

Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

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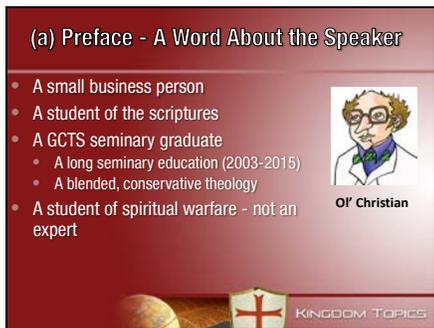
Racing to a BOLDER Faith 5 Segments – 9 Sessions. Thanks for the opportunity to be with you today, and thanks for your interest in this course entitled “Racing to a BOLDER Faith”.

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As a preface to this 9 week series, I'd like to offer some brief remarks about
a. The speaker,
b. The course,
c. The enemy,
d. The boldness of Paul, and
e. Prayer

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This is a portrait that I use for my penname Ol' Christian as he looks more sophisticated than I do. If you were at CCCC on 9/12 when I shared a few words of testimony, *you may recall that I have been a small business entrepreneur since 1986. Since then, it has been a great comfort to me to recall that Jesus surrounded Himself with disciples who were entrepreneurs – fishermen and other small businessmen - and He entrusted them with the leadership of His “Ekklesia” - the Greek word that Jesus used to describe His Church. *Throughout my career I have been a student of the scriptures, and the Lord has graciously provided me with the time to study through a variety of means - including periods of business failure 😊. I read through the Bible cover to cover every year, spend much time in Bible research, and I listen to audio sermons every chance that I get. *I am also a Gordon Conwell Seminary graduate with a Master of Arts in Christian Ministries. Gordon Conwell is an excellent seminary, so please don't hold them responsible for anything that you might find objectionable in

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this course. There are two insights about my seminary education that you might find interesting: *First, I had an unusually long, part-time seminary education 2003-2015, a 12 year process, due to my time and financial limitations during that period. In retrospect, I believe that this extended schedule was a blessing in that it allowed much more optional reading and research on what I had been taught. *Secondly, I have a blended conservative theology. Knowing that CCCC has a long history of being interdenominational, I am hopeful that my approach will be in concert with your long heritage. I like to try to let the Bible speak for itself and I reference the early apostolic church whenever possible, because as we all know, 2000 years of differing theological opinions can sometimes cloud things up a bit 😊. It has always been amazing to me that the Pharisees, a conservative theological group deeply committed to bringing the Jews back into an orthodox relationship to God, could have been so far off in their understanding of the Bible that they killed the Son of God. Amazing! *Finally, I would suggest to you that I am just a student of spiritual warfare – not an expert in this subject - or in any other for that matter. I have studied the Bible a lot, but I'm just a brother of yours in Christ who believes that God wants me to share what I believe that He's been teaching me. So please know that I appreciate any insights that you'd like to share with me along the way.

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(b) Preface - A Word About The Course

1. Getting ready!
2. Intended to be very practical
3. Goal is to put "boots on the ground"
4. At times may need to postpone Q/A
5. Some questions are not easily addressed until foundational elements are in place
6. Topics are "Hebrews 5" topics



KINGDOM TOPICS

Next, I'd like to share a brief word about the course. As I said in the syllabus, I believe that these are exciting times for the Church! We are closer to Christ's return than ever before, and prophetic voices around the world are calling us to get ready for a great outpouring of God's Glory for the End-Time Harvest. So first and foremost, *that's what I believe that this course is all about – getting ready! *Secondly, this information is intended to be very practical and helpful to us in our daily lives. *Simply stated, our goal is to put boots-on-the-ground for the spiritual war in which we are engaged. Please be patient with me as I try to share a lot of biblical information in the clearest way possible. I will do my best to answer questions during class, *but at times we may need to postpone Q&A a bit as *Some questions are not easily addressed until some foundational elements are in place.

*Last, I would suggest that the course topics are "Hebrews 5" topics – topics for mature disciples.

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(b) A Word About The Course (cont.)

Heb 5:11-14 NIV We have much to say about this (the work of Jesus), but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

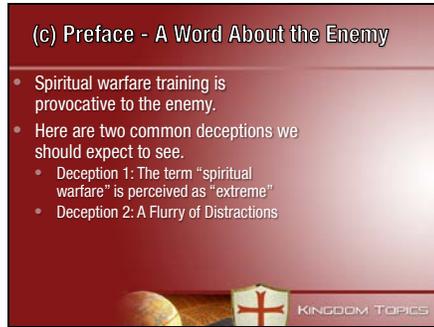


KINGDOM TOPICS

To check that, let's quickly look at Hebrews 5:11-14. *Heb 5:11-14 We have much to say about this (the work of Jesus), but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to **distinguish good from evil**. Clearly, the writer of Hebrews indicates that some Bible teaching may be reserved for mature disciples, and I would humbly suggest that some aspects of spiritual warfare might fall into that category.

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Now, let me share a brief word about the enemy. * Let's not kid ourselves, spiritual warfare training is provocative to the enemy. Satan will do anything he can to keep us from learning biblical ways for the church to defeat him on earth. *So, here are two common deceptions of the enemy that we should expect to see as our course progresses. We will mention some others later in the training. *Deception 1: The term "spiritual warfare" is perceived as "extreme". Believing in the supernatural, as we Christians do, is often seen by our culture as "extreme", and satan often uses that perception to try to discourage us from learning more. Of course, the reality is that the entire message of Jesus IS extreme - (for example, John 14:6 Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me** – a message that is definitely not PC!) so, as Christians we can't be deterred by the "extreme" label in any way. However, to reduce the opportunity for unhelpful mischaracterization, we have titled this class "Racing to a Bolder Faith". Fact is, we must have a bold faith to effectively conduct spiritual warfare, right? So **think of this course as similar to basic training in the military.** Spiritual warfare is always in the picture – even if it is not being talked about specifically. *Deception 2 involves "A Flurry of Distractions". Most Christians have experienced this attack of satan during times of great spiritual growth or "mountaintop" experiences. However, just like Nehemiah in the Old Testament, let's not allow satan's distractions to keep us from building what God has instructed us to build. OK?

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(d) Preface – The Boldness of Paul

- Why should we seek more boldness?
- Paul did!
- Eph 6:19-20 “And [pray] for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth **boldly**, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak **boldly**, as I ought to speak.” KJV
- 1 Cor. 11:1 “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” NIV



So, why should we seek more boldness? *The short answer is - because the Apostle Paul did! *Eph 6:19-20 says “And [pray] for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth **boldly**, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak **boldly**, as I ought to speak. KJV If Paul was asking for more boldness (and he was pretty bold!), we should be seeking it as well! And if we had any doubt about that, Paul says *in 1 Corinthians 11:1 “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” NIV

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(e) Preface - A Word About Prayer

- Pray “The Lord’s Prayer” at least once per day – watch and share about it? eric@kingdomtopics.org
- Two teachings of The Lord’s prayer (Matt 6:9-13, and Luke 11:2-4)
- Matt 6:11 “epiossa”, Luke 11:3 “epiousios” (translated as “daily”).
- These words can be translated “next, following, or tomorrow’s” bread.



So, to conclude our preface, let me share a word about prayer. During this course, I would ask you to consider doing an experiment with me. Would you *pray “The Lord’s Prayer” at least once per day until the end of this course, and then watch and share anything that’s spiritually unusual with me by email? eric@kingdomtopics.org Several years ago the Lord impressed upon me that The Lord’s Prayer was much more of a “spiritual warfare” prayer than I ever thought it was. We will be talking more about this in the upcoming weeks, but here’s a possible dimension to this prayer that I’d encourage you to consider. *As we know, the Bible tells us that there were two teachings of The Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9-13, and Luke 11:2-4). The first time occurred about 1½ years into Jesus’ ministry as He was delivering His Sermon on the Mount. The second time occurred not long after the Return of the Seventy in the last 6 months of Jesus’ ministry. Curiously, one Greek word in each version of the prayer in the very same spot does not occur anywhere else in the New Testament, and as a result, *there is some question about the meaning of Matt 6:11 “epiossa” and Luke 11:3 “epiousios”. These words have been translated as the word “daily” since St. Jerome translated them into Latin in the fourth century as “Give us this day our **daily** bread”. Obviously our

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God graciously sustains us with daily bread, so praying like this is completely appropriate.

*However, these Greek words can also be translated “next”, or “following”, or “tomorrow’s” bread rather than “daily” bread, so this phrase in the Lord’s Prayer could be translated as “give us this day the bread of tomorrow”. So, what might Jesus have meant if He did actually teach the disciples to pray “give us this day the bread of tomorrow”?

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(e) Preface – The Lord’s Prayer (cont)

- Jesus said: “First let the children eat all they want...for it is not right to take **the children’s bread** and toss it to their dogs” (Mk 7:27 NIV).
- Small “pet scraps” of children’s bread were enough to **restore** her health.
- Tomorrow’s bread, the bread of the coming Kingdom, **bread that heals, delivers, and restores.**



One important clue might be found in the curious exchange between Jesus and the Syro-Phoenician woman. Recall that when she begged for her daughter’s deliverance from demons,

*Jesus said: “First let the children eat all they want...for it is not right to take **the children’s bread** and toss it to their dogs” (Mk 7:27 NIV). She then artfully embraced the children’s bread metaphor and replied that even dogs were entitled to the bread crumbs falling off of the Jewish table. As we all know, because of this reply and her “great” Kingdom faith,

*these small “pet” scraps of children’s bread were more than enough to chase the demons out of her daughter and **restore** her health. As such, I would suggest that the children’s bread that Jesus is talking about

*is tomorrow’s bread, the bread of the coming Kingdom of God, the bread that **heals, delivers, and restores**. And that this is the bread that we should be asking for in The Lord’s Prayer. We will look at more biblical evidence for this idea in Segment 2, but in any case, please don’t think I’m trying to convince you to change the Lord’s Prayer to “Give us this day the bread of tomorrow”.

What I **would** like to suggest, however, is an experiment: when we pray the same Lord’s Prayer that we always do, would you consider keeping in mind the possibility that the “daily bread” we are praying for might have “Kingdom” properties to it – just like the daily manna from heaven did for the Israelites in the wilderness – and then we just

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watch and share what happens during this course, OK?

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The Lord's Prayer

- Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.



KINGDOM TOPICS

To conclude the course preface then, would you join me in praying the Lord's Prayer in the way in which each of us are generally accustomed – using the words “debts and debtors”. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

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The “Question” - 9/12/21

- Why don't we talk much about spiritual warfare?
 - We moderns only believe in what we can taste, hear, see, feel, and touch.
- Why do some denominations talk about spiritual warfare more than others?
 - Something to do with our theological emphasis with respect to the work of Jesus



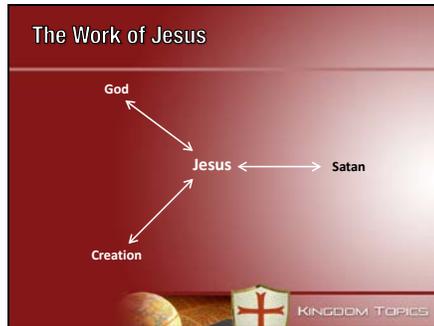
KINGDOM TOPICS

Now, just one more thing before we start our series entitled “Racing to a Bolder Faith” - let's try to answer the question that we raised back on September 12. *Why we don't talk much about Spiritual Warfare? I would suggest that the main reason we don't talk about it is because our western culture doesn't believe in the spiritual realm. *We sophisticated moderns only believe in what we can taste, hear, see, feel, and touch, right? We believe in “science” - not in some imaginary spiritual realm. (Of course, as long as it's the subject of fictional entertainment, we adore the supernatural, and as we all know, our tv shows and movies over the last 40 years have been increasingly filled by dark stories of the occult). Our brothers and sisters in Christ in other parts of the world, on the other hand, sometimes don't have our western “Enlightenment” mindset – to them the spiritual realm is very real in their day to day Christian lives. Even though we evangelicals really **DO** believe in what the Bible says about the spiritual realm, however, we can't help but be subconsciously affected by the biases of our culture – especially if such beliefs make us look “extreme” to those around us. Unfortunately this bias can cause us to have a very two dimensional understanding of Christianity that involves just God and Man - rather than a more accurate three dimensional view that also includes

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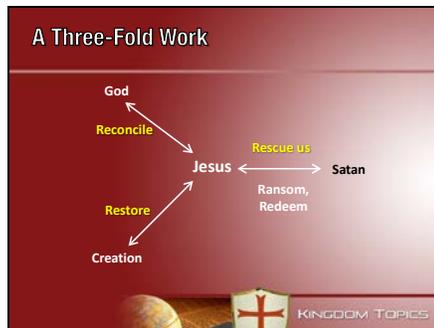
the forces of darkness arrayed against us. *A second part of our question is this: why do some Christian denominations talk about spiritual warfare more than others? *I believe that this has something to do with our theological emphasis with respect to the work of Jesus. Please be aware that the following is an over-simplified model to make a specific point.

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In our model, Jesus is the center of all things and He is shown between God the Father, Creation, and Satan. Most Christians usually agree that the work of Jesus is also three-fold.

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First, *to Rescue us (or to Ransom us, Redeem us, purchase us) from Satan, because by sinning Adam and Eve and each one of us have sold ourselves into slavery to Satan, *Second, to Reconcile us to the Father, *And third, to Restore us, and all of Creation, to the way that God created all of us to be. Three "r's" – easy to remember: **Rescue, Reconcile, Restore**. And this makes sense, right? While Jesus was on earth, His ministry involved **rescuing** people from bondage to the enemy by delivering them from demons, **restoring** them by healing their bodies and minds, and **reconciling** all to the Father through His death on the Cross and resurrection to new life. Before He Ascended, in the Great Commission passage, He charged His disciples to do ALL OF THE VERY SAME THINGS that He and the disciples had been doing together. Let's take a quick look at Matthew 28:19-20.

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Teach the Exact Same Things

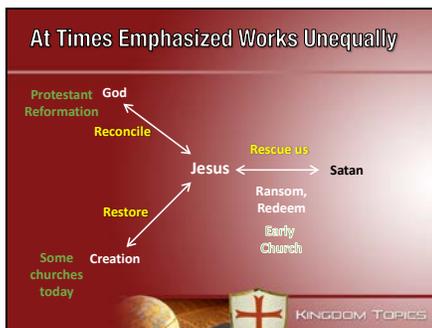
Matt 28:19-20a KJV
 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them **to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you**"

2 Cor 5:18 ...all this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation** NIV.

Matt 28:19-20a KJV "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:20 Teaching them **to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you**" Jesus told them to teach other disciples **the exact same things** that He taught them. What was that? To Rescue (deliver from demons), to Restore (healing diseases), and to Reconcile them to the Father.

If we were to have any doubt about our role in Reconciling, *Paul makes it clear in 2 Cor 5:18 ...all this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation NIV.

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The only unaddressed question here is - in what proportion do we Rescue, Reconcile, and Restore? Since we are not told this in the Bible, it is safe to assume that all three of these works are equally important - and that our Christian teachings should generally try to keep them in balance. Over the last 2000 years of church history, however, we have at times emphasized these works unequally. For example: *Sometimes we've emphasized our rescue from satan - as the early church did. *Sometimes we've emphasized the restoration of creation - as some churches are doing right now with respect to environmental issues and social justice. *and since the Protestant Reformation about 500 years ago, we have emphasized Reconciliation - particularly in Reformed churches. Once again, let me say that this is a greatly oversimplified model and that these examples are imprecise.

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To make this a bit less theoretical, let me suggest some very simplistic stereotypes to help make the point. *If you have ever attended a Methodist or Episcopal church, it is possible that the work of **Restoration** – such as environmental concern, social justice, etc. – has been emphasized. *If you have attended a Reformed church (such as Presbyterian, Baptist, etc.), it is possible that Jesus’ work of **Reconciliation** has been emphasized, *and if you’ve been in a Pentecostal or Charismatic church, it is possible that Jesus’ work of **Rescue** has been emphasized – and *along with Rescue often comes teaching on **spiritual warfare**. As I said, this entire model is very simplistic and imprecise, but it might provide a place to start if you’d like to do some further research on this question.

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OK! Now let’s begin Racing to a BOLDER Faith! Heb 12:1b...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (NASU). As an introduction to the general framework that we will be using for the course, I ask that you will permit me to share a bit more personal history with you. On April 20, 1998, our family bicycled to the center of Wellesley, MA from our home in Dover. We came to cheer on the runners of the 102nd Boston Marathon, and our 10 year old twin girls Hannah and Rachel had never seen anything like it. I was 44 at the time, and though I was born and raised in the Town of Dover that was right next to Wellesley, I had never seen a Boston Marathon either. Several friends from our church were running, and we wanted to show them our support. Wellesley, as you may know, is the halfway point in this 26.2 mile race. When we saw our friends run by, it was a very inspiring moment. But when I saw many handicapped runners – some without legs, some without arms, some on crutches, some in wheelchairs – and I saw the determination in their eyes, I was deeply

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moved by their heroic quest. The tears just seemed to roll down my cheeks as I watched them, and as I looked down to wipe my eyes, I was struck with guilt as I realized that my legs – although fully functional – were not being used to their full potential. That thought just brought more tears, and I remember praying, “Lord, if You will let me, I would like to run this race. Please help me to be a good steward of the two legs that You have given me”. This prayer began a 16 year string of Boston Marathons, running to raise money for cancer research as a member of the Dana Farber Marathon Challenge team. The marathon became an event that involved the whole family – some as part of the pit crew that met me at 4 different locations during the race, and some that ran with me – most often my daughter Rachel. There is much that I learned from running these marathons, but the most important lesson by far was recognizing how similar the Christian life can be sometimes to running a marathon. And that makes sense, right? The Apostle Paul used a racing analogy several times in scripture, and at the end of his life he said this “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Tim 4:7). To be sure, my marathon analogy (or perhaps metaphor ☺) is not perfect for all of the topics in this Bolder Faith series, but I have used it as a general framework because I think it can help us remember some of the key points.

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Racing to a BOLDER Faith - S.C.O.U.T.ing the Challenge.

When scouting the Marathon for the first time back in 1998, I looked for all the information that I could find to help me understand how should I prepare for a race like this. I called this process “Scouting the Challenge” to determine some of the foundational concepts. This included research on topics such as: what kinds of footwear and clothing were best, how much nutrition and hydration was recommended for each mile, and what type of weekly training schedule would extend my running range the quickest. During this phase I also discovered that I needed to change some of my unhelpful thoughts about this challenge – such as: “there’s no way that I can run 26 miles!” In a similar fashion there are some foundational concepts of our “race to a bolder faith” that we should seek to identify and learn more about – and possibly reconsider some unhelpful thoughts that we discover during this scouting phase!

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In order to provide some structure to the thoughts that I will be sharing with you, I have made use of the SCOUTing acronym in the following way:

Story (the Big Picture)

Contract (the legal aspects)

Objectives

Utensils (Tools), and

Trainig

In each case we will utilize some of the fundamental concepts of marathon running and apply them to building a bolder faith. So let’s get started by scouting the Story!

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Story (Big Picture) - Marathon

1. Scope (When, where, length?)
2. Participants (Numbers, types)
3. Conditions (Terrain, environment?)
4. Obstacles (Crowds, distractions, hills?)



KINGDOM TOPICS

When scouting the Story, the big picture of a marathon, here are some of the foundational elements of our challenge that we need to research. *The Scope – When does the race occur? Where does it start and end? What is the length of the race? Etc. *The Participants – How many runners are in the race? What types of runners are they? Etc. *The Conditions – What’s the terrain and environment of the race? And fourthly, what are the *Obstacles that we will have to overcome during the race? Crowds, Distractions, Hills? Etc.

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Story (Big Picture) – BOLDER Faith

1. Scope
 - a. An endurance race that takes all you have.
 - b. This race can begin at any time.
 - c. It will end when we see Jesus face to face.
 - d. It is never too late to start.



KINGDOM TOPICS

So then, with respect to the Story or Big Picture of our race to a bolder faith, let’s start with *the scope of our spiritual challenge. As you know, *a marathon is an endurance race, and it takes all that you have to finish it well. So, too, our race to a bolder faith. *This race can begin at any time - whenever we desire to please God even more, *and it will end when we see Jesus face to face at the finish line. *May I also suggest that it is never too late to start this race. In fact, if you start it later in life, there are usually fewer distractions in your life to slow you down. When I ran my first marathon at 44 years old, I was amazed at how many runners in their 60’s, 70’s, and even 80’s passed me on the 26.2 mile course, and this has also been true in my race to a bolder faith. Once again, it is never too late to start racing to a bolder faith!

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Story (Big Picture) – BOLDER Faith

1. Scope
2. Participants
 - a. Universe is filled with many created beings in addition to mankind (ex. Dan. 7)
 - b. Beings such as principalities, powers, rulers, authorities, cherubim, seraphim, angels, Archangels (Michael, Gabriel), etc.



Next, let's take a look at *the Participants in the race. The Bible makes it clear that we are not alone. In fact, *the universe is absolutely filled with many created beings in addition to mankind (for example Daniel 7:10 ...Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. NIV) *beings such as principalities, powers, rulers, authorities, cherubim, seraphim, angels, and Archangels. Some Archangels we even know by name – like Michael and Gabriel. Here's a question for you. How many of you have ever heard of Elemental spirits? They are mentioned in the Bible in at least 2 places. Let's take a quick look at one of the verses – Galatians 4:3.

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Galatians 4:3 “Elemental Spirits”

RSV: ...when we were children, we were slaves to the **elemental spirits** of the universe.
NIV: ...when we were children, we were in slavery under the **basic principles** of the world.
NASU: ...while we were children, were held in bondage under the **elemental things** of the world.
ASV: ...when we were children, were held in bondage under the **rudiments** of the world:
SOME OTHER REFERENCES: Colossians 2:8, 2:20



Now, please note that “elemental spirits” are not essential to our topic, but I think there's an important point to make here for our scouting phase. *Gal 4:3 So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. RSV *Gal 4:3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. NIV *Gal 4:3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. NASU *Gal 4:3 So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world: ASV. Kind of an amazing range of meanings here, don't you think? If you'd like to check two more verses where Paul referred to these “beings” (at least according to the ASV), *see Colossians 2:8, and 2:20. As you may recall, the “elemental spirits” of Paul's day were widely worshipped in the pagan (and I would add demonic) religions, and they were known as “Air, Fire, Water, and Earth”. So why is this of any interest to us? Well, I would suggest that the bias of our modern culture that we mentioned earlier can sometimes even creep into our Bible translations, minimizing some references that are helpful in understanding some aspect of spiritual warfare. Over the years I have found a number of scripture verses on spiritual warfare where translators disagree, and we will be

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talking about a major example of this in a few weeks when we cover Segment 3. Please note that I am not setting myself up as some kind of expert here. Rather, I am just pointing out that those **who are** experts can at times disagree. OK? My seminary professors always use to remind me that even though our scripture translations are remarkably accurate, every Bible “translation” involves some amount of “interpretation” on the part of the translator.

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So, based on the wisdom of my seminary professors, here’s a Racing Tip that I usually keep in mind: *always check as many reliable Bible translations as you can when you are studying the Word of God.

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Returning once again to our story participants, since we don’t see these spiritual beings we usually don’t think about them too much. However, *the Bible tells us that they are just as real as the world that we can see, feel, hear, taste, and touch, and that we shouldn’t allow ourselves to forget that the spiritual realm affects our physical world every single moment.

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Story (Big Picture) – BOLDER Faith

2. Participants
 - d. Satan (adversary, accuser), the Devil
 - Ezekiel 28:12-19, Isaiah 14:12-14
 - Jesus acknowledged that Satan has a kingdom that is aligned against God's Kingdom (Matt 12:26, Luke 11:18).



KINGDOM TOPICS

The last of the Participants that we will identify here *is Satan, the adversary, the accuser, the Devil. Surprisingly, the Bible doesn't tell us a great deal about this being, but there are some bits and pieces. Some theologians say *that two passages in the Old Testament indirectly give us insight as to who Satan is and what he did prior to tempting Adam and Eve in the garden – passages implying that he was an Archangel named Lucifer who rebelled against God (Ezekiel 28:12-19, and Isaiah 14:12-14). For our immediate purposes, the point to note here is that *Jesus acknowledged that Satan has a kingdom that is aligned against God's Kingdom (Matt 12:26, Luke 11:18).

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Story (Big Picture) – BOLDER Faith

1. Scope
2. Participants
3. Conditions
 - a. Our race course is located right in the middle of a Kingdom war zone
 - b. We are behind enemy lines
 - c. We need to develop a spiritual warfare worldview.



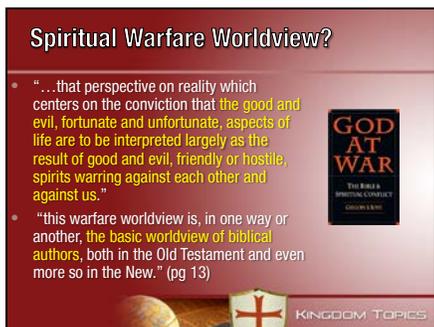
KINGDOM TOPICS

Next, *let's take a look at the conditions of the race course - the terrain and the environment. Simply stated, *our race course is located in the middle of a Kingdom war zone *and we are behind enemy lines. For us to race to a bolder faith, *we need to develop a spiritual warfare worldview. What is a spiritual warfare worldview?

Slide 28

Spiritual Warfare Worldview?

- "...that perspective on reality which centers on the conviction that the good and evil, fortunate and unfortunate, aspects of life are to be interpreted largely as the result of good and evil, friendly or hostile, spirits warring against each other and against us."
- "this warfare worldview is, in one way or another, the basic worldview of biblical authors, both in the Old Testament and even more so in the New." (pg 13)



KINGDOM TOPICS

Dr. Gregory Boyd in his book entitled "God At War" defines it this way: *"that perspective on reality which centers on the conviction that the good and evil, fortunate and unfortunate, aspects of life are to be interpreted largely as the result of good and evil, friendly or hostile, spirits warring against each other and against us." He notes that a warfare worldview is rooted deep in Scripture, *and that "this warfare worldview is, in one way or another, the basic worldview of biblical authors, both in the Old Testament and even more so in the New." (pg 13).

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Slide 29

Importance of this Worldview

- “The outcome of the war has been settled, but **there are still important battles to be fought. Fighting them is what the Christian life is all about.**” (pg 291)
- Dr. Gregory A. Boyd, *God At War* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).
- Chapter 16 excerpt at: www.kingdomtopics.org/cccc



He concludes his lengthy book by emphasizing the importance of this worldview stating that: * “The outcome of the war has been settled, but there are still important battles to be fought. Fighting them is what the Christian life is all about.” While I do not subscribe to all of Boyd’s theological views, most notably his support of “open” theology, he has well articulated the importance of having a spiritual warfare worldview in a way that no other theologian has (at least to my knowledge) and I wholeheartedly recommend his *God At War* book to the reader. Please note however that it is very deep at times. I have posted an excerpt from Chapter 16 for you on the www.kingdomtopics.org/cccc page for you to download if you are interested. If you like this chapter, you will greatly appreciate the entire book. Dr. Gregory A. Boyd, *God At War* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

Slide 30

Story (Big Picture) – BOLDER Faith

4. Obstacles

- The world, the flesh, and the Devil.
- Three “enemies” of the soul?
- Can’t find all three listed in one Bible verse in a mutually-exclusive way.
- The Devil is the inventor of sin, and the whole world is under his control – **why would we think they are different enemies?**
- The 3 enemy teaching subtly reduces the Devil’s involvement by two thirds!



Finally, when looking at the big picture, *it is important to take note of the obstacles on the race course. When running a marathon, we need to overcome crowds that can get in the way, a variety of distractions, and of course, the hills! In our race to a bolder faith, *the main obstacles are the world, the flesh, and the devil! We all know these obstacles well, so we don’t have to talk much about them here. However, I believe that there’s something that we should “scout” here, and it involves identifying who our real “enemy” is. In current Christian teaching “the world, the flesh, and the devil” *are often described as the three enemies of the soul. While I can appreciate the intentions of this teaching, we should always check to see if teachings are biblically accurate. Although the Bible repeatedly warns us about the world, the flesh, and the Devil, *I, for one, can’t find all three listed in one Bible verse. This is rather curious. If these evils were indeed **three distinct enemies**, why would the Holy Spirit neglect to list them in a clear mutually-exclusive way? Rather, in various places the Bible says *that the Devil is the **inventor of sin**, that he repeatedly

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tempts us to sin, and that our “flesh” has been corrupted by our willing and ongoing participation in his invention. With respect to the “world”, the Bible tells us that “the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1Jn 5:19). Why then would we want to think that the “world” and the “flesh” are somehow different enemies? Certainly Paul didn’t think so. He said: “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” (Eph. 2:1–2 ESV italics mine). *Unfortunately the “three enemy” teaching subtly reduces the devil’s involvement in our daily battles by a whopping two thirds, playing directly into our modern bias of downplaying “extreme” topics. Not surprisingly perhaps, most of the sermons that I’ve heard in my life have spoken about fighting the world and the flesh, but have said very little about fighting the Devil.

Slide 31

Story (Big Picture) – BOLDER Faith

4. Obstacles – 3 enemies? (cont.)

- Dictionary definition:
- 1. One that is antagonistic - “being”
- 2. Something harmful or deadly (i.e. COVID is an enemy - “non-being”)
- The 2nd definition “non-being” is NEVER used by the Bible.
- Have multiple fronts in our spiritual battle
- We only have ONE ENEMY – not three!



A second and even more subtle reason why this “three enemy” teaching is problematic involves the definition of the word “enemy”. *The Miriam Webster dictionary defines “enemy” *as 1) one that is antagonistic to another especially one seeking to injure, overthrow, or confound an opponent, *or 2) something harmful or deadly. The first definition requires that an enemy have “being”. The second definition does not - allowing the use of the word “enemy” for things or conditions that do not have “being” (for example, saying that COVID is an enemy). *This second dictionary definition of the word “enemy”, however, is **never used by the Bible**. With the help of a concordance we can quickly confirm that the New Testament never uses the word “enemy” to identify a “non-being”. Of the thirty two occurrences of the Greek word for “enemy” (the Greek word echthros), thirty one of them clearly refer to a “being” or a group of “beings” – whether physical or spiritual. And since we’re told in Hebrews 2:14 that the Devil has the

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power of “death”, the remaining use of the Greek word involves “being” as well. The same consistency of meaning is found in the use of the Hebrew words for “enemy” in the Old Testament. As such, it is not biblically accurate to apply the word “enemy” to places, or things, or conditions, or anything else that does not have “being”. If we ever had any doubt about this, Paul makes it crystal clear in Eph. 6:12 that we are fighting evil beings. So, in conclusion, I would suggest that *while we certainly have multiple “fronts” in our spiritual battle, ***we only have one enemy – not three** - and this enemy is determined to steal from us, kill us, and destroy us in any way he can!

Slide 32



S.C.O.U.T.ing the Challenge

- **S**tory (the Big Picture)
- **C**ontract (legal aspects)



KINGDOM TOPICS

Now that we have scouted the **S**tory, the Big Picture, *let’s spend some time researching the legal aspects of the race. We have used the word **C**ontract to represent this in our SCOUTing acronym.

Slide 33



Contract (Legal Aspects) - Marathon

- We must become very familiar with the rules, agree with them, and learn how to “think legally”.
 - General rules that apply to everybody
 - Rules that apply to specific race participants.



KINGDOM TOPICS

When scouting the legal aspects of running a marathon, *we must become very familiar with the rules of the race, **agree with them**, and learn how to “think legally” in order to participate successfully. We are going to mention only two types of rules in this scouting segment: *general rules that apply to everybody, and *rules that apply to special participants such as Elite runners.

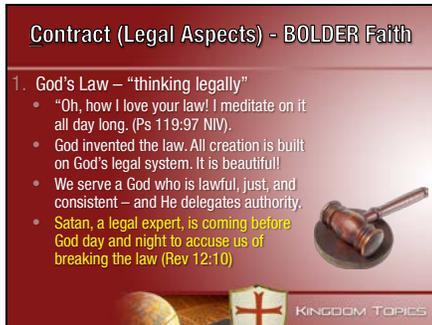
Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

Slide 34



First, let's do some scouting on the general rules - *what we will call God's law - and why it is important for us to be "thinking legally".

Slide 35



One of the Psalmists said: *"Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. (Ps 119:97 NIV). Although I did not become familiar with the concept of "thinking legally" until later in life, I now humbly agree with the Psalmist. *God invented the Law, of course, and all Creation is built upon God's legal system. Without a doubt, God's Law is beautiful. The Bible is chuck-full of legal transactions and terms such as promises, covenants, authority, delegations of authority, buying, selling, inheritance, debts, redemption, treaties, negotiations, judgments, understandings, and agreements – not to mention that the whole book is divided into two legal "testaments". *We serve a God who is lawful, just, and consistent – unlike the god of Islam, by the way, who is completely arbitrary and capricious. And amazingly, our God delegates various amounts of His legal authority to His creatures and respects the authority that He has delegated - regardless of what they do with it! We will be talking more about God's delegated authority in Segment 2. Jesus further emphasized the importance of God's legal system, saying: "until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished" (Matt 5:18b NIV). And if all this wasn't enough to encourage us to "think legally", *the Bible warns us that Satan – arguably the most devious legal expert within creation – is coming before God day and night to accuse us of breaking the Law (Rev 12:10). Thankfully, we have Jesus as our Attorney, but that doesn't mean that we can ignore the

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legal battle around us!

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Contract (Legal Aspects) - BOLDER Faith

1. God's Law – “thinking legally”

- Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? (Amos 3:3 NKJV)
- In daily life, are we walking in agreement with God or with Satan?
- Everything that we think, say, or do legally aligns us with either the Kingdom of Light or the Kingdom of Darkness.
- There is no category in between.



If the concept of “thinking legally” has been unfamiliar to you as well, a helpful place to start is to examine our daily “agreements” in thought, word, and deed. *Amos asks “can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3 NKJV), and similarly we might ask ourselves *in daily life “are we walking in agreement with God or with Satan?” Whether we realize it or not, *everything that we think, say, or do (or not think, not say, or not do) **legally aligns us in some way** with either the Kingdom of Light or the Kingdom of Darkness. *There is no category in between.

Slide 37

Contract (Legal Aspects) - BOLDER Faith

1. God's Law – “thinking legally”

- These agreements have an impact on us.
- 2 Cor 6:14b-16 NIV “What do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?”



As God created His creatures with a free will, such legal “agreements” are ours to make. *However, we should be aware that these agreements have an impact on us – especially if we are walking with God in some things and walking with Satan in others. *Paul exhorts us about such conflicting agreements, saying: “what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?” (2 Cor 6:14b-16 NIV).

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Contract (Legal Aspects) - BOLDER Faith

1. God's Law – “thinking legally”

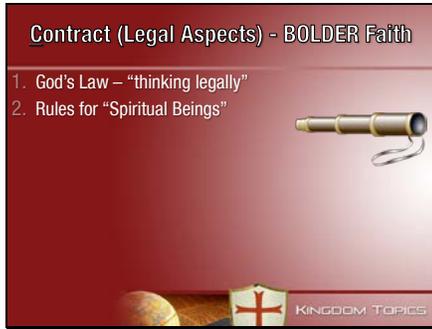
- How do we consistently walk in legal agreement with God?
- Faith, belief, worship, and obedience are some of the ways.
- Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15 NIV).
- We are not talking about thinking “legalistically” as this word has a very different meaning.



So, *how do we consistently walk in legal agreement with God? *Faith, belief, worship, and obedience are some of the ways. *Recall that Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15 NIV). We’ll talk more about “thinking legally” later in the course - and *please note that we are not talking about thinking “legalistically” as this word has a very different meaning.

Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

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Moving on to a special set of participant rules, we should be aware that God has some rules that only apply to spiritual beings, and so *we will label them Rules for “Spiritual Beings”. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately 😊, we don’t know too much about these rules, but the Bible gives us a few insights that could be important for us in our race to a bolder faith. We will talk more about these in Segment 2, but for now our scouting has made us aware of this special rule category.

Slide 40



Now let’s turn to *scouting out the objectives of our race.

Slide 41



When considering the objectives of a marathon, there are a number of possibilities. For example, *we might want to win the race, or *beat a particular “time” - such as finishing in under 3 hours, *or just simply want to finish the race - however long it might take. This was the objective that I had for all 16 of my marathons, and thankfully in some years I did better than others 😊.

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Objectives – BOLD Faith

- Want to hear Jesus say “Well done thou good and faithful servant” .
- Heavenly reward!
 - Rev 22:12 “Behold, I am coming soon! My **reward** is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. NIV
 - Heb 11:6 says: ...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him **must believe** that he exists **and that he rewards** those who earnestly seek him. NIV



With respect to scouting the objectives for our race to a bolder faith, I would imagine that at the finish line *all of us want to hear Jesus say “Well done thou good and faithful servant”. But let me suggest that we scout out at least one additional objective, *our heavenly reward. Now, as you know, we evangelicals don’t usually talk about our heavenly reward too much. Why is that? Well, you’ll have to wait for Segment 2 for some thoughts on that 😊. Meanwhile, we should be reminded that Jesus talked about our heavenly reward a lot! For example, a good portion of the Sermon on the Mount is dedicated to rewards, and some of the last words of Jesus in the Bible refer to our reward: *Rev 22:12 “Behold, I am coming soon! My **reward** is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. NIV. If we want to race to a bolder faith, I would suggest that we not say that our reward is not important. *The writer of Hebrews says: ...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him **must believe** that he exists and **that he rewards** those who earnestly seek him (Heb 11:6 NIV). Clearly, for us to **please God** - and someday hear Jesus say “well done thou good and faithful servant” like just mentioned - we **MUST BELIEVE** that God is a **rewarder!** So we should humbly thank Him for it and consider His heavenly reward as one of our bolder faith objectives. As you may know, there are additional Bible verses that we can look at on this topic, and we will do so in the next Segment.

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S.C.O.U.T.ing the Challenge

- Story (the Big Picture)
- Contract (legal aspects)
- Objectives
- Utensils (tools)



Now let’s turn to *scouting out the Utensils - or the tools - to help us run our race. I am not a fan of the word Utensils, but it gets the idea across and starts with the letter “U” for our acronym SCOUT 😊.

Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

Slide 44

Utensils (Tools) - Marathon

1. Equipment
 - Sport clothing, well-chosen running shoes, etc.
2. Techniques
 - Exercise programs for increasing speed and distance
 - Routines to improve running nutrition and hydration, etc.



KINGDOM TOPICS

So what kinds of utensils or tools should we scout for to run a marathon? Well, there are many available, but for our purposes here, we will divide them into *two types – tools that are equipment related, *and those that are technique related. The equipment category includes essential tools *such as sport clothing for varying conditions, and well-chosen running shoes. With respect to techniques, *we should be looking for helpful exercise programs for increasing our running speed and distance, *and also for various routines to improve our running nutrition and hydration.

Slide 45

Utensils (Tools) – BOLD Faith

1. Equipment
 - a. Spiritual armor
 - b. Well-chosen words
 - i. Words of God
 - ii. Words of Ours
2. Techniques
 - a. Programs to exercise our spiritual giftings
 - b. Stretching routines to help our ears to hear and our eyes to see



KINGDOM TOPICS

Scouting for the tools available for our race to a bolder faith, *our equipment should include such things such as spiritual armor, *and well-chosen words – Words of God, and Words of Ours. By the way, if the idea of considering “words” to be like “running shoes” seems a bit obscure to you, I find it helpful to reflect on the fact that there is nothing more foundational to running than shoes, and probably nothing more foundational to building a bolder faith than written and spoken words. We’ll talk about this more in a moment. *Next, with respect to techniques, *we might scout for some helpful programs to exercise our spiritual giftings, *and some good stretching routines to help our spiritual ears to hear and our eyes to see better and better every day.

Slide 46

Utensils (Tools) – BOLD Faith

1. Equipment
 - a. Spiritual Armor
 - Jesus said: “... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
 - Jesus is not talking about a defensive posture for His church!
 - His church should be attacking Hell to rescue satan’s prisoners.
 - The gates of Hell will not prevail against our attack! (Matt 16:18b KJV)



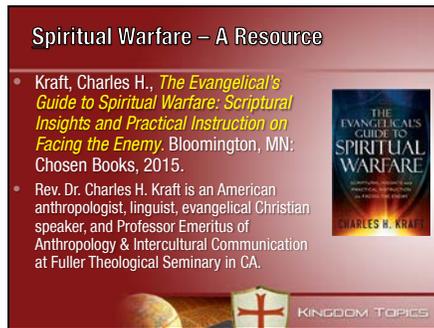
KINGDOM TOPICS

Focusing now on equipment, *we first consider spiritual armor. Spiritual armor is probably the most well-covered dimension of spiritual warfare in the evangelical church today, and so we are not going to talk about it much in this course. However, I would suggest that it is often taught in a way that portrays us as being mainly in a defensive posture. Sometimes we are not taught a whole lot about how to wield the sword or how to attack the enemy’s position. However, as we know, *Jesus said: “...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matt 16:18b KJV). *Clearly Jesus is not talking about a defensive posture for His church,

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rather He appears to be saying *that His church should be attacking Hell to rescue satan’s prisoners, and Jesus seems to be assuring us *that the gates of Hell will not prevail against our attack! By the way, the word translated “Hell” here is also translated as Hades (NT86). Technically this word means “unseen”, and in the context of Jesus’ statement about His church on earth, it would seem clear that Jesus was speaking here of those being held in “unseen” spiritual bondage around us.

Slide 47



By the way, if you would like to read a book that I believe has a well-balanced view of spiritual warfare, *check out the book by Charles H. Kraft entitled, *The Evangelical's Guide to Spiritual Warfare: Scriptural Insights and Practical Instruction on Facing the Enemy*. Bloomington, MN: Chosen Books, 2015. *Rev. Dr. Charles H. Kraft is an American anthropologist, linguist, evangelical Christian speaker, and Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and Intercultural Communication at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

Slide 48



Returning now to our second category of equipment, *let’s talk about “Well-Chosen Words” – first, the Words of God. As we recall, Paul’s list of spiritual armor also included a sword which Paul identified as the Word of God: *Eph 6:17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. NIV

Jesus, of course, used the scriptures to defeat satan when He was being tempted, and we should use the scripture in a similar way when we are being confronted by any of the forces of darkness. *The writer of Hebrews says: “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Heb 4:12 NIV). Obviously, to employ this important tool in our race to a bolder faith, we may need to get to

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know the scriptures even better than we already do. We can't use them if we don't know them, so let's consider looking for a program along the way to help us with some verse memorization if we possibly can. Unfortunately, Bible memorization is not as common today in the evangelical church as it once was.

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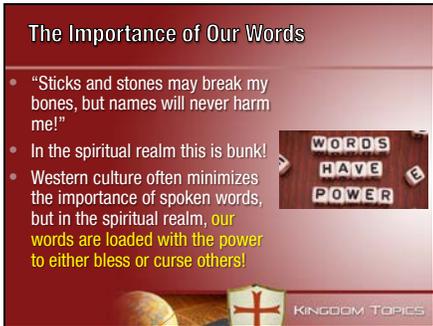
Utensils (Tools) – BOLD Faith

1. Equipment
 - b. Well-chosen words – ii. **Words of Ours**

KINGDOM TOPICS

Let's take another look at "well-chosen words", only this time let's scout Words of **Ours!** This might sound odd, but I suspect that our scouting of this tool is going to make a bigger impact in our daily lives than much of what we've covered so far.

Slide 50



The Importance of Our Words

- "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never harm me!"
- In the spiritual realm this is bunk!
- Western culture often minimizes the importance of spoken words, but in the spiritual realm, **our words are loaded with the power to either bless or curse others!**

KINGDOM TOPICS

Have you ever heard the old English-language children's rhyme: *"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never harm me." *Well, I would suggest that at least in the spiritual realm this is "bunk"! *Our Western culture often minimizes the importance of spoken words, but in the spiritual realm, our words are loaded with the power to either bless or curse others.

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The Importance of Our Words

- Have you ever counted how often the Bible talks about blessings and curses - in BOTH the Old and the New Testaments!
- The English word "bless" occurs in the Old Testament over 330 times, and the word "curse" at least 100 times – depending on how the Hebrew is translated.



KINGDOM TOPICS

And I think we would agree that the Bible confirms it. *Have you ever counted how often the Bible talks about blessings and curses - in BOTH the Old and the New Testaments! Just to give you an idea, *the English word "bless" occurs in the Old Testament over 330 times, and the word "curse" at least 100 times – depending on how the Hebrew is translated.

Slide 52

The Importance of Our Words

- God created the entire universe through His spoken Word...
- ...and Man was made in God's image!
- Why wouldn't our words have some measure of spiritual power?



KINGDOM TOPICS

So, it is safe to say that our words are important! But that makes sense – doesn't it? *God created the entire universe through His spoken Word... *...and Man was made in God's image! So when you really think about it, *why wouldn't our words have some measure of spiritual power?

Slide 53

Words of Curse toward Others

- Example: Around 1400 BC, Jericho was destroyed by God after Joshua and the Israelites marched around it for 7 days.
- Joshua 6:26 Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates." NASU



KINGDOM TOPICS

Want a biblical example? *As you may recall, around 1400 BC, Jericho was destroyed by God after Joshua and the Israelites obediently marched around it for 7 days. And after the destruction, *we read in Joshua 6:26 - Then Joshua made them take an oath, saying, "Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates." NASU

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Slide 54

Words of Curse toward Others

- Jericho was rebuilt in the days of King Ahab (874-853BC) – 500 years after the curse!
- 1 Ki.16:34 In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; **he laid its foundations with the loss of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub,** according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.



So, what happened? Well, in the book of 1 Kings the Bible tells us what happened *when Jericho was rebuilt in the days of King Ahab (874-853BC) – 500 years after the curse was uttered! *In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; **he laid its foundations with the loss of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub,** according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun. NASU Before we leave this verse, please note that it tells us something that the passage we read back in Joshua did not – that God **instructed** Joshua to speak this curse, so Joshua didn't do it all on his own. Nonetheless, God used the human voice of Joshua, filled with spiritual power, to verbalize this curse that would echo through the centuries and bring about this unfortunate result for Hiel the Bethelite after he disregarded this widely-known and well-understood warning.

Slide 55

Words of Curse toward Others

- Extreme example?
- Other passages indicating that our words contain some measure of spiritual power.
- Luke 6:28a "Bless those who curse you"
- Rom 12:14 "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse."
- Matt 12:36 ... **I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.**



An extreme example? Perhaps. *but please note that there are other passages indicating that our words of blessing or curse contain some measure of spiritual power. *This may be why Jesus said: "Bless those who curse you...(Luke 6:28a NIV), *and later Paul said "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse (Rom 12:14 NIV). *Recall that Jesus also said: "I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken." (Matt 12:36 NIV).

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Slide 56

Words of Curse toward **Ourselves**

- Let me suggest a very practical question for us to think about
- When we say something like “I am so stupid”, or “I’ll never get well”, or “bad things always happen to me”, **have we ever considered that we may be cursing ourselves and giving spiritual permission to the forces of darkness to help cause these things to come about?**




KINGDOM TOPICS

Before we leave this topic, *let me suggest a very practical question for us to think about with respect to ourselves, something that can make a huge difference in our race to a bolder faith. *When we say something like “I am so stupid”, or “I’ll never get well”, or “Bad things always happen to me”, have we ever considered that we may be cursing ourselves and giving “spiritual permission” to the forces of darkness to help cause these negative things to come about? **We really need to think about this!**

Slide 57

Let's be positive!

- Most of us give Satan an easy way of attacking us every day by cursing ourselves and not realizing it!
- Even our secular culture seems to have a sense of the “power” of **positive thinking and speaking!** Why don't we?
- We have the privilege of blessing others with God's blessing!**



KINGDOM TOPICS

I would suggest that *most of us give Satan an easy way of attacking us every day by cursing ourselves and not realizing it! *Let's face it, even our secular culture seems to have a sense of the “power” of positive thinking and speaking! So - why don't we? And let's not forget, *we have the great privilege of blessing others with God's blessing!

Slide 58

Let's be positive!

- As Christians who understand what is going on in the spiritual realm, we have no business thinking or saying anything that is not positive!
- 1 Thess. 5:16-18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks...?
- God wins! Let's bless, and not curse!
- Let's declare that His Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!



KINGDOM TOPICS

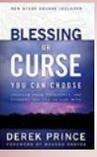
There's so much more that we can say here, but let's sum it up for the moment: *As Christians who understand what is going on in the spiritual realm, I would suggest that we have no business thinking or saying anything that is not positive! *Doesn't the Apostle Paul say in 1 Thess 5:16-18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks...? *After all – the bottom line is that God wins! So, let's bless and not curse. *And let's emphatically declare that His Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!

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Slide 59

Blessing or Curse?

- Prince, Derek. *Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1990, 2000, 2006.
- Derek Prince (1915 – 2003) was an international Bible teacher, theologian, and pastor whose daily radio program, Derek Prince Legacy Radio, is broadcast around the world in various languages. (www.derekprince.org)



If you are interested, *a very helpful book on this topic by Derek Prince is entitled *Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1990, 2000, 2006. *Derek Prince (1915 – 2003) was an international Bible teacher, theologian, and pastor whose daily radio program, Derek Prince Legacy Radio, is broadcast around the world in various languages. (www.derekprince.org)

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Utensils (Tools) – BOLD Faith

1. Equipment
 - a. Spiritual armor
 - b. Well-chosen words – God's and Ours
2. Techniques
 - a. Programs to exercise our spiritual giftings
 - Ken Fish, Orbis School of Ministry; <https://kingdom-fire-ministries-school-of-supernatural.teachable.com/>
 - Please ask for info on others.
 - Consider some research on "Cessationism"



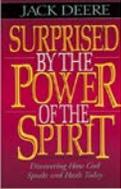
Returning now to our second category of utensils or tools, *let's do some scouting for techniques that can help us stretch our faith. *With respect to programs to exercise our spiritual giftings, here is one teaching ministry that you might want to consider * – that of Ken Fish. I have benefited greatly from his teaching. Orbis School of Ministry (Ken Fish's latest website) <https://kingdom-fire-ministries-school-of-supernatural.teachable.com/>. There are a number of other teachers that I would recommend depending upon your interests, *so please ask if you would like information. *If you **do** want to exercise your spiritual giftings, also consider some research on the topic of "Cessationism". If you are not already familiar with it, Cessationism is a doctrine that teaches that some of the spiritual gifts - such as prophecy and healing - ceased with the Apostolic Age. Reformers such as John Calvin supported and added to this view, so if you have been mostly attending churches having a Reformed theology (Presbyterian, Baptist, etc.), it is possible that you've been taught from a more Cessationist perspective.

Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

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Excellent Book on Cessationism

- Deere, Jack S., *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit: Discovering How God Speaks and Heals Today*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993.
- Dr. Jack Deere is an American charismatic pastor and theologian. He was an associate professor of Old Testament at Dallas Seminary.

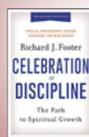


If you'd like to learn more about this topic, an excellent resource that looks even-handedly at the doctrine of "cessationism" and also offers an alternate view more in concert with the early church, *I would encourage you to read a book by Dr. Jack Deere entitled, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit: Discovering How God Speaks and Heals Today*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993. *Jack Deere is an American charismatic pastor and theologian. He was at one point an associate professor of Old Testament at Dallas Seminary – a school that historically has held to cessationism. In 1987 Deere joined the staff of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship Church in Anaheim, CA and pastored a Vineyard Church from 1988 to 1992. Deere pastored a Presbyterian church in Montana from 1994 to 1996, and then moved back to the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex where he was pastor of Wellspring Church in North Richland Hills. So Deere has a broad understanding of this topic.

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Utensils (Tools) – BOLD Faith

1. Equipment
 - a. Spiritual armor
 - b. Well-chosen words – God's and Ours
2. Techniques
 - a. Programs to exercise our spiritual giftings
 - b. Stretching routines to help "our ears to hear and our eyes to see"
 - i. Spiritual disciplines



Finally, *let's scout for some stretching routines to help "our ears to hear and our eyes to see". All athletes know how important stretching is to physical performance, and the spiritual realm is no exception. *In general, spiritual disciplines such as bible study, meditation, prayer, and fasting are very helpful to being able to hear God's voice more clearly and to experience Him more. We will talk specifically about the discipline of fasting in a few moments. *If you are interested, a classic book on the disciplines is entitled "Celebration of Discipline" by Richard Foster.

Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

Slide 63

Utensils (Tools) – BOLD Faith

1. Equipment
 - a. Spiritual armor
 - b. Well-chosen words – God’s and Ours
2. Techniques
 - a. Programs to exercise our spiritual giftings
 - b. Stretching routines to help “our ears to hear and our eyes to see”
 - i. Spiritual disciplines
 - ii. Learning from “Figurative Examples”



KINGDOM TOPICS

The last utensil or tool we will mention in our scouting phase is *Learning from “Figurative Examples”. So, what are “figurative examples”? Perhaps the best way to describe them is to read what Paul had to say about Abraham’s two sons in Galatians chapter 4.

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Learning from “Figurative Examples”

- Gal 4:22-24 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 23 His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. 24 **These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants.** One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.



KINGDOM TOPICS

Gal 4:22-24 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 23 His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. 24 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. NIV – and then Paul goes on to explain more fully how these historical events of Abraham’s life when interpreted “figuratively” can lend spiritual insight to the two covenants of scripture – the Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant.

Slide 65

Learning from “Figurative Examples”

- Abraham taking Isaac up the mountain to sacrifice him - Isaac carrying the wood.
- **God the Father sacrificing His son Jesus on the hill of Calvary – Jesus carrying His wooden cross.**
- Many of the stories of the Old Testament can be taken **figuratively, allegorically, or typologically**, and we do - but we do it carefully!



KINGDOM TOPICS

Another “figurative example” *would be Abraham taking Isaac up the mountain to sacrifice him. Recall that Isaac was carrying the wood. *Now, think of God the Father sacrificing His Son Jesus on the hill of Calvary, *with Jesus carrying His wooden cross. Get the idea? *Many of the stories of the Old Testament can be taken figuratively, or allegorically, or typologically, and we do – but we do it carefully!

Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

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Learning from "Figurative Examples"

- The parables of Jesus are also a kind of "figurative example"
- Why should we scout this interpretation technique?
- God may be teaching us some insights about spiritual warfare through the stories of Moses and Joshua – and the parables of Jesus.



KINGDOM TOPICS

In fact, *the parables of Jesus are also a kind of "figurative example", So, *why should we scout this interpretation technique in our race to a bolder faith? *Well, in addition to many other spiritual lessons that we can learn, God may be teaching us some insights about spiritual warfare through the Old Testament stories of Moses and Joshua – and the parables of Jesus. Have you ever wondered why the Old Testament includes some rather harsh war stories? Well, possibly this is one of the reasons. We'll be doing more research into this in upcoming segments.

Slide 67

S.C.O.U.T.ing the Challenge

- Story (the Big Picture)
- Contract (legal aspects)
- Objectives
- Utensils (tools)
- Training



KINGDOM TOPICS

Now let's conclude Segment 1 by *scouting out the last letter of our acronym, Training.

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Training - Marathon

1. One-time Events
 - Initial physical exam, heart stress test, etc.
2. Recurring Training
 - Short runs, long runs, sprints, etc.



KINGDOM TOPICS

Scouting the various Training options for a marathon can be a big task, but these options generally fall into two categories. *One-time Events - such as an initial physical exam and a heart stress test, and *Recurring Training - such as short runs, long runs, sprints, and the like.

Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

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Training – BOLD Faith

1. One-time Events
 - Baptism
2. Recurring Training
 - Fasting



KINGDOM TOPICS

As we scout training options for our race to a bold faith, we can identify similar categories. For now, we will only scout one training regimen in each category. *Under the One-time Events category, *we will scout Baptism, and *under Recurring Training, we will take a *quick look at Fasting.

Slide 70

Training – BOLD Faith

- One-time Events: **Baptism**
 - Baptism is an important act of obedience to God, but not necessary for salvation
 - Luke 23:43 ... "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" - thief never got a chance to be baptized
 - Jesus clearly instructed His disciples to baptize, so **what might have been His reasons for these instructions?**



KINGDOM TOPICS

Now, scouting baptism for our race to a bolder faith might strike you as being a bit odd, but it is really quite surprising how many Christians today have not been baptized. Most pastors would probably say that *baptism is an important act of **obedience** to God – but not necessary for salvation, and I would agree. *After all, the thief on the cross was told by Jesus in Luke 23:43 * ..."I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" and of course, the thief never got a chance to be baptized. *Jesus clearly instructed His disciples to baptize, so what might have been His reasons for these instructions?

Slide 71

Baptism

- Some form of protection in our spiritual battles on earth?
- Moses led the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt and through the Red Sea.
- Baptized into Moses (1 Cor. 10:2)
- It is possible that the forces of darkness cannot "follow" us through the waters of baptism – or can't trouble us in quite the same way.



KINGDOM TOPICS

Perhaps one of Jesus' reasons had to do with providing us with *some form of protection in our spiritual battles on earth? If true, this could certainly explain why the thief didn't need baptism - he was about to die and would not be involved in any earthly spiritual warfare! I am not trying to convince you of this, but let me share just one thought that harkens back to our comments a few moments ago about "figurative examples". In the Old Testament we find an interesting picture of baptism *when Moses led the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt and through the Red Sea. They, of course, were able to pass through the Sea safely. Paul says that through this event *the Israelites were baptized into Moses (1 Cor 10:2). The Egyptians, however, could not make it through, and the waters closed on top of them. I believe that this historical "example" figuratively represents a spiritual picture of Jesus rescuing us –

Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

Satan’s captives - and leading us out of the Kingdom of Darkness and baptizing us into Himself. In some important “legal” way then (and as you know, I believe it is important to always “think legally” 😊), *it is possible that the forces of darkness cannot “follow” us through the waters of baptism - or at least can’t trouble us in quite the same way as before. Let me suggest that if you have been fighting a bad habit or difficult circumstance throughout your Christian life that you can’t seem to conquer, and you’ve never been baptized, you might find that your spiritual battle against it will go easier after baptism. I have heard some personal testimonies about this.

Slide 72

Baptism - History

- Since the earliest days of the church, a legal “renunciation formula” has been included in the baptism ceremony.
- “I renounce Satan and all his work and ways.”



KINGDOM TOPICS

Further support of this idea comes from history. *Since the earliest days of the church, a legal “renunciation formula” has been included in the baptism ceremony. *This formula reads: “I renounce Satan and all his work and ways.” Unfortunately this phrase is now left out in some contemporary church baptisms.

Slide 73

Racing “Tip”

If you haven’t already been baptized, consider doing so, and also consider baptism by full-immersion.

If nothing else, we will be obeying our Lord’s command.



KINGDOM TOPICS

So, here’s a Racing Tip that might be helpful: *If you haven’t already been baptized, consider doing so, and also consider baptism by full-immersion. *If nothing else, we will be obeying our Lord’s command.

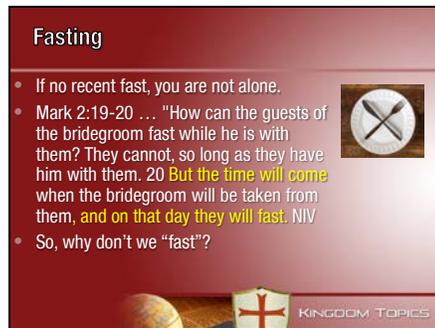
Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

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Our final topic in Training, and the final topic in Segment 1 – Scouting the Challenge – is *Recurring Training. There is much that we could scout in the way of recurring spiritual training here, but we will reserve some of these topics for later in the course. *For now, let's talk about the exercise of Fasting.

Slide 75



I'm not asking you to answer this question, but have you recently given up food or water for a period of time in order to draw closer to God? *If not, you are not alone in the church today. Unfortunately I haven't been able to find reliable statistics on what percentage of Christians regularly fast, but my own unscientific study suggests a number less than 5%. I also suspect that a very high percentage of Christians have **never** fasted in their lifetime. Admittedly, the New Testament doesn't specifically direct us to fast, but I'm sure we all know that it is strongly implied! When Jesus was asked why His disciples weren't fasting like the disciples of John the Baptist, *Jesus answered: Mark 2:19-20 ... "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. 20 **But the time will come** when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and **on that day they will fast.** NIV. The obvious implication of this verse is that WE should be fasting regularly **today** because the bridegroom is currently away from us in heaven. In addition to this teaching of Jesus, there are a number of texts in both the Old and the New Testaments that encourage us to participate regularly in the spiritual discipline of fasting. *So, why don't we fast?

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Fasting

- At least 3 reasons why we don't "fast!"
 - Many churches don't teach it.
 - Many Christians don't want to "fast".
 - We are not sure that we **CAN** "fast" safely.
- It is curious that the **Greek word for "sorcery"** used in **Rev. 18:23** concerning the End Times is the same word that our word "pharmacy" comes from – **pharmakia!**



KINGDOM TOPICS

Well, I would suggest that there are at least 3 reasons why we don't "fast". *First, many churches don't teach it. *Second, many Christians really don't want to fast, *and third, we are so dependent on daily medications *that we are not sure that we **CAN** "fast" safely! You know, you have to wonder how mankind could ever get to a point where the vast majority of people – particularly in affluent western cultures - are taking some kind of medication every day. Right? PLEASE NOTE that I'm **not** saying that medicine is bad, *but **it is curious** that the Greek word for "sorcery" used in Revelation 18:23 concerning the End Times is the same word that our word "pharmacy" comes from - pharmakia!

Slide 77

Fasting

- Rev 18:23 NIV Your merchants were the world's great men. By your **magic spell [pharmakia]** all the nations were led astray.
- Most Christians are not fasting
- If we are expecting to fight all kinds of spiritual darkness successfully without fasting, we are probably mistaken.



KINGDOM TOPICS

Rev 18:23 Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell [pharmakia] all the nations were led astray. NIV. *Whatever the reason, most Christians are not fasting, *and if we are expecting to fight all kinds of spiritual darkness successfully **without** fasting, we are probably mistaken. Here's why...

Slide 78

Fasting

- Mount of Transfiguration - disciples failed to cast a demon out of a boy
- Matt 17:21 ...this kind [of demon] does not go out except by prayer **and fasting.**" NASU (see also Mk 9:29)
- "and fasting" not in the original text? (per NIV, etc.)
- A case can be made that the word **fasting IS** in the original text.



KINGDOM TOPICS

Recall that when Jesus came down *from the Mount of Transfiguration, He was informed that the disciples had failed to cast a demon out of a boy. After Jesus had cast the demon out, the disciples asked Him why they could not get the job done themselves, *and He said to them: Matt 17:21 ...this kind [of demon] does not go out except by prayer and fasting." NASU. Now, I am aware that some of our modern translations (the NIV for example) have a footnote saying that *the words "**and fasting**" may not be in the original text of Matthew 17:21 or Mark 9:29, but this is due to an assumption made on the part of the translators – a reasonable assumption perhaps, but an assumption none-the-less. *A case can also be made that the word "fasting" IS in the original text, and there is a fair amount of testimonial evidence **in print today** that fasting is of vital importance in deliverance ministry.

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Fasting

- A better assumption for the translators of Matt 17:21 and Mark 9:29 to make might be that Satan has done everything possible over the centuries to **remove the word “fasting” from copies of the Bible** knowing how powerful “fasting” can be for us in spiritual warfare.



KINGDOM TOPICS

So I would suggest that a better assumption for the translators of Matthew 17:21 and Mark 9:29 to make might be that Satan has done everything possible over the centuries to remove the word “fasting” from copies of the Bible **knowing how powerful “fasting” can be for us in spiritual warfare.**

By the way, later in the course we will look more closely at some of the assumptions translators make about old Bible manuscripts and what impact that can have on our understanding.

Slide 80

What Should We Do About Fasting?

- Ask God - study the Bible – read biblical fasting books
- **Talk to your doctor**
- Ask if you might be able to “fast” safely - and ask what kind of fast might be OK for you.
- There are a variety of biblical fasts to choose from and pray about.



KINGDOM TOPICS

OK, so what should WE do about fasting? Well, first of all let’s just calmly do some more scouting on this topic - *ask God about fasting, study the Bible, and read some biblical fasting books.

*Second, the next time you talk to your doctor, *ask if you might be able to fast safely - and ask what kind of fast might be OK for you. *There are a variety of biblical fasts to choose from and pray about.

Slide 81

What Should We Do About Fasting?

- In addition to the spiritual benefits of fasting, there are great physical benefits.
- God has built an amazing “reset” switch into our bodies!
- Share your research with your family.
- **The next generation is going to be facing even greater attacks by the demonic than we have.**



KINGDOM TOPICS

By the way, *in addition to the spiritual benefits of fasting, there are great physical benefits and healings that can come from it. *God has built an amazing “reset switch” into our bodies, and the way to push that switch is through fasting – particularly when we fast 3 days or more. If you want more information on this please ask me about it. *Finally, share your research on fasting with your family. *The next generation is going to be facing even greater attacks by the demonic than we have. It’s time that we scout this out!

Segment 1: Racing to a BOLDER Faith – SCOUTing the Challenge

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So there we have it, SCOUTing the Challenge in our Race to a BOLDER Faith:

*Story (the Big Picture)

*Contract (the legal aspects)

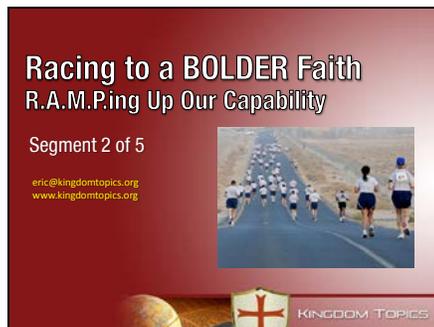
*Objectives

*Utensils (Tools), and

*Training

Please feel free to ask me questions by email, and check out the special page on my website for CCCC!

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Next up, Segment 2 in our series entitled

R.A.M.P.ing Up Our Capability.

Let's pray to end.