearts. James 3:6 describes the same truth concerning the tongue which "defileth the whole body."
2. Division is a fruit of the root of bitterness. It divides the bitter person from fellowship with God, family, friends and drives away the ones who love us the most. Cain in Gen. 3 is a good example. Surely he and his family missed the closeness of each other's company all because he became bitter.
3. Deadness to the Holy Spirit and the things of God is a fruit of the root of bitterness. Bitterness controls and consumes the heart and keeps the bitter one from sensing the sweet presences of God. Eph. 4:30-31

shows that these things including bitterness "grieve the Holy Spirit."

4. Deception is a fruit of the root of bitterness. I have been amazed at the deception bitter people live with. Many times, they cannot see where they are wrong and they feel justified to be bitter. We never try to win over something we will not admit is true. I have had people say very bitterly, "I AM NOT BITTER!"
5. Depression is a fruit of the root of bitterness. Bitter people have poison in their heart and the first victim of bitterness is the bitter person. They live in mental anguish and are consumed with the object of their bitterness. Not all depression comes from bitterness but all bitterness has a measure of depression.
6. Delirium (madness) is a fruit of the root of bitterness. A bitter person carries a certain amount of anger into the bitter stage. That is why Eph. 4: 30-31 mentions all the other kindred attitudes: bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking and malice.
7. Damage is a fruit of the root of bitterness. The longer a person stays bitter, the more damage is done in every personal relationship including fellowship with the Lord. The longer they suffer from bitterness, the more suffering they spread with their bitterness. It affects whole families, whole Churches, friends and chips away at the foundation of their faith.
8. Distraction is a fruit of the root of bitterness. Cannot fellowship with the Lord without thinking about the source of the bitterness. Cannot pray without thinking about the source of the bitterness. Cannot listen quietly and contently to the Word of God without

thinking of the source of bitterness. Cannot live a successful Christian life with the fruit of the Holy Spirit described in Gal. 5:22-23

9. Finally and sometimes fatally, sometimes bitterness determines destiny, and instead of being broken and born again, the bitter one is bound in the chains of sin and sorrow. And even more sadly, many times the bitterness spreads to others and the bitterness of one keeps the other from coming to Christ. Let me explain. When a father or mother allows bitterness to take them out of Church, they take their children with them and away from the environment best suited to reach their hearts. (Romans 10:9-17)

HOLINESS

The ultimate goal of spiritual warfare is to destroy the evil kingdom of darkness. We, individually and corporately, must do warfare against this demonic kingdom wherever we find it. Unfortunately most of the Church is never taught to fight and is content to sit on the sidelines and not engage in the battle. But there is a remnant of genuine believers, a people who are not content to sit idly by in half-heartedness and complacency (Revelation 3:15-16: ***"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you about of my mouth"***) and ignorance (Hosea 4:6a: *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me*).

One main requirement for engaging in high level warfare between the Kingdom of Jesus, the Blessed Son of God and God the Son, versus the evil empire is holy living (1st Thessalonians 4:7: *FOR GOD did not call us to uncleanness but in holiness*.) Holiness is what we all should long for in our walk with Jesus. This quality is very difficult at times (Hebrews 12:10-11: *For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it)* because we live in a fallen and increasingly wicked world. Even the great Christian Paul struggled with holiness, admitting that "*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice"*-Romans 7:18-19.

The Prophet's Dictionary defines *holiness* this way: "The state of being consecrated and sanctified to God from sin. It is holiness in conduct that springs from holy thoughts, emotions, desires, and determination. It is a willful holiness that resolutely exists to produce and perform what is right, recognize and shun what is not, and impart the power and excelling virtues of both to those around. This is more than sanctification or consecration. It is the grounds upon which both can be accomplished and biblical redemption is exhibited. Being holy is the state of being dedicated and devoted to God by being separated from sin."

Holiness is such an important virtue to the Lord that He uses holiness to describe Himself (Exodus 15:11-) and tells us that one way to show worship to Him is to walk in the beauty of holiness (1st Chronicles 16:29: *Give to the LORD the glory due His name! Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!)* It is a way of separating ourselves unto God (2nd Chronicles 31:18b: *…for in their faithfulness they sanctified themselves in holiness.*)

Isaiah speaks of the coming Kingdom, "*A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it. It shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away"* (Isaiah 35:8-10).

Jeremiah tells us the results of walking away from holiness: *"Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: This is what the Lord says: 'I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of His harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them,'" declares the Lord. "Hear the words of the Lord, you descendants of Jacob, all you clans of Israel. This is*

what the Lord says: 'What fault did your ancestors find in Me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. They did not ask, "Where is the Lord?", who brought us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and ravines, a land of drought and utter darkness, a land where no one travels and no one lives? I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable'" (Jeremiah 2:2-7).

We are called to be holy, and it is not characterized by beehive hairdos, no make-up, and long dresses. It has to do with the heart. I am not there yet, but I hope to be as I grow in wisdom and knowledge through the Word of God. 1st Peter 1:15-19: *...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy," and if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

PRAYING WITH AN IDOL IN YOUR HEART

...any man in the house of Israel who sets up his idol in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will be

brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols. Ezekiel 14:4

What is an idol? An idol is anything that you want or enjoy more than you want God. In the Old Testament we do not find the children of Israel ascending from idol worship to pure worship of God, rather we find true believers falling, usually at the influence of a religious leader, to idol worship. Those believers who worship idols are practicing spiritual adultery. Examples of idols in our day are the human body, money, sports, houses, cars, relationships, etc. Idols do not have to be materialistic. Galatians 5:19-20, for example, associates idolatry with sexual sin, not a materialistic object. Idols can possess a demonic presence whether materialistic or not.

When you go to the Lord in prayer, you have to lay down your own will and be a living sacrifice, seeking and asking for His will alone. You must be totally sold out to the will of God in whatever issue that you are praying about. If you don't have that attitude of self-denial and of really seek His will, not yours, you need to pray that God first change your attitude, and when He does, then you will be free to pray. If you already have a definite direction in your mind as to how the Lord should answer this prayer, that becomes an idol of your own will and causes you to think that God is answering the way you want, whether He actually is or not. If your will is His alone, whatever His will is, then the answer from the Lord will be pure revelation, not contaminated by your own desires. A true word from the Lord comes when you are fixing your eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith (Hebrews 12:2).

The best example of praying with an idol in one's heart is the story of Balaam, the prophet. Balaam was hired by Balak to seduce the new nation of Israel through sorcery, divination, and other occultic powers. Balak wanted the Israelites to defect from the powerful God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to the pagan Moabite religion. As you might remember from an previous lesson, Moab was the son fathered when Lot's eldest daughter got Lot drunk so that she could have an incestuous sexual relationship with Lot. The Israelites were ordered to have nothing to do with the Moabites.

In Numbers 22-24, Balak asked Balaam to come to him and curse the enemies of Balak which were the Israelites, God's chosen people. The Lord told Balaam not to go and not to curse the Israelites. Balak, however, sent messengers with promises from Balak to Balaam. He said that he would give Balaam honor, riches, and gold, if Balaam would come. Balaam wanted these things more than he wanted God's will. He prayed with this idol in his heart and so he falsely interpreted the word from the Lord as "Sure! Go ahead!"

God was angry with Balaam and sent an angel with a sword to block his path. This is when Balaam's donkey spoke. This stopped Balaam in his tracks. Unfortunately, however, Balaam eventually returned to Balak's payroll and Balaam seduced the Israelite males into orgiastic rituals with the Moabite women and from there into worship of the Moabite god. Balaam was finally slain by Joshua's army in Joshua 13:22.

Other examples of people praying with an idol in their hearts, where they prayed for what they wanted instead of

for God's will are when Israel wanted a king and got Saul, and when Israel lusted for meat in the wilderness, and God gave them the meat but also sent leanness to their souls (Psalm 106:14-15).

RECEIVING A PROPHET'S REWARD

"Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward."

Matthew 10:41

Finis Dake, approaching this verse from the negative side, comments: "Receiving a false prophet as a true one, or a wicked man posing as a righteous man, will not be rewarded. If a person receives such or bids him GOD-speed, one is a partaker of his evil deeds. We cannot receive every teacher of religion and expect to be rewarded even if we make a mistake. We will be judged for the mistake, for we are plainly told, 'by their fruits ye shall know them' (Matthew 7:15-20). We must be more intelligent than to give our money and hospitality to every man posing as a minister."

William Barclay, approaching this verse from the positive side, writes: "When Jesus said this [Matthew 10:41], he was using a way of speaking which the Jews regularly used. The Jews always felt that to receive a person's envoy or messenger was the same as to receive that person. To pay respect to an ambassador was the same as to pay respect to the king who sent him. To welcome with love the messenger of a friend was the same as to welcome the

friend. The Jews always felt that to honor the person who was sent by the representative was the same as honoring the person who had sent the representative."

Barclay goes on to point out that we cannot all be prophets and preach and proclaim the word of God, but those who give hospitality and welcome to a prophet will receive no less a reward than that prophet.

We know of at least three things in the scripture that people, who received a prophet in the name of a prophet, received. First, they received revelation from heaven. Secondly, they received miracles of sons and daughters being raised from the dead, coming back home, or being healed. Finally, they received provision or prosperity.

Again, we must judge the prophet and the righteous man, not by their gifts, but by their fruits: Matthew 7:15-20: ***"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them."***

CHARISMATIC WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft is rooted in manipulation and control. It is defined in *The Prophet's Dictionary* by Dr. Paula Price as "…the practice of abusing creation for one's own purposes by the imposition of demonic desires upon the will and lives of others by magic, sorcery, and other occultic

means." She further states that witchcraft is "…nothing more than a seductive trap to deceive people into using their free will agency to unlawfully intrude into the destiny and fate of others."

The Prophet's CALL defines charismatic witchcraft for us: "What is charismatic witchcraft? In the simplest form it is the practice of trying to control others. The person performing Charismatic Witchcraft may not like you or approve of you. They have judged you in their hearts, so he or she will pray against you in an attempt to control. They try to take the place of God, exercising control over other Christians. It can come from well-meaning, though deceived, Christians who are in fact praying against us instead of for us. There is power in this because whatever is released on earth is released in heaven, and whatever is bound on earth is bound in heaven. If intercession is motivated by a spirit of control or manipulation, it is witchcraft, and its power is just as real as that of black magic."

AMERICA'S CULTURAL SHIFT TO THE DARK SIDE
BY JONAS CLARK

1. Video games home school our children in violence.
2. MTV models the way for a culture of immorality, rebellion, and "alternate lifestyles."
3. Reality television programs broadcast the lives of immoral Jezebel drama queens and dysfunctional families.
4. Hollywood celebrates a culture of violence, Goth, vampires, death, the occult, and witchcraft.

5. Music promotes a gangster lifestyle and sexual debauchery.
6. The rise of illegitimate births confirms the rise of a bastard nation without fathers. (Illegitimate births in the U.S. total 40.7% of all births. Whites represent 29.1 %, Blacks 72.3%, Native Americans 66.2%, Asian/Pacific Islanders 17.2%, and Hispanics 53.3%).
7. Church entertainment replaced Holy Ghost visitation.
8. Looking to the State and politicians for protection and provision best known as entitlements.
9. Millions of aborted children paid for with taxpayer funds.
10. Yoga, Hindu spiritualism, replaced Christian prayer in school.
11. Preachers stopped preaching about the blood of Christ, sin, immorality, and reprobate homosexuality.
12. Wizards, warlocks, mutterers, New Age mystics, "Chrislam," false prophets, and doctrines of demons embraced.
13. Christian television stopped being Christian.
14. Worldly culture ushered into "seeker friendly churches" replaced the Gospel of the Kingdom to invade, occupy and take dominion.
15. Same sex marriage replaces mom and dad.
16. Ordaining homosexuals into the priesthood.
17. Drugging America's children with dangerous psychotrophic drugs. Have we listened to the side effects of the drug advertisements? Stop using, "if you have thoughts of suicide…" How much difference is there between suicide and homicide?

18. The rise of "pretty boy" preachers with watered down "grace only" sermonettes.
19. Coming to church for personal blessing instead of spiritual equipping.
20. Liberal and politically correct, say nothing, weak leadership.

WHAT SALVATION REALLY IS

My people are destroyed through lack of knowledge....
Hosea 4:6

Most Christian believers are never taught that the word *salvation* in scripture is much more than just the new birth. I would in no way degrade the new birth, for without being born again, none of the other aspects of salvation would be viable.

But, by simply taking a Strong's Concordance and looking up both the Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) words for "salvation," we see the astounding breadth and depth of the word. In both the Old and New Testaments, the word literally means: DELIVERANCE, PRESERVATION, PROSPERITY, HEALING, SOUNDNESS OR WHOLENESS (through and through), and AID (help and comfort).

Yes, SALVATION involves the new birth, but it is so much more! It encompasses all of the promises of God, YES and AMEN! 2nd Corinthians 1:20: *For all the promises of God in Him are "Yes", and in Him "Amen", to the glory of God through us.*

A RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

One of the most dangerous spirits in the church today-and since the beginning of the church in the New Testament-is the religious spirit. In fact, it was the religious spirit that crucified Christ.

Jonas Clark says, "Religious spirits fear loss of position, new things, and being wrong. They will oppose all whom they feel threatens their sense of importance. The spirit of religion is always frightened by those who are anointed by the Holy Spirit because religious spirits sit in seats of governing authority that do not belong to them. The religious church is a man-motivated, dead religious works oriented, carnal church that has a form of godliness, void of the presence of the Holy Spirit."

People with religious spirits have a form of godliness and are always critical of other people's walks with God. They desire position and honor in the church more than honor from God, and they receive their main identity in the things they attempt to do for God instead of in their relationship with Jesus.

Rick Joyner in his book *Overcoming Evil in the Last Days* lists 25 characteristics of the religious spirit:

A PERSON WITH A RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

1) Will be unable to accept a rebuke, especially from those they judge to be less spiritual than themselves.

2) Will have a philosophy that, "I will not listen to people, but only to God." Since God frequently speaks through people this is an obvious delusion, revealing serious spiritual pride.

3) Will be inclined to see more of what is wrong than what is right with other people, other churches, etc. Those who are in a place of true vision will have their attention on what God is doing, not men.

4) Will be subject to an overwhelming feeling of guilt that they can never measure up to the Lord's standards. Guilt is a root of the religious spirit because it causes us to base our relationship with God on our performance rather than on the cross.

5) Will keep score on their spiritual life. This includes feeling better about ourselves because we go to more meetings, read our bibles more, etc. These are noble endeavors, but the true measure of spiritual maturity is getting closer to the Lord.

6) Will believe that they have been appointed to fix everyone else. These persons become the self-appointed watchmen or sheriffs in God's kingdom. They are seldom involved in building, but serve only to keep the Church in a state of annoyance and agitation, if not causing serious division.

7) Will often see their primary mission as the tearing down of whatever they believe is wrong.

8) Will have a leadership style that is bossy, overbearing, and intolerant of the weakness or failures of others.

9) Will have a sense that they are closer to God than other people, or that their lives or ministries are more pleasing to Him. This is a symptom of profound delusion that we draw closer to God because of who we are, rather than through Jesus.

10) Will take pride in their spiritual maturity and discipline, especially as compared to others. True spiritual maturity involves growing up into Christ. When we begin to compare ourselves to others, it is obvious that we have lost sight of the true goal-Jesus.

11) Will believe that they are on the "cutting edge" of what God is doing. This includes thinking that we are involved in the most important thing that God is doing.

12) Will have a mechanical prayer life. When we start feeling relief that our prayer time is over or that we have finally prayed through our prayer list, we should consider our condition. We will never feel relief when our conversations are over with the One we love.

13) Will do things in order to be noticed by people. This is a symptom of idolatry of fearing people more than we fear God.

14) Will be overly repulsed by emotionalism.

15) Will use emotionalism as a substitute for the work of the Holy Spirit. This use of emotionalism includes such things as requiring weeping and wailing as evidence of

repentance, or “falling under the power”. Both of these can be evidences of the true work of the Holy Spirit, but when we require these manifestations we are beginning to move in another spirit.

16) Will be encouraged when their ministries look better than others. We could also include in this being discouraged when it seems that others are looking better or growing faster than they are.

17) Will glory more in what God did in the past than in what He is doing in the present. A religious spirit will always seek to focus our attention on works and on making comparisons, rather than on simply drawing closer to the Lord.

18) Will tend to be suspicious of, or opposed to, new movements, churches, etc. This is an obvious symptom of jealousy, or the pride that asserts that God would not do anything new without doing it through us.

19) Will tend to reject spiritual manifestations that they do not understand. This is a symptom of the pride and arrogance of presuming our opinions are the same as God’s. True humility keeps us teachable and open, patiently waiting for fruit before making judgments.

20) Will overreact to carnality in the church. We need to recognize that people are making progress and do what we can to help them along the way.

21) Will overreact to immaturity in the Church. The idealistic religious spirit only sees the immaturity, without considering the other important factors.

22) Will be overly prone to view supernatural manifestations as evidence of God's approval. This is just another form of keeping score and comparing ourselves with others.

23) Will be unable to join anything that they do not deem perfect or nearly perfect.

24) Will be overly paranoid of the religious spirit. We do not get free of something by fearing it, but by overcoming it with faith in Christ Jesus.

25) Will have a tendency to glory in anything but the cross of Jesus, what He has accomplished, and who He is. If we are building our lives, ministries, or churches on anything else, we are building on a shaky foundation that will not stand.

Those with a religious spirit usually have such a "log in their own eye" that they cannot see their own problems. Paul said, "Test yourself to see if you're in the faith", not your neighbor, not your pastor, not another preacher, but yourself. May God help us!!