

Lesson #24

Facing The Giants

The Spiritual War

Ephesians, Chapter 6 is Paul's classic passage about spiritual warfare where he tells us to have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (see Eph 6:15). Satan is warring against us seeking to prevent us from reaching maturity and preparing the way for the Kingdom. In verse 12 we read:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

— Ephesians 6:12 (KJV emphasis added)

The word "principalities" in verse 12 above comes from the Greek word *arche* (ar-khay') and in other places *arche* is translated as *first*. It describes being first or chief in order or power. A form of this word is used in the first part of the word archangel, which describes the highest rank of God's angelic host, such as Michael the archangel (see Jude 1:9). Here in Ephesians it speaks of the highest level of demonic spirits.

This word *arche* is used in Hebrews 5:12 to describe the foundational principles calling them *first* principles of the oracles or utterances of God. Immediately following, in Hebrews 6:1, the word *arche* is used again and is simply translated principles, again speaking of the first or primary utterances of God. The knowledge and skillful use of these foundational utterances of God enables us to discern good and evil (see verse 14), which speaks of the spiritual war we are in..

¹² For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the **first** [*arche*] principles of the oracles [utterances] of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

¹³ For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

¹⁴ But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

¹ Therefore, leaving the **principles** [*arche*] of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection...

— Hebrew 5:12-6:1 (KJV) - emphasis added

Principles and Principalities

The association of principalities and powers in Ephesians 6:12, and first principles in Hebrews 5:12 cannot be ignored. We have arch enemies fighting to prevent the arch utterances of God from being fulfilled. This is why I believe that, with each of the five principles we are studying from Hebrews 6:1-2, there is a demonic force or principality at work to resist it.

How to classify, name, or group the different demon rulers may be unclear, but the demonic resistance to each of the principles that we are seeking to reestablish through this study is clear enough. We could say: "For each principle there is a principality."

There Were Five Giants

Goliath was a seasoned warrior, a giant of a man standing over nine feet tall. He defied the armies of Israel day after day, challenging them to send out one man to fight him and thus decide who would serve whom. David was a young shepherd boy who was untrained in warfare and unfamiliar with the traditional weapons of war. Nevertheless, through faith in God, David took the equipment of a shepherd, and defeated Goliath the warrior.

Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine.

— 1 Sam. 17:40 (NKJV)

There have been many speculations as to the reason David took exactly five stones to fight Goliath. But in 2 Samuel, Chapter 21, we learn that there were four other giants besides Goliath (see 2 Samuel 21:16-22). "These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants" (2 Sam 21:22). All of these were killed later by David's mighty men. It is therefore reasonable to speculate that David was aware of the other "Goliaths" and chose five stones because he was prepared to kill all five giants!

Like these five giants that David and his mighty men slew, we have five giants to defeat which resist the five foundational principles. The chart below shows the five foundational principles and a corresponding enemy that would seek to prevent it. We will briefly describe the operation of each one and how to defeat the corresponding giant.

#	Foundational Principle (First Oracles of God)	Corresponding Principality (Giant)
1	Repentance from dead works and faith toward God	Religion
2	Doctrines of Baptisms (Washings)	Uncleanness
3	Laying on of Hands	Independence

4	Resurrection of the Dead	Fear of Death
5	Eternal Judgment	Vengeance

Giant #1: Religion and Dullness

Religion is a principality that causes dead works based on man-made traditions and dead routine. Repenting from dead works (religion) can only be accomplished through a living relationship with God in which we hear and obey. When we rely on religious routine instead of seeking God, it is often because we have become dull of hearing, or in other words, we have grown slack in seeking Him. If we are not getting up-to-date and living direction from the Holy Spirit, dead routine and dead works based on past direction is our only option.

Yes, some things we have heard in the past continue to be active and alive and we need not hear them again. Obedience to these things may be routine-like but obedience based on faith is never a dead work. Nevertheless, our relationship with God and being led by the Spirit must be ongoing and cannot be replaced by religion. This is why religion is the enemy of the first principle: Repentance from Dead Works and Faith Toward God. We are called to do good works out of a personal relationship with Him.

The bedrock principle of the New Covenant is that we know God: “For this is the covenant that I will make ... for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” (Heb. 8:10-11). Religion is an enemy who constantly wars against the New Covenant and our personal relationship with God. This giant knows that without the faith that comes by hearing the living Word of God, our works will be dead and will not accomplish His will.

- Religion generally looks good on the outside, but can be recognized by its lack of power, even though it has a form of godliness.
- It may be somber and quiet or hyper and loud, but still dead on the inside.
- Religion lacks eternal purpose.
- Religious people often know about Jesus, but they don't know Him (John 5:39).
- Religious people can get along without a real relationship with Jesus - a Christian can't.

To defeat the giant of Religion we must know God and obey Him. It is a matter of maintaining our relationship with God, walking in real faith that only comes by hearing and obeying the word of God. This is how we repent from dead works and walk in living/good works. We are called to do good works out of a personal relationship with Him.

Giant #2: Uncleaness

The unclean spirit wars against the principle of baptisms or washings by getting us to return to sin after having been cleansed. No one is without sin, but everyone must pursue holiness and the grace that allows us to walk in victory over temptation and sin. If the giant of uncleanness is operating in our lives, we will not only have difficulty with temptation, but we will be constantly be reminded of our sin. The unclean spirit seeks to separate us from God by creating a consciousness of sin. With this consciousness

of sin comes condemnation and an identify associated with sin. But Jesus has made provision for the removal of this sin consciousness.

...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

— Hebrews 9:14 (NKJV)

Here we see that the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus not only provides for the forgiveness of sins we have committed, but it cleanses our conscience from the dead works of religion which we have referred to as Giant #1. The unclean spirit works with the religious spirit by trying to get us to rely on dead works to achieve holiness instead of relying on faith and the work of God through Jesus Christ.

Being holy and clean is more than "not sinning." Holiness is being set apart unto God. It is seeing one's self as belonging to God, which is another way of describing our new identity in Christ. When we see ourselves as holy and belonging to God, we are free from condemnation and it is much easier to resist sin. If we do stumble and sin, we should be heartbroken over our sin and repent from it. But if we confess our sin, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness (see 1 John 1:9)! Paul told the Corinthians to be separate and not to touch what is unclean (see 2 Cor 6:17). But first he told them this:

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

— 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21 (NKJV)

Repentance is only the first step in dealing with uncleanness. When we say *no* to sin, we must move on by saying *yes* to God by focusing on His directions and His work, not ours. One of our first yes responses to God is be baptized. Baptism is a cleansing that speaks of washing away sin, but it also speaks of newness of life, or a new identity.

⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

— Romans 6:4 (NKJV)

Identifying with Christ is a daily choice. Living with two identities is double mindedness and that creates instability (see James 1:8). If we choose a single-minded walk with God and live in an intimate relationship with Him, our sins will become a forgotten part of our past. James continues saying:

⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

— James 4:7-8 (NKJV)

The giant of uncleanness is slain when we repent, confess sin, and draw near to God. When we draw near to Him, He draws near to us. The closer we are to God, the harder it is to sin.

Giant #3: Independence

We have seen the importance of Laying on of Hands, impartation, and building generational momentum by passing the baton to the next generation. This can only happen through meaningful relationships, but the spirit of independence isolates people thus hindering or preventing impartation, discipleship and generational momentum. Independent people often desire to walk in faith and do living works, but often have trouble getting the big picture because isolation hinders us hearing God through other members of the body of Christ. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you" (see 1 Corinthians 12:21). This makes the independent person more easily deceived or misled.

Therefore, those who are independent receive little impartation and often lack vision. We typically think of vision as having to do with seeing into the future, or as long range vision. This true but a lack of vision can also speak of blindness and short-sightedness. This is because independence, which naturally tends to be more self-centered, lacks such qualities as brotherly kindness, love, faith, etc. And as Peter tells us, "he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins" (2 Peter 1:9). As we reject independence and connect to others, our short range vision is restored and we are able to receive long range vision as well. Blindness is healed!

As we have seen, the Hebrews should have been teaching others but were instead reproved for becoming dull of hearing and were in need of being taught again the foundational doctrines about the Christ. They had lost sight of the big picture or the long-range plan. Comprehending this long range plan seemed to be a concern Paul had for the Ephesians as well. He prayed that the saints would be able to "comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height" (Eph. 3:18).

The giant of independence is slain by maintaining relationships, being humble and teachable. Then we can connect to spiritual mentors, receive an impartation of Kingdom vision, and learn to teach the foundational principles to others. Paul summed it up to his disciple Timothy this way”

2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

— 2 Tim. 2:2 (NKJV)

Giant # 4. The Fear of Death

Though Jesus has made abundant life available to us, the thief has come to steal, kill, and destroy (see John 10:10). Through fear, especially the fear of death and the fear of lack, the enemy seeks to erode our confidence, neutralize our faith, and steal the abundant life that Jesus has provided.

The fear of death causes us to seek to preserve or save our lives. Self-preservation is one of the strongest instincts we have and in some ways of course, this is good. But when it comes to our spiritual life, self-preservation is the fruit of fear. Jesus said, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 16:25). In self-preservation, fear of death and fear of lack are common because we are essentially seeking to be our own savior and that simply doesn't work.

Jesus promised to provide all that we need in this life if we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (see Matt. 6:33). By seeking the kingdom, we are really seeking the resurrection. At the

resurrection and the appearing of His Kingdom, we will put on immortality, death will be put under our feet, and eternal life will be a reality.

As we seek the kingdom of God, we are also seeking His righteousness. This righteousness speaks of moving from *training* in righteousness to the *ministry* of righteousness which was spoken of in *Lesson 22: Five Levels of Growth*. This is where we move into maturity and taste the powers of the age to come, which includes being witnesses of and demonstrating resurrection power. Whenever we experience the future and get a taste of resurrection power, death becomes irrelevant and the fear of death leaves.

Fear of death can cast an ominous shadow, but as we continue our walk until the full day, we realize that death has been defeated and its fearful shadow is under our feet with no real substance at all. In resurrection, Jesus has delivered us from the fear of death and lack. Our victory over this giant was won by Jesus who lived in the flesh and tasted death for us.

¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

— Hebrews 2:14-15

This victory must be appropriated in our personal lives through our personal relationship with God as we come to know and believe the love He has for us.

¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

— 1 John 4:16-18 (NKJV)

As we draw nearer to Father God, as we see the kingdom more clearly, and as we come to know and believe the love He has for us, the cares of this life fade away and eternity becomes more and more of a reality. As His love is perfected in us, fear of death is no longer a giant, but a forgotten foe.

In summary, we overcome the fear of death through seeking the kingdom, tasting the powers of the age to come, and coming to know and believe the love that He has for us. When the reality of the resurrection is firmly established, it becomes a stone of purpose in our shepherd's bag with which we slay the fear of death and become free to participate in God's purpose.

Giant # 5. Vengeance

Vengeance is the "judo throw" of the enemy where he takes our own strength and momentum and uses it against us. To explain this, let's first remember that our Father is bringing us to a place of

maturity where He gives us function and responsibility in His judgments. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?" (see 1 Cor 6:2). Jesus promised that those who keep His works until the end would have power over the nations and rule them with a rod of iron (see Rev 2:26-27). This is an honor that God gives His people:

⁶ Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand,
⁷ To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples;
⁸ To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron;
⁹ To execute on them the written judgment-- This honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD!

Once we begin to grasp this and begin to realize the awesome future that awaits us, we begin to long for it - and rightly so! Eternal judgment presents more than a picture of wrath and fiery indignation, it is a picture of closure and the ultimate fulfillment of God's strategic purpose and the restoration of all things. Eternal judgment is the promise that warfare will one day be finished and the evil that we see in this world will eventually be eradicated! This longing produces a zeal for the Kingdom of God to come, a zeal like David's who said, "zeal for your house consumes me" (Ps. 69:9 NIV). It is at this point that we become extremely dangerous to the enemy because it is the zeal of the Lord that will bring to pass the purpose of God (see Is. 9:7).

But it is when we begin to long for judgment that our enemy will try to use our own zeal for the Kingdom of God against us much like a judo fighter seeks to leverage his opponents strength and momentum. The enemy will tempt us to take vengeance into our own hands before the time for it has come. We must not succumb to this temptation. Zeal unchecked by compassion and mercy will run aground.

Jesus' disciples began to think this way and were ready to call down fire when a Samaritan village that did not receive Jesus! But Jesus rebuked them saying, "You do not know what spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" (see Luke 9:54-56). James tells us that the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God (James 1:20). Paul warned the Romans not to avenge themselves but to give place to wrath because it is written "'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Rom 12:19).

God always reserves the right to execute judgment Himself, and He has ordained civil governments to bear the sword. And even though judgement may be exercised in this age as a taste of the powers of the age to come, it is primarily redemptive in purpose. In general, it is not our place to execute judgment until after Jesus returns when we will do so under His supervision.

We have been using extreme terms like destruction and eternal judgment, but we are much more likely to encounter the giant of vengeance when we simply need to forgive others who have hurt or offended us. Vengeance is most likely to manifest first as an attitude of unforgiveness toward those who have done us wrong. Jesus made it crystal clear that we must forgive others if we want to find forgiveness in the eyes of God (see Matt 6:12 and 18:23-35).

The giant of vengeance is slain when we walk in mercy and forgiveness. By doing so, we ensure mercy for ourselves, because mercy triumphs over judgement(see James 2:13). We must guard against self-righteousness and seek the righteousness that is from God and not our own. Paul also spoke of the Hebrews, "that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's

righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Rom 10:2-3). James also says, "...the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:20).

"He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?"

— Micah 6:8 (NKJV)

Become a Mighty Warrior

David didn't look like a mighty warrior. He was a simple shepherd boy with five smooth stones in his pouch. But he knew what those five stones were for and how to use them - he took action and defeated the enemy! The five foundational principles we are learning are also like stones that we can use to defeat our enemy.

The chart below summarizes the principles, their corresponding enemy, and the action we take to defeat it. Put these five stones in your pouch and learn to use them. Use them against the giants in your life and make them available to others. As you use them, you will become more and more skilled at doing so. You will become a mighty warrior. You will be used of God to raise up the age-old foundations. You will have a foundation upon which to build the house of God.

#	Foundational Principle (First Oracles of God)	Corresponding Principality (Giant)	Acts of Righteousness (To Defeat the Giant)
1	Repentance from dead works and faith toward God	Religion	Know God Obey Him
2	Doctrines of Baptisms (Washings)	Uncleanness	Draw Near To God
3	Laying on of Hands	Independence	Maintain Relationships Be Teachable Walk in Humility
4	Resurrection of the Dead	Fear of Death	Seek the Kingdom Perfect Love
5	Eternal Judgment	Vengeance	Walk in Mercy and Forgiveness

