

The Authority of Christ over Satan

Lesson 3

TEACHER TO TEACHER

Learning to “overcome the evil one” and to resist the enemy for me has been—and continues to be—an adventure of the first order. It is always challenging. Although I currently take up the battle with more faith in Christ than I did at the beginning, I still find engaging the enemy at times intimidating and sometimes frightening. After all, we face a powerful adversary who is passionate about destroying us.

I am grateful to my early Christian mentors who had the wisdom to teach me about Christ’s authority and power over Satan, before teaching me about the power and intent of the devil. It is possible that I would have been less willing to enlist in the fight had I not had confidence the “powerful outstretched arm of God.” For this reason, I have chosen to order our lessons so that we can teach about God’s power for victory before we discuss with our Bible Fellowship members Satan’s hideous and frightening attacks.

In the early part of the lesson we will examine the multiple purposes of God that were fulfilled through Christ’s sacrificial death. Some in your group may be surprised to learn that the Crucifixion was not just about Atonement—the act by which God restored a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and human beings. They may be further surprised to learn that Jesus’ death dealt a victorious blow to Satan and sealed his destiny.

This lesson is, first, doctrinal in nature. That means that it looks at what the Scripture tells us about what to believe about Christ and what to believe about ourselves in relation to Him. We’ve learned from our teaching pastors that right or correct belief (doctrine) should always be presented in a way that points us toward loving relationships with both God and others. Therefore, I encourage you to ask yourself some of the questions suggested by the relational hermeneutic we’ve learned together over the last few years. For example, when you learn that believers are “seated with Him [Christ] in heavenly places” (Eph. 2:4-6), ask yourself what the verse tells you about God’s love for you and your brothers and sisters in Christ. Or when you learn that Jesus gave us the privilege of wielding “His incomparably great power” with which we defeat the enemy, consider both what that gift suggests about God’s heart for His Church and what our heart response to that love might look like.

Finally, I encourage you to spend some time meditating on Christ’s authority over Satan and what the truth of this teaching means to you. Do you find yourself feeling encouraged, empowered, and wonderfully loved? What actions are you personally prompted to take as a result of your own heart responses to the lesson?

Vulnerably teach your group from the power and perspective of your own experiences with these doctrinal truths as you viewed them through the lens of God’s love toward you. May God empower you to teach His Word with His Heart.

Notes 

Studying the Word Together

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. —Jesus

The victory of Jesus on the cross is the most significant event in human history. It is an event that has universal and cosmic impact like no other. —Dr. Steve Dowdle

A study of the New Testament reveals four significant things that result from Christ's crucifixion on the cross at Golgotha.

1. Jesus' death on the cross provided Atonement for our sins (Heb. 10:10-14).
2. Jesus' death on the cross satisfied God's justice (Rom. 3:25).
3. Jesus' death on the cross provided an example for believers (Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 2:21).
4. Jesus' death on the cross conquered Satan and his demonic hosts (John 12:31; Col. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8).

As you see above, God used the cross to accomplish a number of His purposes at the same time. It seems that the Atonement aspect receives the most focus in our day, especially among evangelicals. While the shedding of His blood for the remission of our sins is of paramount importance to us and does in fact compel us to share it with others, that is not God's only focus.

The purpose of this lesson is to highlight the fundamental and significant purpose of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the defeat of Satan. To view the Atonement of Christ as just about us (our reconciliation to God and our salvation) is, in my view, limited and incomplete. It should be considered that in a sense, the defeat of Satan is the prerequisite purpose God had in mind, for it is of importance to all of the created order of things—to the heavenly beings as well as to humankind.

Christ's Authority over Satan

The Scriptural basis for gaining an understanding of the scope of the Lord Jesus' authority over all of creation—including Satan and his army—is clearly depicted in the following statements:

- ◆ Jesus is exalted by God to the highest place and given the name above all names (Phil. 2:9) and Jesus is seated at God's right hand in the heavenly realms (Eph. 1:20) above every authority, power, dominion, and title (Eph. 1:21).
- ◆ Jesus came to destroy the devil's work (1 John 3:8) and has disarmed

all powers and authorities (Col. 2:15) and declared: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18).

Let's look at each of these important statements in order.

► **Jesus Is Exalted by God and Seated at His Right Hand**

Jesus prayed with the eleven¹ Apostles on His way to Gethsemane:

I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in

your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.
(John 17:4-5)

Paul tells us in his letter to the Philippians and Ephesians how Jesus' prayer was answered :

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,...
(Philippians 2:9)

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the ... incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.
(Ephesians 1:18-23)

Jesus was exalted by God through the resurrection, ascension, and glorification at the Father's right Hand. The "name above every name" given Christ is not just a title; it is indicative of the totality of who He is: His person, His position, His authority, and His power.

The idea that "God placed everything under his (Christ's) feet" is likely a reference to Psalm 110:1 where David in a prophetic vision heard God, the Father, say to Jesus—the Messiah, or Christ, "...sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." It was common practice in King David's day for the conquering king to place his foot on the neck of the defeated king, using it as a footstool! The meaning is clear: Jesus Christ—the Messiah—will subjugate the enemies of God under His feet.

It is important for us also to note the significance of the phrase "seated at the right hand of God." The people of biblical times understood this metaphor to mean that the person of greatest importance, second only to the king himself, sat at the right hand of the king. It was the position of greatest power and authority next to the king. Paul used this imagery to communicate to the Church at Ephesus that the resurrection of Jesus means that He is enthroned in a position of great strength, having authority and power over all His enemies, both natural and supernatural.

► **Jesus Came to Destroy the Devil's Work and Has Disarmed All Powers and Authorities**

Let's begin our discussion of this point by reading three related verses:

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.
(1 John 3:8b)

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Colossians 2:15)

...he [Jesus] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—...
(Hebrews 2:14b)

Dr. Greg Boyd² summarizes these verses, saying, "...the foundational reason Christ appeared was to destroy the works of the devil, to disarm the rulers and authorities, and to destroy the one who has the power of death—that is the devil. [This is the classic Christus Victor view of the Atonement. See Commentary.] The consequence of this victory is that:

- ◆ "Jesus is seated on his rightful throne
- ◆ "The whole cosmos is liberated from a tyrannical and destructive ruler (Satan)

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- ◆ “Humanity is delivered from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:3), and all who accept it are thereby reinstated to the original position and to the responsibility of steward of the creation that God had always intended for us.”

The importance of viewing the defeat of Satan as a prime purpose of the cross is given credibility when one considers that the first messianic prophecy given to us in Scripture proclaims that Christ will crush the head of Satan (Gen. 3:15). While the serpent struck the “heel” of Christ on the cross, it was the willing sacrifice of Jesus the Christ on that cross that ultimately crushed the head of the serpent. The sin of the first Adam and the misery it brought to mankind was defeated by the victory over death of the second Adam—Jesus.

After His resurrection and prior to His Ascension, Jesus declared to His followers that He had completed His earthly work, that the victory over Satan and his power over death had been won, and that He possessed all authority in heaven and on Earth.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...." (Matthew 28:18)

This final statement from Jesus emboldens us to stand in His authority against the evil one and his demons, so that we can walk in spiritual freedom.

Our Authority in Christ over the Enemy

Paul uses the phrase “in Christ” approximately 85 times in his epistles. It can be a difficult phrase to understand. I have sometimes explained it by talking about a familiar “pet”—a goldfish. A goldfish draws the things

necessary to sustain its life from the watery environment in which it exists. We could say that a goldfish exists “in water.” In the same way, Christians exist “in Christ.” We draw everything we need for a spiritual life like God’s—eternal, full, and abundant—from Christ.

► ***In Christ, We Are Seated in Heavenly Places***

By virtue of being “in Christ,” believers may draw upon His power and authority to battle Satan. Let’s explore this idea by first examining Christ’s authority over and in the church. Paul writes:

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,.... (Ephesians 2:4-6)

Remember, Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. Being so seated, He has a position of rule, authority, and power “far above all [other] rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given” (Eph. 1:21). Because we are seated in heavenly realms in Christ, we may—in His Name—exercise His rule over demonic forces.

► ***Our “Incomparably Great Power” in Christ***

It is amazing to consider that the same authority exercised by Jesus under the power of the Holy Spirit during His earthly ministry was in fact given to the Twelve and to the seventy—and then to us, the Church. Dr. Charles Kraft³ puts this great transaction into practical terms: “When He left the earth, Jesus instructed His followers to teach their followers all that He had taught them, presumably including how to minister in His authority

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(Matt. 28:20; Luke 24:49). He gave His followers one more command—to wait until they had received the Holy Spirit’s power before launching out in ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8). They were to receive the same Holy Spirit who had empowered Jesus.”

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we as followers of Jesus Christ—both individually and collectively—have His delegated authority and “his incomparably great power” (Eph 1:19, see previous section) to carry out His mission to destroy the works of the devil. Regarding this power, Dr. Neal Anderson says:

Paul used four different Greek words that give us the above phrase “incomparably great power.” [They are] power (dunameos), working (energeian), strength (kratous), and might (ischuos). Behind the resurrection of the Lord Jesus lies the mightiest work of power recorded in the Word of God. And the same power which raised Christ from the dead and defeated Satan is the power available to us to defeat the works of Satan in our daily lives.⁴

The church—the Body of Christ—is imbued with resurrection power, energy, strength, and might to resist and overcome the demonic forces of Satan.

► The Purpose of Our Authority in Christ

During the last few hours with His disciples Jesus said:

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. (John 14:12-14)

Dr. Charles Kraft⁵ states: “...the purpose for which God gives us this

authority is to use it to imitate Jesus. This fact is clear from Jesus’ prediction that all who have faith in Him will do what He did, and more.” Let’s close this section by considering this passage:

His [God’s] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:10-11)

As we share in the application of the authority of Christ over the work of the devil, we proclaim and demonstrate a basic teaching of the Gospel: The Kingdom of God is here; the kingdom of Satan is being destroyed. Jesus is indeed the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Summary

We place all our confidence in the Lord Jesus, the Christ, for He has won the victory over the devil and his demons. Jesus won the victory on His own behalf when He defeated Satan in His wilderness temptation encounter. He defeated Satan on our behalf on the cross of Calvary. He has sent us the Holy Spirit to empower us as we exercise our authority in Him, to continue to win battle after battle, playing our part as His devoted followers to demonstrate Christ’s authority and power.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul calls us to thanksgiving for this victory:

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. (2 Corinthians 2:14)

This verse reminds us that “always” and “in every place,” Christ has made victory possible for us.

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Application Ideas and Questions

In this lesson we learned that we are not helpless and powerless as we face satanic forces that might oppress or harass us. Indeed, we battle them in the Name and Authority of Jesus, the Christ, who has made a footstool of all of His enemies in spiritual dimensions.

The story below demonstrates a clear application of how our authority in Christ can be used to defeat the enemy. It is the true story of a missionary who sought help from the empowered church and stood in her own authority in Christ to find relief from debilitating depression.

► Carrie's Story

In 1983, Carrie (not her real name) returned from the mission field due to debilitating depression. She was under the care of a psychiatrist who had prescribed antidepressants. Carrie was also receiving counseling from a Christian psychologist. Neither the medication nor the counseling was producing any relief. A friend recommended she consider that the unrelenting depression might have a spiritual origin. Carrie had heard that Casas was teaching a class on the adversary and that we had a Christian counseling ministry. So, she contacted us.

In a counseling session, we learned that while on the mission field Carrie had gone to a “faith healer” for healing of a physical illness, believing the “healer” was of God. We scheduled an appointment with a prayer team. The prayer team consisted of an elder and his wife, a Casas minister, and me [Steve Dowdle].

As we prayed with her it was revealed through the gift of discernment that she was indeed being oppressed by the enemy and her depression was the result. Although we were just learning about our authority in Christ to help people find freedom from

demonic oppression, this inexperienced prayer team witnessed the authority of Jesus Christ over the work of the enemy in this missionary's life. She was instantly delivered from depression in the prayer session. I had the opportunity to check with her years later, and she told me she had never suffered from depression since her deliverance.

Carrie's ignorance of spiritual warfare was no protection from the demonic spirit who gained a stronghold in her life when she submitted herself to a source of evil power—the so-called faith healer. His power did not come from God. Carrie confessed she had put her faith in someone other than Jesus Christ for her healing. She renounced her sin. Then, in the Name and Authority of Jesus, she commanded the evil spirit to leave her; she was freed from the depression that medicine and counseling could not help.

It is important to understand that there are three possible diagnostic categories to be considered when trying to determine the cause of someone's illness or problem:

- ◆ Medical/Physical
- ◆ Psychological/Emotional
- ◆ Spiritual

In Carrie's case, both medical and psychological issues were assumed to be causes of the depression. However, when she received no relief from counseling and medication, she appropriately sought deliverance in the Name and Authority of Christ.

As you think about how you might apply the truths taught in this lesson, consider the following questions:

1. Had you been Carrie, would you have considered demonic oppression as a possible cause of your depression? Why, or why not?
2. Is it possible that there are spiritual causes behind some of the problems that you face in your own life? In the lives of your family or friends?

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3. Are you comfortable standing in the authority and power that you have in Christ to confront the enemy's attempts to tempt, harass, or oppress you?
4. Do you know believers who will stand with you as you resist the enemy's attacks?
5. Are you able, in Christ, to help others like Carrie who need deliverance from spiritual attack?

Notes 

¹ Judas had left the group in order to lead to the garden those who would arrest Jesus.

² Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict*, copyright © 1997 by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, p. 241.

³ Charles H. Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, copyright © 2002 by Chosen Books, Grand Rapids, MI, pp. 157-158.

⁴ Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, copyright © 1990 by Harvest House, Eugene, OR, p. 64.

⁵ Kraft, p. 160.

Notes 

Commentary

Many images of Jesus have been proffered throughout history. For example, He is viewed by some as a mystic, moral leader, social reformer, motivational speaker, entrepreneur, or salesman. Such distortions of his ministry are narrow and unhelpful. Others view Him as lunatic, fraud, deceiver, opportunist, or cult leader. These views are derogatory and have no foundation in truth, either from the Gospels or historical investigation.

On the other hand, the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*¹ identifies numerous helpful word pictures of Christ. These images portray His humanity and identify Him as a shepherd, refugee, stranger, scorned one, dinner guest and host, head of family, leader and pathfinder, as well as suffering servant. There are three biblical images or names that are particularly germane to this lesson. They are savior, divine warrior, and “Christus Victor.”

► Savior

In today’s Christian jargon, the word *Savior* is so closely associated with Jesus that the two names are considered synonymous. Just as Moses led the Hebrews from Egypt, Jesus is pictured as saving or delivering people from many forms of bondage. The term *savior* (Gk. *sōtēr*) is found 24 times in the New Testament. Eight of those times it refers to God with the sixteen other occurrences referring to Jesus. The words *salvation* and *save* are found many more times in the New Testament with Jesus being the most frequent subject.

The general image of salvation is present in many Jewish texts.² Such texts portray a messiah who, acting as God’s agent, delivers Israel from all sorts of brokenness, including sin, oppression, and a “spiritual exile” from the blessings of God.³ This picture is contained in the

Hebrew name Jesus or Yĕšūa’ (shortened to Yĕšū) which means “Yahweh saves” (cf. Matt. 1:21).

The Gospel of Luke best profiles Jesus as Savior. As the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*⁴ puts it,

*Jesus arrives on the stage of Israel's drama at an hour when the nation has long been groaning under spiritual exile and bondage to foreign rule. The angel declares to the shepherds that “a savior” is born (Lk 2:11) in the city of David, but the unspoken fact is that a “savior” is already enthroned in Rome-Caesar Augustus, whose monuments declare him “savior of the world.” Against this backdrop the anticipation of a savior within Israel seems fraught with danger, as the pious figures we meet in Luke's Gospel invoke OT promises of deliverance. Zechariah speaks of a “mighty savior” and of being “saved from our enemies” (Lk 1:69, 71 NRSV). Simeon, who has been looking for the “consolation of Israel,” thanks God that he has lived to see God's “salvation” (Lk 2:30) in the face of the infant Jesus. And the aged Anna rejoices over the child in the presence of all who are “looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Lk 2:38 NRSV). John the Baptist also speaks of a great judgment and renewal within Israel associated with the coming of the Lord. Luke summarizes John's activity with the biblical image of preparing a highway for the *divine warrior so that “all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Lk 3:6 NRSV; cf. Isa 40:5 LXX). We are not led to expect a savior who will bring “spiritual” salvation.*

The surprise is that Luke's Gospel defines this savior in a way that reshapes Israel's expectation of salvation as well as our own. Jesus the Savior delivers Israel from the deepest dimensions of its plight, its spiritual state of sinfulness and bondage to Satan. But this salvation turns out to be

a broadly encompassing salvation aimed at whole persons and communities. Salvation is a comprehensive image that embraces a number of benefits brought about through God's saving action in Jesus.

► **Divine Warrior**

The image of Jesus as divine warrior is apparent in the accounts of the beginnings of Christ's ministry. In Matthew and Luke we find Jesus battling Satan in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). He is pictured as having "the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14), enabling Jesus to wage battle (Luke 4:18). Following the narrative of Christ's ministry through Mark and Luke, we find Jesus confronting demons and driving them out with a boldness and tenacity reminiscent of Joshua warring against the Canaanites.

► **Christus Victor**

The early first century Church Fathers saw the drama of the cross from what has become a classical perspective and is now called *Christus Victor*. Irenaeus wrote: "The work of Christ is first and foremost a victory over the powers which hold mankind in bondage: sin, death, and the devil." Christus Victor is a drama, a passion story of God winning

the battle over dark powers and freeing us from the bondage of sin and the devil's power. As Paul said,

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Colossians 2:15)

Indeed, Jesus is victorious over His enemies:

- ◆ God has "highly exalted Him" and named Him "Lord," the name that is above every name (Philip. 2:9).
- ◆ He is presently subduing his enemies (1 Cor. 15:24-26) and is reigning in triumph over his enemies, who are now "under his feet" (Eph. 1:19-22; cf. Ps. 110:1).
- ◆ He will come again in visible power and glory to vanquish the last embodiment of evil (2 Thess. 2:1-12) and establish his kingdom (1 Cor. 15:25-28).

The Christus Victor motif views the Atonement from the standpoint of conflict and victory over Satan, sin, and death. It is a perspective that sees the plight of humankind as being in bondage to a demonic power. The cross and resurrection form the climax of the paradoxical battle that engages both spiritual and human forces.

Notes 

¹ *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, copyright © 1998 by Intervarsity Christian Fellowship/USA. All Rights reserved.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

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RESOURCES NEEDED:

- ◆ 2-sided copies of Lesson Notes / Take-Home pages
- ◆ Pencils or pens for each person
- ◆ Dry erase markers and marker board or felt tip markers and a flip chart

TIMEFRAME:

- ◆ 35 minutes

Suggested Lesson Plan

NOTE TO TEACHER: This *suggested* lesson plan contains many elements that, if employed, will help maximize learning for life-change in your Bible Fellowship. If you are an experienced teacher, you have freedom to create your own plan based upon the “Studying the Word Together” section. If you are less experienced, we suggest that you “stick to the plan.” However, even less-experienced teachers should feel free to modify the plan based upon the needs of your Bible Fellowship. This plan is designed to be presented in 35 minutes. It is important, therefore, that you carefully plan your presentation so that you communicate the main points with brevity and clarity.

Important Scripture References:

- ◆ Philippians 2:9
- ◆ Ephesians 1:18-23
- ◆ Hebrews 2:14b
- ◆ Ephesians 2:4-6
- ◆ Ephesians 3:10-11

Teaching Goals:

- ◆ **Learn:** Department members understand that Christ has complete authority over Satan and that believers have great authority and power to resist the evil one in Jesus’ Name.
- ◆ **Experience:** Bible Fellowship participants see the fulfillment of Ephesians 3:10-11 in Carrie’s story.

Before Class Begins:

- ◆ Distribute handouts.

STEP ONE: GETTING READY TO LEARN (5 MINUTES)

- ◆ Begin by telling your group that today’s lesson is about Christ’s authority over Satan and our authority in Christ over the enemy. Next, set the stage for talking about Christ’s authority by referring the department to the two summary statements found on their handout. Ask two different people to each read one of the statements:
 1. Jesus is exalted by God to the highest place and given the name above all names (Phil. 2:9) and Jesus is seated at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms (Eph. 1:20) above every authority, power, dominion, and title (Eph. 1:21).
 2. Jesus came to destroy the devil’s work (1 John 3:8b) and has disarmed all powers and authorities (Col. 2:15) and declared: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt. 28:18).

STEP TWO: CHRIST’S AUTHORITY OVER SATAN (10 MINUTES)

(Use material from pages 3-2—3-4 as the basis for the discussion of the following ideas.)

Notes 

◆ Remind the group that Jesus is exalted by God and seated at His right hand.

1. Read Jesus' prayer from John 17:4-5. Tell your group that Paul records the answer to that prayer in Philippians 2:9 (on handout). Ask someone to read the verse. Explain the phrase "the name that is above every name."

2. Next ask someone to read Ephesians 1:18-23 (on handout). Explain the phrases "seated at the right hand of God" and "placed all things under His feet."

◆ Remind your group of the second summary statement read earlier by telling them that Jesus came to destroy the devil's work and has disarmed all powers and authorities.

1. Read the collection of verses: (1 John 3:8b; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14b, on handout) as a unit. Read Dr. Boyd's summary of these verses and write the "3 consequences" on the white board:

- a. Jesus is seated on his rightful throne
- b. The whole cosmos is liberated from a tyrannical and destructive ruler (Satan)
- c. Humanity is delivered from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 13), and all who accept it are thereby reinstated to the original position and to the responsibility of steward of the creation that God had always intended for us.

◆ As a final point in this step, read Matthew 28:18 to your group reminding them that Jesus claimed "all authority" in both the supernatural (heaven) and natural (earth) realms just prior to the Ascension.

**STEP THREE: OUR
AUTHORITY IN CHRIST
OVER THE ENEMY
(10 MINUTES)**

(Use material from pages 3-4—3-5 to prepare for this step.)

◆ Begin this step by telling your Bible Fellowship that you are going to quickly discuss the authority and power that we have "in Christ" to resist the enemy. Then, use the "goldfish explanation" to describe what it means to be "in Christ."

◆ Next tell your group that Jesus is at the right hand of God—a position of authority. Then explain to them that we, too, are seated in heavenly places because we are in Christ. Refer them to their handout and ask someone to read aloud Ephesians 2:4-6. Tell them our being seated in heaven with Him reflects that we have His delegated authority to act in His Name.

◆ Now tell your group that we not only have authority—we have "incomparably great power." Refer them to their handout and the Ephesians 1:18-23 passage. Call their attention to verse 19 ("and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,"). Remind them that we have such power because we are in Christ.

◆ Explain the purpose for our authority and power in Christ by reading John 14:12-14. Next, paraphrase Dr. Kraft's statement that explains the purpose of our authority and power: "...the purpose for which God gives us this authority is to use it to imitate Jesus. This fact is clear from Jesus' prediction that all who have faith in Him will do what He did, and more."

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STEP FOUR: APPLICATION AND CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

- ◆ Quickly divide your department into groups of 3 or 4 people.
- ◆ When the groups are established, refer everyone to their handout where they will find “Carrie’s story” and ask each person to silently read the story.
- ◆ After everyone is finished reading, ask the groups to briefly discuss the following question: Had you been Carrie, would you have considered

demonic oppression as a possible cause of your depression? Why, or why not?

- ◆ When each group has had time for most people to answer the question, regain everyone’s attention and ask everyone to read in unison Ephesians 3:10-11. Tell your group that Carrie’s deliverance was an example of the truth of these verses.
- ◆ Close with a prayer of thanksgiving that Jesus has authority and power over Satan and that He has given us His authority and power to overcome the evil one.

Today in My Bible Fellowship

Summary Statements

1. Jesus is exalted by God to the highest place and given the name above all names (Phil. 2:9) and Jesus is seated at God's right hand in the heavenly realms (Eph. 1:20) above every authority, power, dominion, and title (Eph. 1:21).
2. Jesus came to destroy the devil's work (1 John 3:8) and has disarmed all powers and authorities (Col. 2:15) and declared: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18).

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In a counseling session, we learned that while on the mission field Carrie had gone to a "faith healer" for healing of a physical illness, believing the "healer" was of God. We scheduled an appointment with a prayer team. The prayer team consisted of an elder and his wife, a Casas minister, and me [Steve Dowdle].

As we prayed with her it was revealed through the gift of discernment that she was indeed being oppressed by the enemy and her depression was the result. Although we were just learning about our authority in Christ to help people find freedom from demonic oppression, this inexperienced prayer team witnessed the authority of Jesus Christ over the work of the enemy in this missionary's life. She was instantly delivered from depression in the prayer session. I had the opportunity to check with her years later, and she told me she had never suffered from depression since her deliverance.

Carrie's ignorance of spiritual warfare was no protection from the demonic spirit who gained a stronghold in her life when she submitted herself to a source of evil power—the so-called faith healer. His power did not come from God. Carrie confessed she had put her faith in someone other than Jesus Christ for her healing. She renounced her sin. Then, in the Name and Authority of Jesus, she commanded the evil spirit to leave her; she was freed from the depression that medicine and counseling could not help.

It is important to understand that there are three possible diagnostic categories to be considered when trying to determine the cause of someone's illness or problem:

- ◆ Medical/Physical
- ◆ Psychological/Emotional
- ◆ Spiritual

In Carrie's case, both medical and psychological issues were assumed to be causes of the depression. However, when she received no relief from counseling and medication, she appropriately sought deliverance in the Name and Authority of Christ.

Today's Scriptures

Philippians 2:9: Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name....

Ephesians 1:18-23: I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the ...incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

1 John 3:8b: The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Colossians 2:15: And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Hebrews 2:14b: ...[H]e [Jesus] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil—....

Matthew 28:18: Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...."

Ephesians 2:4-6: But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,....

Ephesians 3:10-11: His [God's] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Next Week's Lesson:

Know Your Enemy

Daily Reflections

Begin each daily reflection by meditating a few minutes on the suggested Scripture passage. Seek to listen to the Holy Spirit as He speaks to you. Then consider the comments and questions about the passage. Be aware of both your thoughts and your feelings. Respond to God through both.

Monday: *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)*

It is important to remember that even the evil spirits must acknowledge Jesus as Lord. Take a moment to declare that Jesus is Lord in your own life and thank Him for the security that you feel knowing that even His enemies must bow to His Lordship.

Tuesday: *... [H]e [God] raised him [Christ] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (Ephesians 1:20-23)*

As you meditate on this passage, underline key words or phrases that are particularly significant to you. Be aware of your heart response to these Words and express them to Christ. You might say, "Jesus, when I realize that _____, I feel _____." Now, let Him minister His response to you.

Wednesday: *...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8b)*

Jesus is *Christus Victor*. He has won the battle over Satan and death. There will be a final reckoning at His Second Coming. In the meantime, we struggle against the evil one in the Name and Authority of *Christus Victor*. What would be your plight had not Christ won the victory? Take time to express heartfelt gratitude to Jesus for sacrificing on the cross to defeat Satan, freeing you from the bondage of sin and eternal death.

Thursday: *...Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...." (Matthew 28:18)*

Do you feel a sense of comfort and security from knowing that Jesus has "all authority" in supernatural and natural realms? If Jesus did not have such authority, what might you feel? Thank God for the blessing of living under the rule, authority, and power of a loving, sovereign God.

Friday: *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-7)*

This passage speaks to both a supernatural and a natural reality. It speaks of the mysterious truth that we somehow look forward to a future reign with God, but it also speaks to the present reality that in some supernatural way we are already seated with Him and ruling with Him even as we exist in this natural realm. What does it do to your heart to realize such truth? What actions are you motivated to take because of this truth? Express your heart to God in prayer, thanking Him for the amazing reality of the truth that we currently rule with Him and that Satan must submit to us in Jesus' Name.

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