

## Lesson Five – The Belt of Truth

*Day One – Living By Faith*

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Are you getting frustrated? Are you tempted to stop studying? Are you thinking that maybe you've bitten off more than you can chew? I am sure that you have been experiencing MUCH spiritual warfare in your life since you've started this study. You are learning about your enemy and he is not happy about that. You are learning about your purpose—God's purpose *for you*—and your enemy is not happy about that. Like I said, there is a huge target on you.

However, God's Words speak SO much louder than Satan's. And make no mistake, Satan is a liar and he does not want you to go on. He wants you to be confused, and he wants you to be overwhelmed, and he wants you to be conflicted. *He wants you to give up.*

Yes, you will be overwhelmed at times. Yes, you will be confused at times. And yes, you may have difficulty understanding God's Word at times. That is normal. But please—press on! Keep going forward! Pray your way through the tough times and *do not give up!*

Make up your mind now before we get any further because if you don't know where you are going and why, you have absolutely no business putting on the belt of truth. In fact, it would be impossible.

### Day One – Living By Faith

Before you begin today, would you take a few minutes and pray for understanding? God is ready to have His Spirit lead you into ALL truth, but you have to desire to see it and you have to desire to hear it. Pray for His protection against the spiritual forces in the heavenly places that want to keep you from understanding your purpose. This is a real battle and those forces are much, much stronger than you, but they are NOT stronger than the Lord! He will protect you and strengthen you and *mature* you, if you will let Him.

As a Christian, you are in a race. It's a race with one goal, one prize. The moment you first believed in Jesus Christ, you were put on the starting blocks of this race. This race is your journey, and if you don't

know where you are going, and if you aren't determined to get there, *you will not get there*. This is what the belt of truth is all about.

Today we're going to look a bit at the Book of Hebrews, which deals almost exclusively with the salvation of the soul. (This salvation is intimately connected with the belt of truth, so hang in there!)

**Hebrews 10:36-39**

**<sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. <sup>37</sup> “For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. <sup>38</sup> But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” <sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the saving of the soul.**

We've already studied about the need for endurance. What does this passage say that you need endurance for?

When that is done, what will you receive?

What was it that was promised? (Think back to Abraham's two-fold inheritance and the promise made to David.)

According to v. 39, what does it take to save the soul?

Verse 38 states that God's "righteous one shall live by faith." In order to be God's "righteous one," a person must be born again (*saved*); then, that righteous one is expected to live by faith. This would be faith put into action, which is the faith necessary to save the soul.

Notice that the person (again, the *saved* person) who does not live by faith is considered to have "shrunk back to destruction" and God's "soul has no pleasure in him."

Look up the word "destruction" in your Appendix, and write out its definition.

destruction (684) -

This Greek word *apoleia* (684) is also used in the following verse—

**Matthew 7:13-14**

**<sup>13</sup> Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction (684), and many are those who enter by it. <sup>14</sup> For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.**

In light of the Hebrews passage, what does this mean?

The author of Hebrews goes on to say exactly what kind of faith we need, and he gives us many examples to illustrate the point—

**Hebrews 11:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> **Now faith** (contextually this must be referring to the “faith to the saving of the soul” from the previous verse) **is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.** <sup>2</sup> **For by it the men of old gained approval.** <sup>3</sup> **By faith we understand that the ages were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.**

What is it that we hope for? (Refer to Eph. 1:18 and Col. 1:27 if needed.)

How does v. 1 describe faith?

By that faith, what did the “men of old” gain?

Let’s pick out a few verses from chapter eleven to see *how* the men of old gained approval. (It would be a good idea for you to read all of Hebrews chapter 11 now, if you have time.)

**Hebrews 11:4**

**By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous...**

Did Abel just *believe* something, or did he *believe and then do* something?

How does the author of Hebrews describe Abel?

Continuing—

**Hebrews 11:7**

**By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household...**

Did Noah just *believe* something, or did he *believe and then do* something?

Were his actions based on something he saw?

What were his actions based on?

# Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

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Continuing—

### Hebrews 11:8-9

**By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise....**

Did Abraham just *believe* something, or did he *believe and then do* something?

Were his actions based on what he saw?

What were his actions based on?

Continuing—

### Hebrews 11:20

**By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.**

Did Isaac just *believe* something, or did he *believe and then do* something?

What did the blessings have to do with?

Continuing—

### Hebrews 11:22

**By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.**

Did Joseph just *believe* something, or did he *believe and then do* something?

Joseph did this because he believed (*because God had said*) that God would one day redeem Israel out of the bonds of slavery in Egypt and take them to the land promised to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Joseph knew this to be a future time; he asked that when it did happen, the nation take his bones with them when they went.

He acted on faith, based on what he *knew* would happen yet future.

Continuing—

### Hebrews 11:24-29

<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to endure ill-treatment, with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; <sup>26</sup> considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

**<sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.**

What did Moses do by faith?

What was he looking to?

Was he looking to the present, or was he focused on the future?

The author of Hebrews goes on—

**Hebrews 11:32-40**

**<sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection; <sup>36</sup> and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonments. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated <sup>38</sup> (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.**

**<sup>39</sup> And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, <sup>40</sup> because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.**

Explain what these men and women did.

How did they do it (v. 33)?

What did they gain because of this faith (v. 39)?

According to this verse, did they receive what was promised?

Verse 40 explains why. Rewrite this verse in your own words.

Do you understand that we are all waiting for *the same thing*? We should all be looking toward the same thing? And we have clear instructions on how to receive what was promised, don't we? BY FAITH! And as we've seen, it is faith put into action—it is *faith with works*. This is faith that comes after our *initial* saving faith—it is *faithful* obedience to what God has said. Paul sums it up—

**Romans 1:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

From what you've just learned, how would you explain the phrase “from faith to faith”?

Let's not forget the content of the Book of Hebrews. We are to live by faith, act by faith, all for THE faith—looking out ahead to the future promises. And if you are familiar with Hebrews at all, you'll know that it contains no less than five warnings to the Christian in regards to this.

This is our journey, our race, our fight. We begin at one point and we head to a future point. We have a purpose and a goal. Do you see that? Have you ever seen it like this before? Write down your thoughts.

We'll stop here for the day. Tomorrow we'll continue in Hebrews and study a bit more about living *by faith* in our current race *of faith*. This will lead us right into putting on the belt of truth!

Have a great day!

## Day Two –The Race

We're picking right back up where we left off yesterday, in Hebrews chapter 11, leading into chapter 12. Take a minute to refresh your memory as to what we have learned from yesterday's lesson. Pray for continued understanding of God's Word.

Now let's take another look at the Hebrews passage we've been studying, because the very next verse sums up this day's lesson perfectly—

**Hebrews 12:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance (Lit., weight or burden), and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race (Greek word used here for race is *agon* which is also translated “fight”) that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

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Notice how v. 1 begins—“Therefore.” This word can also be translated “consequently,” or “because of this...” Reflecting on yesterday’s lesson, sum up the thought that the “therefore” is connected to.

According to v. 1, what do we need to lay aside?

Then we need to do what?

Do you see the word picture being formed? We are to run the race set before us without any encumbrances and sin, with our eyes on ONE THING ONLY. What/Who is that one thing?

Notice *how* we are to run—with endurance. The word for endurance is the same word in the James passage that keeps coming up. Read it again—

### **James 1:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup> And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Now tie this thought together with Hebrews 10:36 regarding endurance. How do these two passages relate?

How did Jesus *endure* the cross and the shame (Heb. 12:2)?

What was *the joy set before Him*? (Re-read Heb. 2:10 if needed.)

Let’s now look at how Paul describes this race. We’ve studied just a little bit about Paul and what he taught and preached. He taught and preached “the whole counsel of God”—the gospel of grace and the gospel of the kingdom. Paul knew that he was in a race, and he was concerned about his outcome. Let’s read about it—

### **I Corinthians 9:24-27**

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. <sup>25</sup> And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I fight in such a way, as not beating the air; <sup>27</sup> but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possible, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

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Who are the ones running the race (all people in general, or just Christians)?

Does everyone receive the prize?

Paul tells the Church at Corinth (and by extension, the Church in general) to “run in such a way that you may win.” Does this imply that it is possible to run in a way as to *not* win?

What do those who compete in the race exercise (v. 25)?

What do those in the race compete for?

Implicitly, how would a Christian win the prize?

How does Paul run the race (v.26)?

How does he fight?

He does it all with purpose, doesn't he? What seems to be his goal?

Does Paul think that there is a chance he could be disqualified?

Think about that for a minute. Paul, the Apostle, thought that he could possibly be *disqualified* from this race. What does that mean?

The Greek word for “disqualified” is *adokimos* (96), which is the negative of the word *dokimos*. *Dokimos* is the word used in the same James passage we've been studying—

### **James 1:12**

**“Blessed is a man who perseveres (Lit., endures) under trial; for once he has been approved (*dokimos*, 1384) he will receive the crown of life.”**

Compare James 1:12 with Paul's statement in I Corinthians 9:27. What are the similarities?



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Now make this application personal. What do *you* need to do, and why?

Paul talks about his race in other ways also. Read about it in his letter to the Philippians—

### **Philippians 3:12b-14**

<sup>12b</sup> I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. <sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Why does Paul press on?

How does he press on?

What does he press on toward?

What does that mean?

Paul mentions a prize in his letters to the Corinthians and the Philippians. Compare the two prizes.

Now let's read about the end of Paul's life, in the last known epistle he wrote. He comments on the race he has run—

### **II Timothy 4:6-8**

<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; <sup>8</sup> in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

What does Paul mean in that he has kept the faith?

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Did Paul think he had accomplished what he needed to?

What did he expect to receive?

When will he get it?

Who will give it to him?

What are crowns for?

Now, let's sum up what we've learned—

Every Christian is in a race, whether they know it or not. Every Christian is expected to run in the race and reach the goal. The race is our journey through this life, in which we are expected to die to our flesh, transform ourselves (through the inward work of the Holy Spirit) to the image of Christ, not be conformed to the image of the world, and resist the devil. We are to endure trials and rejoice in our sufferings. We must suffer and we must endure discipline if we are to be called a “son” of God. And all of this is for a reason! It is for that revealed goal that awaits us at the end of this age, the six-thousand years of time—it is for the purpose of ruling and reigning with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens in that Seventh Day. Isn't that exciting?!

Note this—God only leads in *one* direction. When the first generation of Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, God led them in a specific direction, with a specific goal. He led them by a pillar of fire at night and a cloud by day to the land promised to them, Abraham's descendants. On the journey, God taught the nation of Israel things they needed to know regarding the land and the kingdom that was to be set up.

God is now leading *us* in one direction. Our journey has a specific goal. The Spirit of God is teaching us the things we need to know regarding the heavenly land, wherein the kingdom is to be set up.

Now for a personal question, if you do not know where the finish line is, how can you get there?

If you do not know that there IS a finish line and a prize, then how can you get there?

If you are unsure as to what the goal or prize is in this race, do you think you might be running with uncertainty? Maybe fighting as to beating the air? According to Paul, will that person receive the prize?

And finally, if you don't know the rules of the race, what is the possibility that you will be disqualified?

Think and pray about these things, keep up the good work, and stay encouraged in your studies.

We'll study again together tomorrow.

## Day Three – The Belt of Truth

The last two days of study lead us right into the putting on of the belt of truth. Pray that your heart remains open and seeking, so that God can continue to teach you.

The belt of truth is the first item mentioned in the putting on of our spiritual armor. First, let's review why we need God's armor.

**Ephesians 6:11, 13**

**<sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil...<sup>13</sup> Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day...**

Why do we need the full armor of God?

Just for the sake of clarification, one must put on the full armor of God, which means putting on every piece. One cannot pick and choose which piece of armor they would like; one must put on the *full* armor or *no* armor at all.

The belt of truth, as we are calling it, is mentioned in this way—

**Ephesians 6:14**

**Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth...**

The phrase “girded your loins” is the Greek word *perizonnumi* (4024), which means “to fasten one's belt.” Hence, the phrase, “belt of truth” is an accurate rendering to describe this piece of the armor.

Let's for a moment examine what the armor of Paul's day was like. Rome was the world power at the time Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians, and Paul was a Roman citizen, though a Jew. The Roman soldier wore only a tunic under their armor, and when putting on the armor they would put on their belt (also known as a “girdle”) *first*. The breastplate, or body armor, would connect to the belt and the belt would transfer some of the weight of the iron mail from the shoulders to the hips. The soldier's legs wouldn't be covered with anything, but they would wear socks and boots on their feet. The Roman soldier's boot looked like a sandal, but it was called a “boot.” The soldier would also wear a helmet and carry a shield and weapons. The weapons attached to the belt.

What, then, does it mean *spiritually* to put on the belt of truth? You might be quick to answer that the truth is simply God's Word. That wouldn't be entirely correct because Ephesians 6:17 states that the “sword of the Spirit” is God's Word. The belt is something we put on *first* that will hold the rest of the armor in place; and, as we've already studied, in order for someone to even *put on* the full armor he/she must already be in possession of a mature knowledge of God's Word. Therefore, the belt of truth isn't referring to the Word of God.

We could try to find the meaning of the belt of truth by relying on what truth means in our English language, which is simply being honest and forthright. That, however, wouldn't be an accurate way to

interpret this verse either, because as we know, the full armor has to do with standing against the spiritual forces in the heavenly places. Being honest and forthright about any particular matter wouldn't be the foundation of defensive armor. Being honest is something we should do, but it is not considered a piece of armor.

We need to look a bit further for the answer.

The word for truth is the Greek word *aletheia* (225), which denotes that which is opposite to a falsehood. It's usage, however (especially by Paul) has a particular, specific meaning. Let's take a look.

**Galatians 5:5-10**

**<sup>5</sup> For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. <sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. <sup>7</sup> You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? <sup>8</sup> This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. <sup>9</sup> A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. <sup>10</sup> I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.**

What are we waiting for?

What is our hope? Please explain.

According to v. 5, what do we wait *through*?

We wait *by* what?

According to v. 6, what matters?

Paul addresses the Church in v. 7 by saying, "You were running well." What is he referencing?

Apparently they *were* (past tense) running well, then they were hindered from continuing to run. They were hindered (which literally means "beaten back") from obeying the truth. Because they were disobedient, they stopped running.

What would the truth be referencing? (Look at the context—Christians, in a race, who stopped running; they did not head toward their goal.)

Who do you think hindered them? (We know where the influence to disobey comes from, but who ultimately *makes the choice* between walking in the spirit and walking in the flesh?)

Looking at another letter from Paul, we see mention of truth in connection with hope—

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### Colossians 1:3-5

<sup>3</sup> We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven [Lit., the heavens], of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel...

According to v. 5, what did they previously hear about?

What do we know about this *hope laid up for us in the heavens*?

The Church at Colossae heard about “the hope” in the “word of truth.” Paul calls *the gospel* the “word of truth.” Since you know what Paul means when he writes *the gospel*, what then does “the word of truth” mean?

Let’s look at one more passage from Paul regarding truth.

### I Timothy 2:1-4

<sup>1</sup> First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup> This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

What does God our Savior desire (v. 4)?

The Greek word used here for “knowledge” is *epignosis* (1922), which means a mature knowledge. It is the word *epi*, which is an intensifier, with the word *gnosis* which means “knowledge.”

What did you learn about mature knowledge from Lesson Four?

What does Paul mean by the mature knowledge of the truth?

I hope you see the context surrounding Paul’s use of the word *truth*. Paul’s letters to the churches are about Christ and His coming kingdom and the church’s future participation in that. That is the truth, of which Paul writes. (James and Peter also use it in the same way. James 5:19 and I Peter 1:22 use *the truth* in relation to the salvation of the soul.)

We can see a bigger picture of truth emerge by looking at a couple of Old Testament Scriptures.

(Note: One way to be more accurate in comparing a *specific* word in both the Old Testament, which was written in Hebrew, and the New Testament, which was written in Greek, is to stick with one language. Since we have access to The Septuagint<sup>1</sup>, we can use that. However, when comparing words with content and context in mind, English translations usually work just fine.)

**I Kings 2:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> As David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, <sup>2</sup> "I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. <sup>3</sup> And keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, <sup>4</sup> so that the Lord may carry out his promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'"

How are David's sons to "walk before the Lord" (v. 4)?

A little further on in the Book of I Kings we read—

**I Kings 3:6**

Then Solomon said, "Thou hast shown great lovingkindness to Thy servant David my father, according as he walked before Thee in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward Thee..."

How did King David walk before the Lord?

We can see a commitment, a sincere heart, and an attitude of *determination* in these statements surrounding the truth.

If we are to put on the belt of truth, which is the foundation that holds together the rest of the armor, we must not only possess a mature knowledge of what the truth is, but we must possess an unfaltering commitment to knowing and believing that it is indeed The Way, the Only Way, THE Truth.

Walking in truth and obeying the truth are just other ways of saying *faithful obedience to God's Word*. *Truth* is belief in what God has said and obedience to it! It is being absolutely committed to being victorious! Now we'll put these thoughts together with the words of Christ Himself—

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> The Septuagint, or simply "LXX", is a collection of Jewish Scriptures which were translated into Greek between the third and first centuries B.C. The Septuagint incorporates the oldest of several ancient translations of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. The word *septuaginta* means "seventy" in Latin and derives from a tradition that seventy-two Jewish scholars (seventy being the nearest round number) translated the Pentateuch, or Torah, from Hebrew into Greek for one of the Ptolemaic kings, Ptolemy II Philadelphus. The Septuagint includes some books that are not in the Hebrew Bible. Many Protestant Bibles follow the Jewish canon and exclude these books.

**John 14:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

There is only one way to the Father. There is only one hope and one race, with one goal. There is only one way to get the finish line—through Jesus Christ the Prophet, the Priest, the Judge, and the King.

It is your knowledge of and determination to run this race, to fight this fight, and stand firm before the enemy which comprises the belt of truth. It is the fortitude to hang on to your hope no matter what the enemy throws at you. It is what holds the rest of the armor in place. And all of this—ALL of it—is done through Christ Jesus, THE TRUTH.

See you tomorrow.

## Day Four – The Whole-Hearted Attitude

Begin your day in prayer!

The Scriptures are full of examples of steadfast determination. There are many figures that exhibited faithfulness in the face of adversity; people who could have given up but were committed to serve, obey, and *follow* the Lord until the end. That is what Scripture would call a *whole-hearted* attitude.

Let’s look at Psalm 119 and the description of this whole-hearted attitude—

**Psalm 119:2**

**Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.**

**Psalm 119:10**

**With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.**

**Ps 119:34**

**Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.**

According to these three verses, what characteristics surround the idea of a whole heart?

God wants your *whole* heart! Read about His commands-

**Joshua 22:2-5**

(Joshua speaking to the second generation of Israel upon entrance into their land)

<sup>2</sup> [Joshua] said to them, “You have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I commanded you. <sup>3</sup> You have not forsaken your brothers these many days to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God. <sup>4</sup> And now the Lord your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan. <sup>5</sup> Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord

**commanded you, to love the Lord your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”**

Joshua tells the Israel to go to their land that was promised them. What does he tell them to be careful of (v. 5)?

How are they to do this?

As you know, Israel never stayed truly faithful to God’s commandments and they turned quite defiant and disobedient. God, though, never stopped reminding them (through the prophets) that they needed to change their ways—

**I Samuel 12:20-24**

<sup>20</sup> And Samuel said to the people, “Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. <sup>21</sup> And you must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. <sup>22</sup> For the Lord will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the Lord has been pleased to make you a people for Himself. <sup>23</sup> Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.

<sup>24</sup> Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.

According to v. 20, how was Israel commanded to serve the Lord?

What must they not turn aside from (v. 20)?

Why must they not turn aside from following the Lord (v. 21)?

According to v. 24, they need to fear the Lord and do what?

It’s back to the truth, isn’t it?

Now let’s look at a condemnation given to the Nation of Israel regarding their lack of whole-heartedness when the Prophet Isaiah spoke to the disobedient nation.

**Isaiah 1:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> Alas, sinful nation, people weighted down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from Him. <sup>5</sup> Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint (Lit., troubled or sick).



**<sup>6</sup> From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts, and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil.**

How is Israel described?

Specifically, how is their heart described?

Remember, when Jesus came to the Nation of Israel the first time He stated, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” This was a cry to the nation to change their behavior and get back on track with God. They needed to do this because God still saw them in the same condition as they were during Isaiah’s day.

Israel’s repentance would have brought the blessings God had promised to them. Israel, as a nation, has yet to come to the place of repentance; because of this condition, they forfeited their right to rule in the kingdom of heaven (*cf.* Matt. 12:31-32; 21:43). They did not lose their right to rule in the earthly kingdom, however, and that promise will still yet be fulfilled. Jeremiah describes what that future time will be like, once they do repent as a nation—

**Jeremiah 24:6-7**

**<sup>6</sup> “For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. <sup>7</sup> And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the Lord; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.**

**Jeremiah 29:13**

**“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”**

When Israel returns to God *with their whole heart*, what will He do for them?

In order to find God, how must one search for Him?

In light of all of this, do you think God accepts a half-hearted attitude? Why or why not?

Let’s continue our study by looking at some specific examples of this whole-hearted determination to follow the Lord. We can see this attitude in Caleb in relation to the first generation of Israel at Kadesh. We can see it in Rebekah, a member of Abraham’s family who leaves her family behind to marry Isaac, Abraham’s son, the son of promise. And, we can see it in Ruth, as she clings to Naomi instead of turning back as her sister-in-law Orpah did, determined to go where Naomi goes. Because of this heart attitude, Caleb receives his inheritance, and Rebekah and Ruth get married—both women receive an inheritance with their respective husbands. This is very encouraging for us!

We'll finish up today by looking at Caleb's heart and his choices. Tomorrow we'll examine Rebekah's and Ruth's attitudes.

## CALEB

You should be familiar with the first generation of Israel and their failure to enter the land promised to them due to their hearts of unbelief. Out of the more than one million adults that should have gone into the land, only two actually got to set foot in it and receive their inheritance. Caleb and Joshua were the only ones who believed what God said.

### Numbers 13:30

**Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it."**

What report did Caleb give to the people?

Was Caleb unsure or ambivalent in any way?

The other ten leaders who spied out the land gave a negative report, and the people believed them—

### Numbers 14:1-5

**<sup>1</sup> Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. <sup>2</sup> And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! <sup>3</sup> And why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt? <sup>4</sup> So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt." <sup>5</sup> Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel.**

Then Caleb and Joshua responded—

### Numbers 14:6-9

**<sup>6</sup> And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; <sup>7</sup> and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. <sup>8</sup> If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. <sup>9</sup> Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them."**

Then the people responded to them—

### Numbers 14:10

**But all the congregation said to stone them with stones.**

Caleb and Joshua certainly didn't hold the popular view, did they?

What did God think about them? (In particular, we'll focus on Caleb)? Let's read—

**Numbers 14:24**

**“But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully (Lit., completely), I will bring him into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.**

How did Caleb follow God?

Now imagine what Caleb had to endure. He was told that he would receive his inheritance, but he would have to wait until the entire first generation (excluding him and Joshua of course) passed away. That took 38 additional years! At any time Caleb could have lost hope, given up, or started complaining and grumbling as the rest of the people did. But he didn't. He remained determined to receive that which was promised to him. He waited patiently for it.

And when it came time for Caleb to receive his inheritance, he spoke in this way—

**Joshua 14:6-12, 14**

<sup>6</sup> Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know the word which the Lord spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea. <sup>7</sup> I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart. <sup>8</sup> Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed the Lord my God fully. <sup>9</sup> So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God fully.’ <sup>10</sup> And now behold, the Lord has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. <sup>11</sup> I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and for coming in. <sup>12</sup> Now then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day...<sup>14</sup> Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the Lord God of Israel fully.

Why did Caleb receive his inheritance (v. 14)?

How do you see Caleb exhibiting the belt of truth?

In like manner, how would you see yourself exhibiting the belt of truth?

That's it for today. See you tomorrow.

## Day Five – Examples and Encouragement

Pray before you begin, keeping in mind all that you have learned so far about the whole-hearted attitude. Pray for God to show what that would look like in your own life.

Let's look at two other Old Testament figures who exhibited a steadfast determination in pursuing the things of God. We won't be spending a lot of time on all the details surrounding these two women; we'll primarily focus on one point in particular.

### REBEKAH

If you are unfamiliar with the story of Isaac and Rebekah, please read Genesis 24 now.

Rebekah is an example for us of the Bride of Christ, so let's focus on some of the highlights of the story—

Abraham sent his oldest servant to his family to find a wife for his son, Isaac. He instructed his servant to find the bride from his family *only*. The servant took a sampling, ten camels full, of Abraham's goods with him to show the prospective wife. Once there, Abraham's oldest servant found Rebekah at the well, where she had come to draw out some water. After she filled her jar, the servant asked her for a drink of water. Rebekah "quickly" gave him a drink, and then went back for more in order to give the servant's camels some water. This was the sign that the servant had prayed for in order to determine which one of Abraham's family members would be the bride for Isaac.

Once the servant determined that Rebekah was indeed from Abraham's family, he went back to her house to discuss the matter with her family. He recounted the entire story to Rebekah's brother and mother, and asked if she could come back with him to become Isaac's wife. At first, they all said yes.

Here's the part of the story that we'll pay closer attention to. Rebekah and her family decided that she would go on with the servant to marry Isaac; however, the family took a surprising turn—

#### **Genesis 24:55**

**But her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go."**

What did Rebekah's family say?

Abraham's servant answered—

#### **Genesis 24:56**

**And he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master."**

The family wanted to delay Rebekah from going to Isaac, and the servant needed to leave right away. The decision then rested on Rebekah, whether she would stay or whether she would go—

#### **Genesis 24:57-58**

<sup>57</sup> **And they said, "We will call the girl and consult her wishes."** <sup>58</sup> **Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?"**

Here it is. The choice. Does she go to Isaac or does she stay with the family?

**Genesis 24:58**

**And she said, “I will go.”**

Rebekah left and went on the journey to meet Isaac. The family stayed behind. A separation occurred.

The significance of the statement, “I will go” is self-explanatory. All who want to be the bride of the Father’s Son will have to, at some point, make that same choice and say those same words. Becoming mature in the faith, dying to the flesh and overcoming the world (all of which results in the salvation of the soul and the proper preparation of our wedding garment) are the direct result of a whole-hearted determination to go on the journey to another land.

Do you remember what awaited Rebekah at the end of her journey? *She got married and she received Isaac’s inheritance as his wife..*

## RUTH

Perhaps we could spend months (years!) on the Book of Ruth and still not reach the end of what we can learn from its content. So, for our purposes here we will focus on a few of its highlights and how they pertain to the Christian’s determination in the race of faith.

Please read Ruth chapter 1 from your Bible now.

The setting is this—Elimelech, an Israelite, his wife Naomi, and their two sons settled in the land of Moab (a Gentile land) because there was a famine in the land of Judah. While there, Elimelech died and his two sons took Moabite women as their wives. About ten years later both the sons died, which left Naomi alone with her daughters-in-law. Naomi then decided to head back to Judah, for she had heard “that the Lord had visited His people in giving them food” (Ruth 1:6).

Naomi left Moab with her two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah. On the journey, Naomi said to both—

**Ruth 1:8-9**

**<sup>8</sup> “Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. <sup>9</sup> May the Lord grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.” Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.**

Both Ruth and Orpah began the journey to the land of bread (Ruth 1:6-7), having separated themselves from their families and the land of their birth. They were both Gentile women who had become part of the family of Israel; both of these women are types of Christians. At the onset of the journey, Naomi told them both to go back to their own land. They then said to her—

**Ruth 1:10**

**“No, but we will surely return with you to your people.”**

They both decided to continue on the journey.

Then—

**Ruth 1:11-13**

<sup>11</sup> But Naomi said, “Return, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? <sup>12</sup> Return, my daughters! Go, for I am too old to have a husband. If I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons, <sup>13</sup> would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the hand of the Lord has gone forth against me.”

This is the second time Naomi told them to go back.

(Understanding the culture a bit will help with this. According to the custom of the day, if a man died while married, having no children, his wife was to marry within the family in order to preserve the family’s inheritance [Deut. 25:5-10]. In this story, Naomi had no more sons that they could marry, nor a husband to birth any more sons, so she told them to go to their own family’s home to find another husband for themselves, and to have rest therein.)

This time, in response to what Naomi said, *a separation of the two women* took place—

**Ruth 1:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> And they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. <sup>15</sup> Then she said, “Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”

Who turned back?

What did Ruth do?

Was Orpah still a member of the family, even though she turned back?

Notice in that last verse, Naomi said once more for Ruth to go back. Read what Ruth said—

**Ruth 1:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. <sup>17</sup> Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me.”

Did Ruth decide to go with Naomi?

Did Ruth know where she was going?

Could she have turned back?

Write what Ruth said about going.

Is this a whole-hearted attitude, or half-hearted? Determined or not? What makes you think so?

Continuing—

**Ruth 1:18**

**When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.**

Naomi then stopped telling Ruth to go back. Then they both continued on their journey to Bethlehem.

Do you remember what awaited Ruth at the end of her journey? *She got married and received an inheritance with Boaz.*

Here are a few questions for you to think about—

If Rebekah had decided *not to go on the journey*, would she have married the son?

If Ruth had decided *not to go on the journey*, and *continue* on the journey, would she have married the kinsman-redeemer?

If you decide *not to go on the journey*, will you marry the Son, the Kinsman-Redeemer?

Does the journey and the marriage have anything to do with eternal salvation? In other words, if you decide not to go on the journey, are you still saved? Are you still part of the family?

Do you really know what is at stake if you decide not to go?

Write down your thoughts.

As we end our week of study, I'd like to focus on a few verses that serve as great encouragement for us, because we all, at various times, lack determination to continue on the journey; we lack the belt of truth. The belt of truth is the whole-hearted determination that says, "I know where I am suppose to go, I WILL go, and I WILL get there. I don't care what hinders me, I will get there. God will lead and I will follow. And when I fall, I will get back up again."

For the moments that we feel downhearted, we need to go to God and find His encouragement to keep going. We need to deal with the sin that encumbers us from running; we need to take full advantage of our High Priest. We need to keep going, no matter what.

Once you know your purpose and that it requires a journey, just settle with the Lord that you *will go* and you will *keep going*. He will carry you along, if you let Him.

So let me ask you—do you really *want to go*? Are you willing to *believe* what God has said? Are you willing to make that journey, *no matter what the cost*? Isn't it worth it?

# Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

## Lesson Five The Belt of Truth

Ask the Lord to show you the way, and He will.

Now read the following verses, and make notes if you want. When you're done, write out a little prayer to God the Father and tell Him the deep desires of your heart.

### **Psalm 37:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. <sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it.

### **James 1:5-7**

<sup>5</sup> But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord.

### **Matthew 7:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.”

NOTES:

### **Matthew 21:22**

“And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”

### **John 15:7**

“If you abide in Me [Jesus], and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”

### **I John 5:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

### **II Timothy 2:11-13**

<sup>11</sup> It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; <sup>12</sup> If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; <sup>13</sup> If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

NOTES:

PRAYER:

Keep up the good work! See you next week!